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**The construction of plausibility in
architectural design and inhabitation**

Electronic Deposit
Volume One

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i.

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This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract:

This thesis outlines how architecture can be considered as an accumulation of plausibility. The term plausibility is used herein to mean what architecture is understood to be capable of, and what architecture's limits are understood to be. In-depth archival analysis is used to discuss such understandings from three noted architects, Charles F. A. Voysey, Charles Holden, and Berthold Lubetkin. Additionally, in-depth interviews have been undertaken with those people who currently live or work in the buildings that these architects designed. Consideration is given to the reasoning and analysis that the architects applied to the question of a building's plausible capability in terms of how future inhabitants and inhabitations could be affected by their efforts. The reasoning and analysis of inhabitants is similarly drawn upon in order to detail their consideration as to how and by what means it is plausible for them to be influenced by the architecture of the buildings they experience. A consistent onus on plausibility, and a concurrent understanding that plausibility is produced through an analytical capacity of both inhabitation and architectural production, is reiterated throughout, aiming to demonstrate that the inhabitation of buildings is a potentially proficient field in terms of the analysis that inhabitants can bring to their experiences, a property often overlooked by the geographical literature on architecture, but one which can make important additions to our understanding of what the experience of buildings might involve. A further necessary degree of complexity is added by recognising the time elapsed between the production of the buildings in question and their current inhabitation.

The construction of plausibility in architectural design and inhabitation

Paul Wright

iii.

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v.

Image credits:

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3.1: Voysey House (rear elevation), Steve Cadman, 12th April 2007

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4.7 Bristol Central Library (entrance hall), Steve Cadman, 13th December 2008

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5.1 Highpoint One (rear elevation), Steve Cadman, 28th March 2009

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5.2 Highpoint Two (rear elevation), Steve Cadman, 28th March 2009

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vi.

Glossary and archive referencing notes:

Glossary:

A.A:	Architectural Association
Ahp:	Adams, Holden and Pearson manuscripts collection
D.I.A:	Design and Industries Association
Lub:	Berthold Lubetkin manuscripts collection
MARS:	Modern Architecture Research Group
OPAC:	Online Public Access Catalogue
R.I.B.A:	Royal Institute of British Architects
TfL:	Transport for London
Voc:	Charles F. A. Voysey manuscripts collection

R.I.B.A Manuscripts Collection references:

Throughout this thesis, R.I.B.A archived manuscripts are referred to by their reference number in squared parenthesis, as in the following:

(Holden, 1936 [Ahp/26/3/1/v]: 4)

“Ahp” refers to the collection code (see glossary, above).

“26” refers to the box number.

“3” refers to a folder within the box or, on occasion, large items like notebooks.

“1” refers to a document in the folder (this number is not always used if the folder in question contains only one document). If that document has multiple pages...

...numeral “v” refers to the page number, written in pencil on the reverse of the page during the archiving process.

On occasion, the documents may have original page numbers, in which case they are shown after the squared parenthesis. As in the example above, R.I.B.A’s page numbering is

continuous, even if the original page numbering is not. If original page numbering is absent, the numeral is repeated as in the example below.

(Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/1/vi]: vi)

On relatively rare occasions, the archivists have elected not to include their own page numerals, in which case the page numbers are provided as they are written or printed on the document itself, as in the example below.

(Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 3)

In all cases, archival material is quoted verbatim and, as far as wordprocessing will allow, with original emphasis such as capitalisation and underlining. Emphasis is only noted in those instances where I have added it.

Using these references numbers, the original documents can be viewed at the R.I.B.A Architecture Study Room at the Victoria and Albert Museum – please note that these collections are no longer stored at the British Architectural Library. I gratefully acknowledge the philanthropy of the R.I.B.A and the Victoria and Albert Museum in making these collections freely available to all who wish to view them.

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vi(b).

Preface to the Electronic Deposit edition:

The empirical content of this thesis comprises in-depth archival study of three early twentieth century architects, alongside contemporary interviews with inhabitants/users of the buildings they designed.

When the majority of my interviews were undertaken, I made it clear to my interviewees that anonymised material from our conversations would be publicly available by way of two printed copies of the thesis, held by Aberystwyth University and the National Library of Wales respectively.

The electronic depositing of theses at Aberystwyth University by way of *Cadair* became mandatory from 2008 onwards, after the majority of my interviews had been undertaken. Although my interviewees did not specifically object to the broader circulation of our conversations, that fact remains that I did not secure their consent in respect to the much wider availability that an online copy of my thesis provides.

Therefore, in order to honour the agreement between my interviewees and I, and on the advice of Aberystwyth University (see appendix), I have redacted those passages in this thesis which include quotations from my interviewees, or specific reference to their words.

Please note, however, that **the official printed deposits of this thesis at Aberystwyth University and the National Library of Wales are unaltered** and contain all the interview material that has been redacted from this edition.

Aside from these redactions, the addition of this preface, some additional material in the appendix specific to this edition, and a updated contents page, this thesis is otherwise identical to the official printed deposits, and the page numbering is the same for both.

Paul Wright, December 2010
(pww98.aber@googlemail.com)

I.

Introduction and literature:

How does architecture happen within people's experiences?

The purpose of my research is to complicate current accounts within architectural geography as to the plausibility of architecture, and how the experience of a building, by which I mean both the experiences people have of buildings and the experiences that were designed into buildings (to be encountered in the building's use thereafter), can be understood through a lens of plausibility, a term which is repeated regularly throughout this thesis, and which I use to refer to the ideas of what a building is considered able to do (and what it is not able to do) by the architects who designed it, and by those who inhabit it thereafter.

I wish to dwell on my use of the term *considered*. This thesis seeks to differ from, and therefore contribute to, the geographical literatures on architecture (which I will refer to as architectural geography) by dwelling on the consideration, thought, and analysis that goes into the experience of architecture, and the design of architecture for experience. In the literature review that follows a number of architectural geographies are seen to produce accounts of the architect or the inhabitant who behave in and are affected by architecture in quite simple ways, and their presence in the buildings we study seem to be based on the kind of behaviours that are relatively non-analytical. Conversely, the architectural geographies that dwell on architects' practices are suffused with accounts of analytical thought and behaviour that are not generally passed on to the inhabitants of those buildings. My work, which I situate in the following section in a review of a small number of key architectural geography literatures, is predicated in the first place on exploring how analytical the inhabitation of building can be, and uses these findings to contribute to an emerging sub-discipline in geography which, I argue, has yet to adequately engage with the potential proficiency of inhabitation, or indeed the potential proficiency that architects may or may not assume of inhabitation.

Variety is the empirical keynote of this study: as I explain more fully in the following chapter, in uncovering potentially new versions of the inhabitation of buildings I expect to find and produce accounts of the presence and absence of various different ideas and

analyses. I study three architects in this thesis, each with a separate chapter in which their proposed inhabitations, and inhabitants' actual inhabitations, are discussed in turn. The three architects I study, through their archive collections at the Royal Institute of British Architects (R.I.B.A), are Charles Voysey, Charles Holden, and Berthold Lubetkin, and to each archival study, a number of interviews with inhabitants are attached. Each of these architects has been chosen because they were practitioners with an eye to plausibility, who sought to uncover and utilise plausibility in certain ways, with certain implications for the later inhabitation of those buildings which they hoped to affect (even engineer). By investigating these three architects, all of whom practiced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I intend to open up an account of the building in which it can be understood as a complex accumulation of plausibility and, of course, implausibility.

Before I proceed to review examples of the literature in this area and the way geographers have manufactured their own plausibilities, I wish to situate the dynamic of my research into a particular context which I believe is important, and largely ignored in the architectural geography literature (though see Bryden, 2004). That is, simply, the production of these plausibilities over a divide in the sense that, on average, the population of the UK is younger than the average age of our buildings¹. In attending to the plausibility of architectural inhabitation, this temporality will often resurface and its importance is worth noting here from the outset.

Unfurling my question:

The basic, central question on which this review is based isn't actually basic at all. Its diminutive form contains the potential to generate an array of complex questions because, to make it diminutive, I had to grapple with it, fold, twist, and compact it into this neat seven-word question.

¹ According to the Office for National Statistics, the 2008 estimated population of the United Kingdom is 61,382,200, of whom 61% (37,624,800 people) are less than 44 years old (i.e. were born in 1964 or after) (O.N.S: 2009). According to the Department for Communities and Local Government (2009), as of 2007, only 41.5% of England's housing stock was built after 1964 (Ibid) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) reported that as of 2004 only 28% of the commercial and industrial building stock in England and Wales dates from after 1970. I include these figures, not because they provide an accurate picture of the overall age of the building stock of the UK (they obviously cannot do that), but because, inaccuracies aside, they still suggest that most of the buildings in Britain were completed before most of Britain's current inhabitants were born. Even if we assume, quite reasonably, a wide margin of error in these figures to account for the different areas they cover and the fact that they were not conducted simultaneously, it is still perfectly reasonable to suggest that our buildings are, on average, older than we are.

How does architecture happen within people's experiences?

My grappling and folding is, in essence, a heuristic and, at first, I thought that its action was one of occlusion. I imagined the umbrella terms I'd used as though they were large canopies which enclosed a number of concepts and occluded their plurality with a single wide-span generalisation. But in writing my seven-word question I have observed that the opposite is equally as plausible: if the question is anything like an umbrella, it is furled. It does not span an array of concepts so much as gather and compact them (although, metaphorically speaking, it would obviously have to span them first before the gathering act of furling). The way I'm going to unfurl this tightly bound question is a defining feature of this thesis and what I want to do with it. Additionally, the process of unfurling affords me opportunity to introduce a growing body of work on architectural geography.

I would suggest that, up to 2001, architectural geography can be called a "niche" which produced a small number of publications, almost all in the form of articles. Shortly after the millennium, publications in architectural geography became more numerous and the frequency of the production seemed to increase. Of course, there is no stable demarcation between a "niche" and a "field", but architectural geography has certainly grown more and more quickly in the last ten years. From these more recent offerings I can outline how architecture dwells within geography: how architectural geographers make a space for architecture and define it for the purposes of geographical scholarship.

Unfurling "architecture":

The fifth edition of *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* is an interesting point from which to unfurl the meaning of architecture. This is not simply because it contains a definition of "architecture", but because the dictionary itself represents an ambitious and uncertain unfurling: a rationale of listing and explaining the range, variation, and intricacy of the field in which the term "architecture", stated singularly, must sit awkwardly. The term runs counter to the authors' rationale precisely because it is such a sweeping and singular front-of-house generalisation. Their recognition of this might account for the uncertainty they wrote into the definition:

“Architecture: The art and science of designing structures and their surroundings [...]. Architecture is now understood as encompassing the totality of the designed environment, including buildings, urban spaces and landscape.”
(Fleming, Honour and Pevsner, 1998: 21-22)

Of course, “uncertainty” does not necessarily connote a lack of insight: this uncertain definition may deliberately tap into the usefulness of uncertainty perhaps better described as fluidity. In either case, architecture is definitely not just buildings or “structures” but the surrounding “spaces” and “landscapes”. And it’s not just “art” but also “science”. I am unsure as to how to interpret this uncertainty (or fluidity). It might simply suggest that architecture is a field whose boundaries are porous, or it could hint at a more complex existence for architecture: not as a field of contents, porous or otherwise, but as a property (like electricity) that resides in and animates other things. In this sense I could say that there is a certain architectural something about my bookshelves or my shoes, assuming that I treat either of these things as fundamentally relational and able to tap into multiple properties in order to exist. However, these questions of form and location are less fundamental than the provocative sense of architecture unresolved which Fleming, Honour and Pevsner end the passage with:

“The aesthetics of architecture cannot be readily distinguished from those of the other arts (poetry, music, sculpture, painting), and many questions remain to preoccupy architects: what does architecture express? what does it represent? and with what means (symbolic or otherwise) can it do this?” [*sic*]
(Ibid: 22)

This is a deliberately ill-defined definition which seeks to unfurl itself using uncertainty as a mechanism. The uncertainty (in terms of boundaries) extends to the appendage of *Landscape Architecture* in the title, whereas the previous four editions were titled only *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*. It also extends to the aesthetic shared ground with the other arts. In the final unfurling, the trio of questions that close the passage seem to fling the reader towards the other entries in the dictionary that provides an array of possible answers, theories, approaches, and further questions. In doing so, it delivers a final denial for those readers hoping for a steadfast definition of architecture’s fundamental essence.

For Fleming, Honour, and Pevsner, the term “architecture” has to be uncertain if it is to be true to the breadth and variation of the field/property of architecture.

This denial is important because it obliges the reader of the *Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* to assemble their own working idea of what architecture is, choosing the content and deciding how the content will work. This is equally true for architectural geographers: the architecture we study is not pre-defined, and the articles I review here (with a few exceptions they are all articles) are obliged to assemble an idea of what architecture is, what it contains, and what it does. That assembling will always be driven to some extent by what we want architecture to do for us, and what we need to prune or emphasise so as to fit it into our conception of geography. So what I’m about to describe is not innocent by any means.

The problem of being either certain or uncertain brings to mind Lloyd Jenkins’ 2002 paper, which seems to embrace this non-definition in a profound way. *11 rue du Conservatoire and the Permeability of Buildings* assembles an architecture concept with a fundamental and overriding property that defines the possibility of a building being defined: that of permeability. Permeability, understood as a meta-property, has very substantial ramifications: if a building has permeability as its overriding property, permeability will allow it to be defined by whatever influences come to bear upon it. In short, the building (as it exists at any given point) is the sum of the influences that converge upon it, assuming that you imagine that convergence as a web-like network through which influence flows (as Jenkins does, after Latour, 1987) and the building as “a relational effect achieved between various parts of a network, [in which] objects (such as buildings) only achieve significance in relation to other things” (Jenkins, 2002: 230, after Law and Mol, 1995). In a sense, Jenkins’ permeable architecture is self-effacing: it neither contains or attains anything except by virtue of its susceptibility to the relational so that “instead of treating objects as things in themselves, we need to see objects as entities that maintain their durability via the relations they have to other things” (Ibid: 231). Because of this, Jenkins’ understanding of architecture and buildings is the most (potentially) disparate I know of in the architectural geography literature, necessarily fragmented in both time and extent:

“What we need to have is an analysis that enables us to explore the ways in which an individual building alters over time and the way in which various connections are created, alter, and permeate a building.” (Jenkins, 2002: 230)

Like many of the authors I review here, Jenkins’ insights are produced from research into a single empirical “unit” (such as one building, or one architect). It differs from them, however, because that building is relatively normal². This focus on normalcy reflects Jenkins’ hope that actor networks will allow us to narrate the normal heterogeneous existence of a building: heterogeneous meaning dynamic in terms of its boundary (allowing different things in relation to define it) its temporality (a definition that changes with time) and its concurrently social and technological constitution in which both humans and non-humans are equally reliant. Materiality is as central to Jenkins’ assembly of architecture as permeability, and he conceives of architectural materiality like a list of ingredients: “levels” that include the “site” (the plot of land), the “structure” (foundations and load bearing elements), the “skin” (the changeable external surface), the “services” (wiring, plumbing, data, etc) the “space plan” (interior surfaces that form the interior volumes – at least as changeable as the skin), and the “stuff” (the flux of chairs, lamps, stationery, etc) (Jenkins, 2002: 228-229). But these “levels” do not belong to the building: they are contingencies of a network, and the building is an expression of the “negotiation” between relations in a network and the “delegation” of the building’s existence to what those relations afford (Ibid: 231). The walls, pipes, volumes, and sites of no.11 are so afforded: they do not arise on command as a simple response to the owner’s intent or an architect’s design.

Intent, design, and composition in general are notable by their absence from Jenkins’ approach, and this absence is something I will return to as my unfurling continues. For now, it is worth noting that this absence is most evident, and deliberately so, in the absence of the architect and architectural practice (Jenkins, 2002: 225, 227). This is not to say that his focus on relationality must logically negate intent, but at the same time I am uncomfortable with the onus on contingency in his work. Nonetheless, his approach to architecture is favourably acknowledged in Jane Jacobs’ *A geography of big things* (2006) by way of the “building event”. Her approach to “architecture” as a term is not unlike Fleming, Honour, and Pevsner’s (1998) definition: as a singular term it suggests a degree of

² 11 Rue du Conservatoire, as Jenkins reports, was designed in the nineteenth century by an architect of no particular note, inhabited by the sort of person who you would expect of such a house (a silk trader), and seems no more or less remarkable than any other town house of the same period in Paris.

resolution and stability, and she finds the possibility of a stable and bounded presence for architecture in terms of identity or design practice to be problematic (Jacobs, 2006: 3-4). Her alternative is an understanding of architecture as part of a larger building event whereby a building and its architecture must connect with “non-architectural others” (Ibid: 11). Like Jenkins, Jacobs considers that buildings and architectures are not self contained or self-evident. Specifically, architectural discourses and practices are not sufficient to stabilise the existence of a building alone: they need to connect outside themselves with non-architectural others that deploy efforts (“work”) to stabilise the occurrence of a building: with them the building can be understood to succeed, but without that vital work they begin to falter (Ibid: 4). The building event is the encompassing term she uses to describe the building, the architecture, and the effort deploying non-architectures that necessarily connect to and work upon it.

On the face of it, Jacobs (2006) and Jenkins (2002) share a most fundamental feature: their buildings are understood as relational materialisations of the things they enrol and connect to rather than bounded edifices (Jacobs, 2006: 10). Where Jacobs differs from Jenkins is the way she dwells on the possibility of stabilisation that the building event offers through “work”, and how this work can be directed toward those formations of enrolling and connecting. In Jenkins’ literal understanding a networked reality is driven by momentum, and momentum seems to be the strict property – in both senses of the word – of the relational: the way relations move together to affirm and alter a building (or drift apart to annul it) is something they do themselves and something that is sovereign to them. Jacobs, on the other hand, uses the idea of work to unpick this sovereignty and understand that new connections can be engineered, and existing connections can be re-shaped and steered so that their coming together can do work as a building event. And whilst Jenkins allows the building to be claimed by the network, Jacobs’ conception of work allows the building, as part of a constitutive building event, to make “claims” of its own:

“In this sense, the first steps to a truly critical geography of architecture would be to speak about the claims *building events* make on the ideas and practices of architecture: how those claims are assembled, how they materialise and help the form to materialise in specific ways, and how they come to operate in relation to a range of non-architectural others. In short it would require us to think critically and up close about how a professionalized architecture works to

sustain itself (or not) as an authoritative practice in relation to building events, and how building events are or are not ‘architecture.’” (Jacobs, 2006: 11-12)

The principal feature of Jacobs’ architecture is this combination of the relational, and the engineering of a zone of relations around the architectural project that work to prop it up, hold it together, and somehow tend to and sustain it. Her two case studies, which I will detail in the sections to follow, relate a Singaporean story of a successful building event that sustained architecture in its intended form (Ibid: 14-17), and a British story about a similar type of architecture whose building event wasn’t sufficiently compelling to hold it together (Ibid: 17-20). These case studies reflect another aspect of Jacobs’ architecture: building events are both human and non-human. The work that Jacobs discusses requires synchronisation between the possibilities and potentials of materials (to realise, or perhaps administer, human ideas and actions) and the possibilities and potentials of humans (to see and use the possible actions that material things do). In both of her stories, the work done is in the form of a discourse; in fact, they could both be described as investigations. But being discourses doesn’t detract from their source and origin: they start from, and return to, an unfolding materiality. That unfolding could, in principle, be as contingent as Jenkins understands it *in itself*. The difference is that in a building event the building is never left to itself: Jacobs is clear that the building can only exist through events of planned connectivity, which are as crucial to the building’s existence as the foundations, load bearing elements, services, and etcetera.

The architecture that Kraftl and Adey (2008) assemble shares with Jacobs a sense that architecture can inflect or deflect aspects of its relational environment to achieve an intended end. Specifically, their architecture is understood as a means of “kindling” certain capacities that enable a particular kind of inhabitation or dwelling to become more likely in a given building. In short, Kraftl and Adey’s architectural space is that which has an inherent capacity to make a difference, and allows for the possibility of arranging and wielding that influential capacity (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 213-214). This is immediately interesting because, even though they do not specify as such, I think that Kraftl and Adey’s account allows for the possibility that this isn’t obliged to occur in buildings. Theirs is more a concept of architectural space, and can refer to any space where a capacity for inhabitation has been apprehended and deliberately manipulated so that someone will dwell there in a certain way (Ibid). This also means that architecture is not a property of space

alone, but also a currency of ideas and intentions about space, by people (which Kraftl and Adey do make explicit from their case studies). Where Jenkins begins with an apparent contingency of the building, Jacobs follows (chronologically) with the possibility of amending the event of the building, whereas Kraftl and Adey trace the means and routes by which architectural space can engineer the inhabitation and experience of a building (because, as it happens, the architectural spaces they discuss in their two case studies are based in what we would commonly understand as being buildings³).

In discussing the capacity and power of architecture, Kraftl and Adey recoil, as Jenkins and Jacobs do, from a lexical-symbolical understanding where codes are inscribed into and read from buildings. Their architecture of capacity manifests in material and performative ways “that evade perhaps all (visual) symbolism.” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 214) To understand this manifestation they turn to (and ultimately modify) theories of affect, especially those temporally directional aspects of affect (Ibid: 215-216; after Anderson, 2002 and 2006; Dewsbury et al., 2002; Thrift 2004). I do not intend to engage with affect and its various iterations here – it’s something I will return to in later chapters – but I will sketch out the working model Kraftl and Adey start from as a way of understanding what architecture can do, and the medium it does it in. For them, as with Anderson (2002), affect is an umbrella term that includes the background intensities where affects dwell in a potential state, the relational encounters which allow them to emerge, and the results (or “expressions” or “consequences”) of that emergence. As background intensities – the potentials waiting to be actuals – shift, drift, and redistribute, certain potentials are pushed to a virtual fore where they are more likely to be embodied (or “folded” or “actualised”) into relational undertakings between bodies: embodiment is the point at which potentials become actualised from an ephemeral almost-something to an actual material something. A chord, for instance, is an assembly held virtually (in intensities of potential) until a relational encounter between a body (the player) and an object (the piano) allows the combination that actualises it. As the piano sits unplayed and the player goes to make some tea (or something) the potential for the chord remains in potential (and among many potentials) as an almost-something between them and strictly between them: the potential can neither dwell or actualise in one or the other alone. Affect resides and emerges in the relational, never the unitary.

³ They are Liverpool John Lennon Airport (Merseyside), and Nant-y-Cwm Steiner School (Pembrokeshire). The choice of these two examples reflect Kraft and Adey’s preceding publications – not jointly authored – on airports and spaces of flight (in Adey’s case) and children’s geographies (in Kraftl’s case).

My example of affect is a touch crude, but for the moment it will serve to highlight some similarities between Jenkins, Jacobs, and Kraftl and Adey. All three engage with the idea of connectivity and the relational as fundamental for an understanding of what architecture is, and therefore all three understand the architectural as something that emerges from the tension between influences. Jacobs' "building event" is held taut (or slack, as the case may be) between influences that were crafted and sited to support a building, whereas Jenkins' permeable building seems to function by way of averages or accretions, where the building emerges from a number of linear relations that are conduit-like and route varying proportions of stuff and ideas into it. Both of these accounts understand the relational as the delivery and addition of ingredients from beyond the architectural: where they differ is in the degree to which connectivity can be claimed. Kraftl and Adey's turn to affect is different again because it understands that in relationality you don't simply get an amalgam or a negotiated double act: you open a space which actualises a folding-in of something extra from a huge field of virtual potential that, at the moment of the encounter, produces not player/piano, or piano/player, but something like a chord, or a scale, or an arpeggio. In fact, "A body's engagement with the world might throw up almost limitless possibilities of relationality, which can be expressed in almost infinite ways and can engender almost limitless forms and exemplars of affect" (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 215, after Thrift, 2004).

This erratic hugeness of virtual potential is problematic for Kraftl and Adey much as Jenkins' network contingency is problematic for me: the whole assemblage of affect seems to multiply itself incessantly just as 11 rue du Conservatoire is a multiple outcome of the network that claims it. In the actualisation of affect there are multiple bodily postures and multiple formations of the material that multiply at the point of contact into an even larger multiplicity of encounters. If that were not enough, that encounter completes a circuit that precipitates, from a mass of virtual potentialities, a tsunami of actual things existing and happening (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 215, 226). The fact that Kraftl and Adey wish to counter this multiplicity forms the keystone of their architectural conception, and their two primary questions are, first; whether bodies and objects are necessarily multipliers, leading to the second; whether the design and subsequent inhabitation (i.e. the encounter) of a building can plan for and manipulate the affectual outcome? For Kraftl and Adey, the architectural (as a type of space and a style of intervention in space) is a means of pathfinding within the virtual, to engineer and manipulate from its multiplicity a delimited

and stable affectual route (Ibid: 226-227). Their two case studies (which I'll detail in the sections to follow) are intended to demonstrate how certain design decisions have actually produced spaces in which affect can be restrained to *effect* particular outcomes.

Unfurling the architecture from these three key articles reveals three different treatments of a common theme: architecture is understood to be something dispersed and dispersable, located at multiple sites or emerging from multiple origins. This has important ramifications: in considering that architecture isn't the strict property of a profession (architecture) that contains a key person (the architect) and a key material form (the building), it becomes a much larger connective or affective assembly whose formative influences can be gathered from a variety of ostensibly non-architectural sources (of course, in the case of Jenkins (2002) the terms "assembly" and "gathered" would assume that there was more than a minimal degree of intention behind architectural origin, which is something I will return to in the following section). This fashion for multi-site, multi-origin architecture in geography was originally explored in a 2001 article by Loretta Lees: *Towards a critical geography of architecture: the case of an ersatz colosseum*⁴. And like the three key articles discussed so far, her work also addresses the tension between wide fields of possibility and discrete occurrences that happen from/within it.

This fourth key article can best be described as orbiting around (rather than being based on) a single prominent building – Vancouver Central Public Library⁵ – as Lees' research is located across multiple sites that arose because of that project, which I would loosely classify as before construction and after construction. Before construction refers to the politicised interpretation of the library design and its meaning (Lees 2001, 62-64), concurrent with the politicised process of planning and the related architectural competition (Ibid: 67-71). Her approach at this stage attends to the processes through which a large public architectural project is negotiated into existence. These negotiations take place through various discourses (such as press reports, planning meetings, and opinion polls), and the effect of these is to open spaces within the building's prehistory: spaces where members of the public, policymakers, and other interested parties can exert an influence on the outcome in some way. This is the first way that Lees conceives

⁴ Both Jacobs (2006) and Kraftl and Adey (2008) refer to Lees 2001, as do many of the post 2001 architectural geographies here except Jenkins 2002 (which was actually submitted at almost the same time).

⁵ Located in central Vancouver and completed in 1995 to designs by the principal architect, Moshe Safdie, "Library Square" is the principal library for the Vancouver urban area, and its exterior design is a play on a Greco-Roman aesthetic, with regularly spaced columns repeating floor-by-floor around its oval circumference (Lees, 2001: 62).

architecture: as a cumulative progression of opportunities courtesy of porous discourses about what the building should be like, what it should mean, and what it should do. Large architectural projects like this achieve an important existence by way of these discourses before any concrete is poured or bricks are laid, and Lees' attention to them is quite similar to Jacobs' understanding of non-architectural others (except that in Jacobs' case studies the discourses are differently and specifically porous, being official undertakings in both instances) (Jacobs, 2006: 14 -20). Because these discourses are porous, and because they are key to the way the library was eventually built, the building itself becomes porous by proxy (although this is as close as Lees gets to the building *per se*). At its simplest level, and especially in the case of buildings chosen from competition entries, these discourses can generate popularity:

“Though the design itself is clearly provocative, much of this passion and public feeling was generated through the public consultation process itself, and the way in which different constituencies engaged with the library design.”
(Lees, 2001: 71)

This statement forms the foundation of Lees' second (after construction) architecture where she introduces “ethnographies of use” (a two pronged methodology of participant observation and in-situ interviewing) as a means to apprehend the embodied politics that produce the library through the way people use it, i.e. consumption as production (Ibid: 72-74). As with her architectural conception pre-construction, ethnographies of use negate (and possibly efface) the building and the architectural as being meaningful or influential *per se*. If people and their institutions are understood as “generating” pre-constructed architecture, they continue to do so in the post-constructed building through the way they use it (Ibid). Lees understands the way people use the library as “transformative” (Ibid: 73) or describes them as “appropriating” the forms of the building (Ibid). This approach provides her with four vignettes, all of which lead her to suggest that the architecture is profoundly animated by the way people use it, rather than being particularly animate in itself. In this way, Lees' second architecture is primarily defined by opportunity. From the homeless woman using the toilets as a personal bathroom, to children playing on the escalators, architecture is something we produce from the way we consume it, and the way we can create styles of consumption that negates the intended usage. In short, we as users produce an architecture saturated with opportunities to expand our choices, options, and

outcomes. This attention to inhabitants and the potency of consumption is something that a number of authors have turned to as a way of dissipating architecture over multiple sites and origins, including Kraftl and Adey (2008)⁶. Their work addresses both the styles of inhabitation that architects prefigure into an architectural space, and the way inhabitants occupy that space creatively, manipulating it to constrain limited affects from limitless potential. Where Lees differs with Kraftl and Adey is her treatment of possibility and potential. For her, the occupation and inhabitation of a building is a means or route for individuals to profoundly amplify their ability to inhabit creatively.

Lees' article works like a fulcrum in this review by rejecting certain agendas in architectural geography that had gone before and setting a new agenda for much of the work that followed. Her assembling of architecture is defined not only by what she chooses to include, but what she specifies to exclude in a series of three anti-architectures (Lees, 2001: 53-57). The first such exclusion is the idea of litmus architecture that characterises many of the early forms of architectural geography (Lees quotes, among others, Kniffen 1965 as an example). In this architectural assemblage, buildings were classified as belonging to certain cultures or demonstrating certain techniques. Recording the location of that building allowed geographers to plot the extent of that culture or technique on a map as it diffused over space and time from a given hearth-like origin (Lees, 2001: .53-54). In this case, Kniffen (et al) used architecture like a litmus test, to stand (or not stand) for something else, assuming in the process that architecture had a fairly reliable reflective property. This theme continues through to Lees' second anti-architecture, except that reflection is replaced by representation: the idea of architecture as part of a quasi-lexical environment where a building stands for a concept that was inscribed into it, prefiguring the architectural as a form with the power to secure meaning in textual form (and assuming a readership) (Ibid: 54-55). Lees' third anti-architecture is the *political semiotic*, an approach which retained a lexical understanding of a text-like building but adds to it a ventriloquism of political economy: in short, architecture is treated as a derivative outcrop or symptom of larger social, political, and economic processes (Ibid: 55-56). My use of the term⁷ "ventriloquism" in this sense refers to the way architecture is understood as a conforming surface to be shaped and made animate by broader, more profoundly formative processes. Architectural agency, such that it is, is understood as being reissued from these processes,

⁶ See also Bryden 2004, Llewellyn 2003, 2004, and McNeill and Tewdwr-Jones 2003.

⁷ I should point out that "anti-architecture", "litmus architecture", and "ventriloquism" are terms that I've devised to describe Lees' arguments – the only term in this passage that she used, and which I retain, is "political semiotic".

rather than created indigenously. In fact, all three of Lees' anti-architectures share some degree of ventriloquism which Lloyd Jenkins noted in his own (much shorter) anti-architecture: "All of these texts have one common feature; they all treat the individual building as a blank canvas on which another discourse is illustrated [...], a form which allows the researcher to 'make his or her points stick'" (Jenkins, 2002: 225). The architectural assemblages that Lees, Jacobs, Jenkins, and Kraftl and Adey enter into is predicated on the exclusion of ventriloquist architecture. Both Lees and Jenkins refer to Paul Goss' *The built environment and social theory: towards and architectural geography* (1988) as an example of such ventriloquism.

Unfurling "happen":

Initially at least, my "basic" question is bipartite: "How does architecture happen" and "within people's experiences". "Architecture" and "happen" belong together in the left half for two very good reasons. The first of these is that the literature I introduced in the previous section constructs an understanding of architecture as something specifically able to and/or made to happen, e.g. to be some sort of mechanism, or produce some sort of outcome, or itself be a product or outcome (and I will detail more of this shortly). The architecture in architectural geography is considered so very animate that I don't really need to specify that it "happens": I could just as easily say "How is architecture within people's experiences?" although I admit that it lacks elegance in terms of syntax. This inevitable happening of architecture in architectural geography resembles the undefined definition of architecture that Fleming Honour and Pevsner settled on: it's porous, malleable and ongoing (i.e. it reaches no conclusion, or has an open-ended conclusion). What is clear from the architectural geography literature is that the happening of architecture is much more than (for example) the building's staying power. It is not as simple as saying that a building happens because it persists in being upright and has yet to fall down or lose too many constituent parts like floors or walls. And by extension, it is not as simple as saying that a building is locked into a limited route of happenings that is common to and inevitable of all buildings. In both cases the building would not "happen" but would have "happened" already: the past tense prefigures an end-stop. The temporal hallmark of recent architectural geography is that it maintains a sort of recursive present tense and assumes that architecture continues to happen, and that architecture's happening can be inhabited (being porous) and, from that position, influenced (being malleable). Some of this is owed

to a common anti-architecture that manifests in the more recent work in architectural geography, and it has achieved four distinct things: first, geography's anti-architecture is (to varying degrees) anti-architect: the architect is not considered to be the building's absolute maestro or principal creator, and this guides many architectural geographers toward considerations of how architecture is defined by other people, things, or networks thereof. Second, it is anti-freeze: certain older architectural geographies require the building to be meaningfully and performatively stilled, whereas more recent work sets architecture in motion and understands it as something that changes and is subject to change. Some of this motion and changeability is provided by those other people and things that emerge from the first anti-architecture, once the architect is dethroned. Third, it is anti-ventriloquist: contemporary architectural geography claims to avoid the approach that renders all or part of a building as derivative, reiterative, and generally shaped by a mono- or omni-causal collection of processes. Finally, it is anti-lexical: it does not understand the re-happening of architecture as a matter of buildings being able to correspond with inhabitants or users through a symbolic system whereby meanings are written into built form and read from it by people in a successful and predictable way. The four of these, taken together as anti-architecture, demand that the building be understood as something happening by undermining those narratives that would suggest architectural fixity. They also open a void in which more dynamic accounts of architecture can emerge as something-happening.

Our attempts to fill this void are not without issues: the recursive temporal hallmark of architectural geography requires the building to be positioned in a potentially detrimental way. Either by exclusion or by inclusion, a number of key recent architectural geographies understand the building as a proxy outcome of various influences for which the building is a route, medium, or context (as with Jenkins, 2002; Imrie, 2004 and Jacobs 2006). Another group of recent offerings are perhaps more fundamentally anti-architectural by considering that the consumption of architecture by the people who use or inhabit it is more fundamental and productive (as with Cooke and Jenkins, 2001; Lees, 2001; Llewellyn, 2004(a) and McNeill and Tewdwr-Jones, 2003). Either approach renders a similar affect: architectural geography actually directs its attention and efforts away from or around the building. The building becomes a field of others (or a point of coalescence): it is made animate by other processes or other people with other ideas rather than having much in the way of indigenous effective or affective authority. Because of this, the building becomes a

place where something can get going, but goes of its own accord thereafter. Architectures and buildings are often seen as housing, containing, or routing certain happenings, rather than happening very much themselves. Something of this can be seen in the architectures of both Jenkins (2002) and Jacobs (2006).

One of Jenkins' motivations was to overturn the assumption that a building is frozen at the point of completion and account for the way a building changes over time (Jenkins, 2002: 229). In 1860, the owner of no.11 received a letter from a city engineer, "inviting" him to connect his building to the sewer running beneath Rue du Conservatoire. This invitation, mundane though it seems, served to connect no.11 to many of the accepted norms of the period by material means – it is an example of permeability. The building happened differently because of this connecting: by way of the sewerage system it becomes a consequence of the prevailing scientific, political, and ethical ideas about health and sanitation, and that consequence is negotiated between regulations, materials, engineers, technologies, builders, proprietors, and etcetera (Ibid: 331-332). For Jenkins, the building does not produce an outcome *per se*, but is both materially and meaningfully an outcome of that which flows through it (and requires it to flow through), and by defining it as permeable Jenkins allows the building to change as the networks that permeate it change. I see Jenkins' "permeable" metaphor as very different to the "porous" metaphor I used to describe the architecture entry in the *Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*. I had in my mind the image of a sponge which is able to inflect itself upon a fluid-like context: to draw influences towards it, and to absorb and retain some. Permeability, on the other hand, seems much more contingent on an equally fluid-like idea of flow, especially flowing through from one side to another, and therefore allows all sorts of things to happen to the building without the building exerting any influence. And if reality is understood as formed in and from networks, then these things have the potential to happen a lot.

I ought to expand on the non-influence of the building because I do not wish to accuse Jenkins of being simultaneously anarchic (because the existence of the network from which a building arises seems coincidental) and determinist (because the existence of a building is delegated entirely to that network). The logic of actor networks should refute this: if the building is established in the network, as well as being an outcome of it, then the network isn't something that simply arrives to "do the building". The idea of sewerage, for instance, requires buildings as part of a network that is complementary to its possible existence.

Sewerage is, to some degree, a consequence of buildings, just as the building is consequentially connected, via sewerage, to all sorts of technologies, materials, and ideas. To be established in a network allows no.11 to tap into a capacity to influence and afford, and it's the same capacity that allowed the building to arise in the first instance. *11 Rue du Conservatoire* should, in principle, allow equally for receiving and dispatching influence. The problem is that it isn't actually possible to think about actor networks in simple terms of receiving and dispatching after a while: the more you consider its ramifications, the more its existence melts into something else, or everything else, in a relentless relational logic because (eventually) you arrive at the conclusion that everything that can happen will (or has) happen(ed) to no.11 and it happens everywhere else by way of everything else. No.11 can influence other things, but cannot influence itself because its existence is contingent on arrivals from the influences of every other thing, which logically means that the influences it renders to other things are not created by itself either, but received from and re-routed to everything else. The strange thing about no.11's happening in terms such as these is that, although the building itself is powerless and contingent on connectivity, connectivity itself is also powerless as it's a relational amalgam of the influences that other things don't have either. Either they are powerless, or the power they have is instantly homogenised in a mass of relationality.

Jacobs' argument uses the same theoretical engine as Jenkins, but her outcome is different. In the first instance, her research is directed at a whole building genotype (the highrise residential block) and her interest is the way that this form is globalised. Her work is not just about how a building happens, but about a specific aspect of that happening in which roughly the same form, with roughly the same purpose, can be multiplied and mobilised into existence in multiple different locations (Jacobs 2006, p.12-14). Her analysis is a development of Latour's *translation* concept (Latour, 1987, in Jacobs, 2006: 13) and stays close to the importance of "work" in shaping (or "claiming") the connectivities that form a building. To move a building by way of translation (as opposed to diffusion) requires work for the processes of transportation, and more work again to stabilise it at the destination. The additions of these associations and connections, formed by the hands it passes through (and into) and the various objects and things that coalesce around it, transform the building: it is not sealed whilst in transport as the diffusion concept would assume. Crucially, at least part of this transformation process is directed and intended. On the face of it, Jenkins seems to understand Latour's insights as describing a contingency of existence

(Latour 1987 in Jenkins, 2002: 225 and Latour 1988, 1993 in Jenkins, 2002: 230) whereas Jacobs uses the idea of connectivity as something that can be manipulated or even wielded in a knowing way: it is a remaking, re-routing, steering, inflecting and deflecting of relationality that allows connections to be claimed, rather than connections to simply happen (Jacobs, 2006: 12-14).

Jacobs' connectivity casts a new light with which to view Jenkins' connectivity, specifically his example of no.11's sewerage connection. A less pessimistic re-examination could see in his account the possibility of relational manipulation: the invitation that was issued to the proprietor of no.11 in 1860 was a socio-technical engagement that implies a planned undertaking to draw (or ally) things together. To understand this drawing together requires an understanding of power as translation rather than a directional force from a unitary origin and it's here that the concepts of allies and negotiations resurfaces to suggest that, somehow, relationality can be apprehended and things can be grouped together to work in a certain way (Jenkins, 2002: 232). The problem, which may be an accident of the way the article is written, is that this manipulation of connectivity is largely implicit and given limited attention (Ibid: 231-232), whereas by contrast Jenkins re-states the contingency of connectivity at a number of points, often explicitly. Certain terms, like "permeability" and "delegation" suggest the removal of agency to contingent elsewhere and seem to clash with other terms like "allies" or "negotiations" that suggest the possibility of claiming or attempting to claim the network to make something that doesn't feel accidental after all. *11 rue du Conservatoire* seems to suffer a lack of resolution as to which mode of happening is actually happening. That said, my concerns are not mirrored by Jacobs, who sees substantial value in Jenkins' work and the way it apprehends buildings through the notion of permeability. For her, it equalises and includes the social instead of ennobling it and externalising it as something more than a bounded building and its materiality (Jenkins, 2002: 225-226 in. Jacobs, 2006: 11). But where she sees co-production, I see contingent emergence, and where she lauds Jenkins' reversal of the building's effacement, I see him leaning towards (or failing to limit) a purist understanding of connectivity from which a new form of effacement arises, and the "black box" (Jenkins, 2002: 225) becomes a murky and diffuse fog.

Perhaps I am being too mechanical in my reading of networks and the relational, or perhaps my approach is too pessimistic, but I find that Jacobs takes Jenkins' framework to

a far more useful place, and it's her conception of connectivity that seems more workable to me. The second of her two case studies, the collapse of Ronan Point⁸, is one she interprets as a combination of embodied human actions, enrolled substances and materialities, and enrolled discourses. She uses these to explain how the continuing existence of a building type can thrive or, in this case, founder according to the connections that hold it together in place. The British highrise became, in Latour's terms (1987) an absurdity: a technical/scientific claim that, once understood as failing, went from being a socially accepted fact to an artefact, from a wholesome truth to a pet theory, and people wondered how they ever believed in it at all. The partial structural collapse at Ronan Point became emblematic in this wider collapse from fact to absurdity (Jacobs, 2006: 19). The gas explosion in Flat 90 on the 16th May 1968 blew out a load-bearing flank wall and caused the entire south-east corner tower block to progressively collapse. The inquiry into the collapse could have identified a material trigger event and blamed someone for it, but the existence of the highrise in a web of supporting connections led the inquiry to a conclusion of systemic failure. The weakness of Ronan Point was a product of the weak expectations and regulations it connected to and materially embodied in order to secure a sense that it achieved safety and solidity. But the building regulations defined quality and safety in terms of normal use, rather than unlikely events (Ibid: 17-20). In this case, the inquiry worked to apprehend and deflect the previous work that a key relational constituent of the highrise had attempted to do.

Ronan Point is an example of designed connectivity, one that was manufactured to happen in a certain way to achieve a projected end, even if it ultimately failed. The way Jacobs treats the Ronan Point collapse exemplifies the very different ways that Jenkins and Jacobs use connectivity, even if they are for the same reasons. Connectivity allows their architectures to keep happening and happen at multiple sites, and the manner of that connectivity seems to be expressed as membership. Whether by accident or intention, Jenkins' account allows the building to be defined by membership, and for membership to be essentially unrestricted: the momentum is from outside the building. Conversely, Jacobs

⁸ Completed in 1968 and constructed by Taylor Woodrow Anglican housing to a standard design, Ronan Point was located in Newham, London, and rose to 22 storeys with 110 flats. It was constructed using a variant of Large Panel System (which Jacobs (2006) describes). The gas explosion in Flat 90 on the 16th May 1968, despite being relatively small, caused the whole corner of the block in which that flat had stood to collapse, resulting in four deaths. An inquiry determined that the building, which had no structural frame and was supported by interlocking panels that comprised the internal and external walls, was unduly flimsy by design, compounded by poor construction techniques and a lack of structural redundancy. For contemporary reports, including news footage, see BBC (2008), and Jacobs (2006: 17-21) for further details.

suggests a system of membership in which intention and planning are key: the “building event” allows for the inclusion of discourses and undertakings which connect to the building and work (or fail to work) on its definition and the way it happens. The momentum is from inside in this case, because it is the building’s cause that directs the connective memberships that form around it. But regardless of whether the building is for the unplanned network, or the network planned for the building, connective geographies of architecture direct their attentions away from or around the building to discover what animates it. Neither the building (as a designed material incursion occupying space with shapes and volumes), its design, or its architect are mentioned as having membership, and as such the implications of their memberships are effaced. Even the Large Panel System of Ronan Point, and the faulty gas connection in Flat 90, are understood by Jacobs to be affordances of a connected member, the Building Regulations.

Lees’ insights are predicated on a similar concept of membership, but in a different way to connectedness and networks. *The case of the ersatz colosseum* assembles an architecture and specifies an anti-architecture which has influenced the work of many others since, but between these two there are silent architectures she doesn’t mention at all. The first of these non-architectures is the actual building: Lees does not consider it at any great length, materially or otherwise, as a member of her architectural conception in any meaningful way. It is the memberships created by consumption that makes Vancouver Central Public Library happen the way it does, and moreover, happen more powerfully than any cues its architectural design may provide. Consumption, either at the planning and consultation stage (where ideas, purposes and meanings are consumed) or at the inhabitation stage (where the library’s forms are consumed) is a special and vibrantly productive kind of membership, and the building, in terms of surfaces, volumes, spaces, routes, infrastructures and treatments, is muffled against it. She recognises the daring postmodern play of the colosseum aesthetic, for instance (Lees, 2001: 71), but doesn’t attribute the efficacy of membership to it. This first non-architecture leads logically to a second where the architect fades into the background. As the consuming inhabitant is empowered by consumption Moshe Safdie (the architect) starts to disappear and, with him, any possibility of his ongoing membership within the re-happening building that might shape or define its future consumption through provisions (or denials) in design. The library’s existence was already starting to escape his influence – possibly even understanding – and embrace the

engagement of others at an early stage: by stating as such, Lees undermines his membership from the outset.

“I began to wonder if those who have criticized the ersatz colosseum, and even perhaps Safdie himself at times, have missed the postmodern play. The colosseum design is ambiguous: it reflects no singular engagement.” (Ibid: 66)

Although she conceives of architecture as something-happening across multiple sites and origins, the driving force appears to be the individual creative act, a membership with the potency to permeate and ultimately animate architecture experiences. The question is, can consumption become so powerfully productive without limits? Is the architectural a medium that allows us such soaring memberships? Lees’ architecture seems to suffer the same problem as Jenkins: it allows for certain actions or likelihoods to generate and keep on generating without substantial limitation. It also proposes a very top-heavy distribution of very potent memberships as a means to a dynamic understanding of architecture, memberships that are principally available to inhabitants after the building’s completion, and which make substantial creative freedoms available to them.

The principal reason why I wrote “architecture” and “happen(ing)” into the left half of my question is because I need to use them together to develop this idea of membership. I’d argue that the inevitable happening of architecture which is written into recent architectural geographies seems to actively invite it. The re-happening building allows for people and things to join in, which further implies that buildings happen in a way that generates a capacity or space in which such a joining is possible. If a building is an architectural something that can be enrolled into as I’ve just outlined, then I would be interested in expanding the idea to ask what sort of different memberships are possible in and of a building, especially those particular memberships afforded by the building’s initial design and designer: the architect. A building may be a re-happening thing, but the architect of that building is ideally placed to deliver a very potent opening shove, the momentum of which influences many – possibly all – of the happenings that follow to some extent. For me, unfurling “happen” is all about the architect and what s/he wanted the building to do (or put another way: the kind of happening s/he wanted it to have) by virtue of an

enhanced membership, and the left half of my furled question is where my interests in the possibilities of the architect have come to reside⁹.

Why, when I have just criticised Lees for defining a cache of enhanced memberships, would I argue for a consideration of the same in the architect's case? In the first instance, I already know that certain architects understood their memberships as being so:¹⁰ it was the assumption of capacity, both of the building as capable of exerting influence and the architects role in crafting such capacities, that led them to design certain properties into the building that would (hopefully) render influence or execute effects of some kind. Their stories will follow in later chapters, but I can offer some general opening observations about the architect's role. The architect is one of a number of people who are present at the building's inception, but their particular presence is overarching: the building only becomes possible when s/he corrals these people's demands and needs, creating a network which accounts for each in the final design.¹¹ In this sense the architect is positioned at the centre of gravity, and s/he is also positioned at the effective start of the building's life¹². This is crucial, because it's at this point that certain possibilities can be dimmed and others emphasised by virtue of the trans-material zone the building occupies whilst in the architect's hands. The potential materiality of a sketch or elevation needs to attend to the wishes of the client, the limitations of regulation, and the limitations of materials, techniques and sites, so it certainly isn't without constraint. But notwithstanding, it may be the point of least constraint. This is where the maximum possible scope for the building's outcome is available to the architect: the "position" and "gravity" of their membership allows the architect to open a space around them which encompasses more possibilities to choose from, combine, and experiment with than will ever exist again for that building. I

⁹ By unfurling "happen" in this way, I'm also starting to unfurl "people" by proxy through an understanding of the architect as a person and a role in which I am specifically interested.

¹⁰ I know this from a combination of the readings I'm reviewing as part of this unfurling process, especially Gruffudd (1995, 2001) Llewellyn (2003, 2004) and Kraftl and Adey (2008), along with my previous research for my BA and MA dissertations, and a viability survey which I undertook at the start of my doctorate in 2004/5 during which time I reviewed a number of the larger manuscript collections held by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

¹¹ These other people will be detailed in my empirical chapters, but as an initial outline they include the client, the contractor(s), the suppliers, the local planning authority and the regional/national planning authorities who act through them. If wood, concrete, brick, steel, and glass form the ingredients of a building in a basic material sense, then clients, contractors, suppliers, and authorities are the basic materials with which the architect is provided at the start of the design. Or put another way, these interwoven influences form the necessary trellis on which the design grows, but it is the architect who is responsible for drawing these strands together in a way that will work when the building is finished. Nonetheless, the architect's membership is essentially gifted to him/her by these other people and organisations who require architecture: I would not wish to give the impression that I think the architect subsumes their influence, but then again, I am of the impression that s/he profoundly organises them.

¹² I say "effective" because, whilst the client may start the process of wanting a building, and whilst the planning and building regulations may already be in place, none of these things alone can start the building: it requires the architect to network these things together and apply their abilities for the building to emerge just as it requires clients, builders, and authorities to make themselves available to be networked.

imagine this space to be conical: at the beginning the architect has the maximum range of options, but obviously the form of a building would struggle to indulge in every possible feature or treatment within the architect's ability. Therefore, as the evolving design comes to favour certain approaches and exclude others, the space it happens in narrows. And it seems that the only way that space can be reopened to its (literally) original extent is to demolish and build anew: it's the only point where a "full" design can be achieved. Once the architect's elevations have been converted into a completed build any future creativity is obliged to the original in the sense that they must start from the point where the architect left off and work within certain parameters that endure from their original design¹³.

My unfurling of "happen" along with "architecture" is the start of a specific research agenda that is apparent from the emphasis I've placed on the architect and the way they open up possibility within the limits of buildings. When an architect's membership is fresh and they start to prise open their conical workspace, what manner of possibilities do they imagine are available to them? I am interested in those idealistic architects who made space for the possibility that the creation of various shapes, surfaces, textures (and etcetera) can be causative or influential. The starting point of my research has been those architects who developed a cache of traceable beliefs and understandings that allowed them to apprehend such possibilities and design those assemblages (of shape, surface, shade, etc.¹⁴) so that the building could communicate or demonstrate something. This is a story of piercing ambition in which a building's behaviour could be designed into its architectonic form, and that those forms could behave themselves and repeatedly perform the specific acts designed of them. I have found and opened the caches of three architects with the aim of tracing what sort of performances they thought could be undertaken architecturally, and why they should be motivated to make their buildings do such things. My unfurling of "happen" does not, therefore, assume a rudderless building which is overly susceptible to whim. "Happen" attends to how a building is designed to happen in certain ways, by

¹³ My meaning in this instance is pragmatic: additions to a building generally maintain floor and roof lines, for instance, and partial demolitions have to work around or replicate load bearing elements. The question of whether style and approach should be replicated is a different (deferent) question which I will turn my attention to in the next section and in the empirical chapters that follow.

¹⁴ Lists such as these raise the question of how far I'm going to unfurl "architecture" or "buildings" and raise the possibility that I could break the building down to a list of ingredients (fixed surfaces like walls, floors, ceilings etc., flexible surfaces like doors, windows, etc., surface treatments of colour and texture, the enclosed volumes that are formed where these planar surfaces meet like lounges, bedrooms, chimneys, etc., non-void volumes like pilotis or buttresses, the arrangement and routing of these volumes into a plan, and so on). I'd suggest this is the principal limitation of the "unfurling" metaphor (which I discuss later in this chapter). Suffice to say, the architects I studied intended that their work should be consumed as unitary: complete and whole.

drawing on certain means, toward hoped-for ends, through the efforts of the architect. This also serves to partially limit my unfurling of “architecture” in terms of my research. For me, architecture is a property created by architects and delivered in the forms they design: it describes the beliefs and philosophies of those architects who made ambitious possibilities for themselves, and it is composed of their reasons for doing so, and of the things they did to compel these possibilities to emerge later in the building’s life.

There is a small body of work in architectural geography by Rob Imrie that would immediately call into question my emphasis on the architect by drawing attention to those things that impinge upon and compress my conception of their creative conical memberships. In a 2004 article, *The role of the Building Regulations in achieving housing quality*, he details how the ways a building might happen are prefigured by the regulatory environment they are to be built in (Imrie, 2004). Throughout his work Imrie’s principal interest has been the interface between – and the management of the interface between – people’s bodies and the material environments they dwell in (see also Imrie, 2003), and his interest in this case is how the regulations for disabled users – Part M – is apprehended, and what effects it has (Imrie, 2004: 423). Essentially, Imrie seeks to follow Part M from its beginnings as a legal document through the various processes of design, planning, and construction, to see what happens to it en route. As his account unfolds it becomes obvious that as Part M is routed toward an actual completed building, much of it is lost in translation, or subject to disinterest and creative interpretation. Such treatment, argues Imrie, is built into the document itself: Part M seems tokenistic, indeterminate, and through terms like “reasonable provision” leaves ample space for transgression, discretion, and interpretation of what was originally intended to be a definite and legally binding incursion into architectural space (Ibid: 433-435).

Pre-empting Jacobs (2006) Imrie attends to the non-architectural others of regulation (Part M), enforcement (the Building Control offices where he undertook his interviews) and construction (the site where Part M is supposed to be made material). In this instance, he understands the happening of buildings as occurring outside the confines of the architect’s conical membership and the inhabitants’ creative consumption, unlike Kraftl and Adey (2008, also Bryden, 2004; Lees, 2001 and Llewellyn, 2004(a)). In attending to these often effaced sites and detailing how they can impinge upon and refract something that, like Part M, is intended and supposed to directly oblige buildings to perform in a certain way, Imrie

challenges the idea that the building's happening "pauses" between the architect and the consuming inhabitant: these in-between sites are not merely procedural and functional, an insight which can also be found in Jacobs' Ronan Point case study (Jacobs, 2006: 17-20). Unlike Jacobs, Imrie's account of the demise of Part M from something definite and obligatory to something near-voluntary and interpretable allows Imrie to discuss how the building's performance is made to fall short of intentions, whereas Jacobs' event (regardless of efficacy) understands the building event as a network of good intentions that stabilise the building and hope to keep it performing in a definite and intended way. Imrie's building event¹⁵ is potentially more complex: it's not exactly "for" the building, not all elements within it sit comfortably together, and there is a suggestion of subtle infighting between these elements and the possibility of their marginalisation.

It is also worth considering that if Part M, a supposedly obligatory incursion into architecture, is enfeebled both by the way it is written and the environment it enters into, then the designed incursion of architects in which I have declared an interest might be equally susceptible, and their conical membership might not count for much. The possible incursions of architects and the practices that might allow for these incursions is something Imrie gives attention to in an earlier paper, *Architects' conceptions of the human body* (Imrie, 2003). Retaining the bodily theme, Imrie seeks to understand how architects factor the bodies of those who use buildings into their work (Ibid: 51-52), and in doing so he attends to prefiguring acts of architectural practice and what these mean for the way a building happens. By this I mean the way architects think their building will be occupied, and how they tailor their designs to that prefigured occupation. From a combination of interviews in architectural schools (Ibid: 53-55) and the offices of practising architects (Ibid: 55-58), Imrie finds that architectural understandings of the body are peripheral at best. Architectural schools skim the subject either in overtly theoretical terms (that have minimal implication for practical building design) or by defaulting to the standardised bodily dimensions that are commonly available (see, for example, Baden-Powell, 2001: 64-65 or Adler, 1998) (Imrie, 2003: 23-55). Practising architects either address the body through a series of assumptions and generalisations, or not at all. One key assumption is that the architect uses his/her body as a normal corporeal baseline, assuming that users are like them (Ibid: 55-56). Equally interesting is the fact that many architects believe that

¹⁵ Imrie does not use the expression "building event", but his conception seems to work in terms of Jacobs' (2006) terminology.

architecture appeals to and works at the cerebral level, as material sustenance for an enquiring style of occupation, and the body simply contains these enquiring faculties (Ibid: 57-58).

In my preferred terms of an architect's conical membership, Imrie's discussion directs attention to what architects fill (or fail to fill) this conical space with, and how that content is formed. In the case of the body, that content is either ignored or effaced in a series of assumptions. But these assumptions, Imrie argues, are rooted in professional architectural practices, especially that of drawing. By identifying drawing as a principal currency of architectural practice, he proposes that architects are given to think in terms of arranged elevations, volumes, and shapes to the exclusion of that which might untidy or unbalance that arrangement. Untidy bodies are thus excluded not only from drawings (where, at best, they are included as a blob-like motif) but also from architects' schema of prefigured occupation (Imrie, 2003: 58-63). For Imrie, the way an architect might make architecture happen is not simply the production of shapes, surfaces, and volumes, but the proto-material enactment (i.e. drawing) of considerations, assumptions, and at least one key effacement, of how the building will eventually be used and considered. The ramifications of this insight are important in terms of my own conceptions: the architect's conical membership, even if it is the point of least constraint in the building's story, is not a field of unrestrained choice such as that which Lees (2001) might conceive of inhabitation. Practices and mediums such as drawing necessarily occupy that space and influence the outcomes, especially if one of those outcomes is a set of drawings to present to the client and contractors. Furthermore, Imrie tells a story of inadequate prefiguring acts on the part of architects, and that underestimating elements of the inhabitation-to-follow (such as bodies) might nullify their efforts in some way.

There are relatively few architectural geographies that attend to the architect alone when considering how buildings happen. Perhaps the most purist of these is Mike Crang's *Urban morphology and the shaping of the transmissible city* (Crang, 2000). On the face of it, such articles eschew the important multi-site and multi-origin trend in architectural geography, but both Crang (2000) and Imrie (2003) should be understood as accounts of how architects have apprehended and worked with the distributed reality of architecture and the inhabitation(s)-to-follow. In Crang's case, two architects (Marcus Novak and Lebbeus Woods) catch his interest for the way they've conceived of city time-space (although he doesn't discuss what

specific implications this has for the way they design built interventions there, so his article is located firmly in the abstract environment of their considerations). Both of these architects understand the contemporary and electronically super-connected city as a dynamic condition of time and space in which, instead of elements being mobile across an urban surface, the surface itself is malleable and can bend, fold, and contort to bring ostensibly separate or disparate elements into proximity and contact (Crang, 2000: 304). Novak understands this as a part human, part technological achievement, as technological connectedness allows people to “throw” their agency, to achieve effects at a distance (Ibid: 307). Their technologically mediated actions lead him to re-imagine space in three dimensions as a squeezable looping torus, and space is no longer a void that separates.

“Space ceases to be the ground for the juxtaposition or distribution of given elements, geography ceases to be a context for building or a question of scale but becomes a rupture of scale, and buildings cease being discrete elements but are topological operators crossed by different dimensions.” (Crang, 2000: 308)

Woods has a similar conception of collapsing and looping and also credits this to light-speed communication, but for him that collapsing un-fixes authorities and hierarchies and generates heterogeneous interference and cohabitation where once there was clarity and compartmentalisation (Ibid: 310-311) “This architecture” Crang explains, “responds to both technical and social geographies where existing orders and fixities are challenged” (Ibid: 313).

Despite these two examples being highly abstract and, by Crang’s own admission, imagined (Crang, 2000: 313), they show how architects consider the nature of the territory into which buildings will go. The informationally connected city dweller and their abilities (in terms of an effective end of Euclidean space and the technological morphing of the urban) are apprehended by Novak and Woods as the start of the process of crafting an architecture that might work there.

Pyr’s Gruffudd’s *Science and the stuff of life* takes a different approach on a similar theme. In the first instance, his work is a historical geography and his case studies are two 1930’s

health centres: the Pioneer¹⁶ Health Centre in Peckham (Gruffudd, 2001: 397-399)¹⁷ and Finsbury Health Centre¹⁸ (Ibid: 405-409). But Owen Williams (architect at Peckham) and Berthold Lubetkin (architect at Finsbury, see chapter five) have quite different approaches to the two architects that Crang studies. Rather than understand architecture from the perspective of a challengingly malleable spatial territory, they understand architecture as a means of condensing and stabilising specific things and processes from a wide array of possible content. Gruffudd's argument is based on two different understandings of modernism: "techno-cosmopolitanism", the updating and re-making of existing practices (which he ascribes to Williams' approach at Peckham) and "middling modernism", understood as a total break with previous approaches and the liberty to pursue an absolutely new approach (which he ascribes to Lubetkin's efforts at Finsbury) (Ibid: 396-397). Crucially, despite their different modernisms, both of these buildings were "biotechnic" in that they apprehend and worked harmoniously with nature and natural bodily processes (Ibid: 397).

For Gruffudd, the architect is key. They both understood their ability to enclose space as a means to foreclose what contents and processes were there, and to arrange the ways they could be experienced, and this process could not happen without the architects' input. From a wide range of potential happenings, architecture can bring together a combination of particular happenings in a bounded space, and Gruffudd understands architecture as the planning for and designed arranging of this recursive availability of stuff (in which certain possible contents are apprehended and others are deflected). In terms of something-happening, the building is not effective in itself: it works by collecting and routing effective content through one location and looks to that combination of content to do the work. At Finsbury Health Centre things like fresh air and sunlight induce better health. The purpose of the architecture is to make these things available in one location (Gruffudd, 2001: 409). And at the Pioneer Health Centre, surveillance was one affordance of many that allowed healthy living to be instated in its members, but the building did not create these affordances so much as route them together (Ibid: 401). Whether for the "techno-

¹⁶ The Pioneer Health Centre, designed by Owen Williams (1890-1969) and commissioned by two doctors (married to one another) was completed in 1926 and lapsed in 1950. Its dual purpose was to provide social, recreational, and healthcare services to the people of Peckham (London) whilst allowing the staff of the centre to observe the patrons for research purposes. See Gruffudd (2001) for further details.

¹⁷ A third offering by Gruffudd (2000) discusses Lubetkin's approach to zoo design.

¹⁸ Completed in 1938 in what is now Islington, London, Finsbury Health Centre was one of the first purpose-built inner-urban health centres in the UK. It was one of a number of projects that Lubetkin, with Tecton, undertook for Finsbury Borough Council. See Gruffudd, (2001) for a discussion, and Allan (2002: 105-107) for further details and illustrations.

cosmopolitanism” of the Pioneer Health Centre or the “middling modernity” of Finsbury Health Centre (Ibid: 411) the architects in either case achieved a system of availability for a selection of provisions, i.e. their enclosing of space worked to select content and arrange for its recurring availability.

It’s important to note that this is a historical geography and Gruffudd is presenting Williams’ and Lubetkin’s interpretations of architectural happening, rather than making an argument for how architecture might actually happen. Nonetheless, this is a substantially different way to look at building events: Lubetkin and Williams use buildings to apprehend and organise the world of non-architectural others, deflecting some whilst routing others (recursively) into architectonic forms. It is the building that stabilises a selection of non-architectural others, and the architecture of the form is the means to that stability. In terms of Jacobs’ building event (Jacobs, 2006: 11), Gruffudd’s account of Williams and Lubetkin effects a reversal: non-architectural others are not seen as props for the building to lean on and be stabilised by. They do not work on the architecture. The architecture works on them.

A different account is provided in Gruffudd’s 1995 article, *Propaganda for seemliness*, which attends to the work of Clough Williams-Ellis¹⁹ (the owner and architect of Portmeirion). The approach is outwardly similar to *Science and the stuff of life*: an investigation of the way an architect created his own personal way of dealing with and understanding modernism. Specifically, “Williams-Ellis’ modernism challenged the conventional polarity of urban modernity and rural traditionalism, and sought a reconciliation through ordered landscape” (Gruffudd, 1995: 412). Gruffudd’s approach to Williams-Ellis is to account for his ideals and his architecture as intentions and devices, the former being achieved by use of the latter, and his primary device was to achieve aesthetic beauty and the successful deployment of architectural forms that could generate pleasure (Ibid: 406-409). His high opinion of natural (aesthetic) beauty was key to making this work: if architecture and planning could be reconciled with the beauty of natural landscapes and ordered in such a way to contour and blend with the natural site without spoiling it (as he attempted at

¹⁹ Bertram Clough Williams Ellis (1883-1978) was an architect and an author of architectural books. Although he was involved in the design and planning of British new towns, he is often best remembered for a) being an ardent champion of conservationism, for which he was knighted and b) Portmeirion, the Italianate village on the Dwyryd estuary in Gwynedd, North Wales which he constructed, often from architectural salvage, between 1925 and 1975. Gruffudd (1995) provides a useful introduction to his beliefs and approach.

Portmeirion and his plan for Stevenage new town), then Williams-Ellis believed that a pleasurable and beautiful architecture of order could be achieved:

“[T]he interplay between site and buildings, the creation of physical order, and the spiritual value of aesthetic beauty are clear themes. In this sense there is no tension between Williams-Ellis’ ordered architectural and planning principles and modernist architectural style.” (Gruffudd, 1995: 413-414)

The emphasis on “physical order” referred to the kind of laissez-faire planning that Williams-Ellis recoiled from because of the disordered way it encroached onto and scarred the natural landscape (Ibid: 411): urban function required beauty and nature to be harmoniously manifested. Essentially, Williams-Ellis’ architecture used organic nature as a benchmark and emulated it as a means to beauty, and the key to that emulation was to develop an architecture that could be sited in places like Portmeirion without ruining their beauty.²⁰ His principal device, then, is to use nature as a proxy to make tangible two otherwise intangible outcomes (beauty and pleasure) which is the primary difference between Gruffudd’s articles: in *Science and the stuff of life* Williams and Lubetkin are understood as routing tangible and functional (natural) content, whereas in *Propaganda for seamliness* Williams-Ellis is understood as attempting to meet a perceived spiritual need and appeal to feelings and sensualities. On second glance, however, Williams-Ellis’ approach seems to be the same: the intangibility of his project requires a tangible proxy or surrogate. The concept of beauty requires an already-existing something that is actually beautiful (or at least perceived to be so) to secure it, and in this case it is nature’s beauty, a materially real form or content which, when routed into an architectural project, is understood to manifest the concept (hence the emphasis on reconciliation between beauty, nature, and physical order in planning/architecture (Gruffudd, 1995: 413-414)).

Imrie (2003) Crang (2000) and Gruffudd (1995, 2001) focus their accounts of architecture as something produced by the architect, which at first glance would suggest that they eschew the multi-site, multi-origin approach which has been critical in the transition between ventriloquist architectural geographies and the more contemporary examples in which architecture is understood as happening. A second glance, however, tells a different

²⁰ In fact, Williams-Ellis’ love of natural beauty led him to support some unusual causes, such as the landed gentry. Their continuing stewardship of estates protected these areas from laissez-faire development (Gruffudd 1995, p.415). In this and other ways, his conception of beauty was bound to the specific beauty that nature provided.

story of prefiguring acts, and how some of these other sites and potential origins have been considered (with varying degrees of efficacy) by architects. All of these accounts detail the way architects have thought about the wider realities that their buildings will exist both of and in, and what implications they may have for the designs they produce. I want to emphasise this point and the way it isn't, in fact, a discrete point that starts and ends near the beginning of a building's story. By accounting for their prefiguring acts, Imrie, Crang and Gruffudd have implied the existence of other (future) sites and origins as part of the architect's approach. In other words, their conical membership contains not just options and choices at that point, but strategic possibilities to make the building recur in a certain way from an understanding (which may equally be reasoning or guesswork) of the characteristics of the reality it will occupy. There is a possibility that the architect's role after the building's completion is not simply a matter of sedimentation or palimpsest, but of recurring incursions. The fact that a number of key architectural geographies have ignored or effaced the membership of the architect means that such temporal possibilities are sometimes missed, but not in the case of Bryden (2004) and Llewellyn (2004a), who provide accounts of both the occupied reality of a building, and the recurring intentions of the architect and architecture within that reality.

Of course, the source of architecture needn't always be an architect. In Inga Bryden's *There is no outer without inner space* the architectural design is provided by the *Vastu Purusha Mandala*, a working drawing of sorts that specifies the spatial layout of the traditional Indian (Hindu) courtyard house (the *haveli*) with the aim of connecting the domestic realm to large cosmological ideas (Bryden, 2004: 30-31).²¹ The *haveli* is, in this way, implicated in the *vastu*, (meaning the translation between the human and divine) and is understood to straddle the physical and teleological worlds: in fact, it is meant to demonstrate that these worlds are not really separate at all. The *haveli* occupies and arranges space with a purpose

²¹ Home (*Oikos*) is inseparable from cosmos (*Temenos*) in Hindu philosophy. *Haveli* are built on a conception of necessary harmony between these micro and macro scales, specifically, that the spaces should be designed to intimately connect human lives to the cosmos. Specifically, a grid, in which there are nine cells (each containing a divinity) is laid over a diagram of *Purusha* (cosmic man, in the lotus position) serving to hold him down and impose divine order upon him, a concept known as *Vastu Vidya* or *Vastu* (literally: where the translation between human and divine occur). The whole concept is represented in a working drawing of sorts: *Vastu Purusha Mandala*. It is superimposed onto the site and goes on to form the basis of the *haveli's* form, proportion, and symbolism (Bryden 2004 p.30-31). The inner *chowk* (courtyard) is built around this nine-cell grid, and it has both private and public functions. The rest of the house around the inner *chowk* is derived from a sixty-four square *manduka*, or eighty-one square *parambhagika* grid, which dictates the proportions of rooms, covered and uncovered spaces (the size of the latter reflecting the social status of the occupant), and so on, but all with a strict symmetry that references the meaning of the *Vastu* as manifested in the inner *chowk* (Ibid p.31-34). *Vastu* is a continuing and popularised tradition in contemporary India despite other approaches which, according to Vibhuti Chakrabati (whom Bryden quotes), "invent" distinctions between physical (outer) and spiritual (inner) aspects of house and home (Ibid p.34).

in mind, and Bryden attends to it not only as an outcome of the documents that define it, but also as an actual built thing with volumetric and spatial properties (Ibid p.30-34). But Bryden's work is not just about what is supposed to happen: it's also about how or if that happening has actually continued to the current inhabitation, especially as the *Vastu Purusha Mandala* was intended to define the spatiality of the *haveli's* future habitation (for instance, the spatial interaction or separation between men and women (Ibid: 36)).

The inhabitation of the *haveli* is something I will discuss in more detail in the following section, but the story that Bryden tells is ultimately one of intended compatibility. In terms of happening, the building is understood not only as a medium of connection between the human and divine, but a connection to a meaningful register that will be accepted by future inhabitants of the *haveli* who will be familiar with that register, along with the meaning of the *vastu* and what it is meant to achieve. The *haveli* does not literally produce a link to the cosmos or the belief thereof; it produces an architectonic expression of cosmological association which would be familiar to future inhabitants, and expected by them through their beliefs and worship. The impulses of the *haveli* are not newly deployed beliefs, but architectural appeals to existing ones. The continuation of the *vastu* by architectural means may sound enormously ambitious, but it is actually an exercise in plausibility and reckoning on the likely continued provision of plausibility in future inhabitations (as is true of the current residents of this particular *haveli* who continue to provide some degree of plausibility) (Bryden, 2004: 39).

Such pre-emptive dialogues between architecture and inhabitation are also explored Mark Llewellyn's *Urban village or white house* (Llewellyn, 2004(a))²² which tells the story of Kensal House²³, an early modernist block of flats located in Kensington and commissioned in 1936. There are three elements in Llewellyn's account that make Kensal House happen: the architect and architecture as an intervention in inhabited space, a pre-Jacobs form of building event by way of a particular non-architectural accompaniment to the building, and

²² An earlier article by Llewellyn (2003) also discusses Kensal House, but his purpose in this case is to provide a methodological argument for his approach, so I will discuss it in the following chapter.

²³ Completed in 1937 by E. Maxwell Fry with Elizabeth Denby in Ladbroke Grove (London), Kensal House was a very early social housing scheme. Whilst there were already innovative modernist apartment blocks in Britain, Kensal House was among the first to be built as social housing, commissioned and financed by the Gas Light and Coke Company and intended for re-housed slum dwellers from West London. The building incorporated a number of innovative and experimental features in an attempt to deliver beneficial effects to the inhabitants, for details on which see Llewellyn, 2004.

the productive processes of inhabitation which Llewellyn is keen to emphasise in terms he borrows from Lees (2001):

“The simplistic dichotomy of production and consumption is not effective in enabling an understanding of the intricate processes of adaptation and possession that takes place in homes.” (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 229)

Kensal House was understood to work in two ways. In the first place it was a new material treatment of domestic life, different and superior to the unhealthy and overcrowded homes that were common to that area (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 231-233). It also worked as an event, a tended-to edifice in which there were handbooks, guidelines, and rules (such as approved colour schemes and allotted times for hanging out washing) (Ibid: 238-240). The latter, in the manner of an event, was outright didactic and formed of instructions and the policing of those instructions. The former, by contrast, was a discreet architectural happening by way of hinting, prodding, and nudging people by architectonic means to behave in certain ways (that were afforded by the architectural articulation of shapes, surfaces, volumes, and openings, etc.). The architect, E. Maxwell Fry, designed east-facing bedrooms for each flat and zoned the functional elements (the kitchen, bathroom, and balcony) together in a “working unit”, along with spaces outside the flats where people would be routed together and (perhaps) socialise (Ibid: 233-235). The kitchens in the flats are particularly interesting for Llewellyn (to the extent that he wrote a separate paper about them, see Llewellyn 2004b): their “existenzminimum” design was purposefully compact, reducing journeying between appliances and maximising the efficiency of food preparation (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 234-235 and Llewellyn, 2004(b): 46-48). What Llewellyn discusses in this case is architecture as the planned exposure to or availability of effective things (like sunlight, social contact, and efficient movement) and the planned deflection of unwanted outcomes (like isolation, understood as a possible outcome of living in flats and corrected by routing residents through circulation spaces where they would more likely to interact).

The happening of Kensal House, however, is not just an architectural incursion. The second member of the design team, Elizabeth Denby (a “housing consultant”) added herself to the building’s event as a manager, intervening in the everyday lives of Kensal House and coaxing behaviour from the residents like an amplifier for Fry’s architectonic

nudges (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 235-236)²⁴. The handbooks, colour schemes, and so forth disciplined the ongoing experience of the building, and she also delivered her influence by way of social institutions within the complex like the Feather's Club (the social club at Kensal House) and the nursery, with its doses of sunlight, cod liver oil and milk: "Denby had great eugenic and moral faith in the process of putting the children of the slum-ridden North Kensington district through this nursery" (Ibid: 236).

The theoretical aspect of Llewellyn's approach is provided by Lefebvre's "representations of space" (i.e. space that has been designed) and "representational space" (i.e. that produced in the hearth-like environment of everyday life) (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 230 after Lefebvre 1991, 1996). Between these two spaces Llewellyn sees an opportunity to breach the dichotomy of production and consumption and investigate how inhabitants can take possession of the ongoing production of their homes from the way they understand and materially treat the space (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 229). Fry and Denby sought to use both the architecture and event of Kensal House to create feelings and behaviours that were appropriate, which Llewellyn counters with accounts of how residents have resisted this imposed cache of appropriate materialities by producing their own ways of living there, based on their own understandings of what was "appropriate" (Ibid: 241). This is especially true of the kitchen:

"Class-based identities became the defining factor in using this room. People were aware of the "appropriate" way to use the space, but felt that their whole identity as working class did not fit with the way these rooms had been designed, and they had to find the "right way of doing things", completely contrary to the intentions of the architects". (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 241)

This meant contriving ways to both cook and eat in the kitchen, even if the design was supposed to deflect that possibility and nudge residents towards the dining/living area (which most residents habitually kept "for best"). Interestingly, whilst the kitchens were seen by some residents as impinging on their preferences, the approved colour schemes, despite being more overtly didactic, were often favoured and accepted. The "gravy" brown and beige shades of most working class homes seemed to be dismal reminders, provided by

²⁴ Although Denby was also involved in the "nudging" as she had been principally responsible for the layout of the *existenzminimum* kitchens (Llewellyn 2004a p.234-235)

the landlords, of their tenants inferior status, whereas the pastel shades of the approved colour scheme made residents feel more worthy and appreciated with the suggestion that their class didn't have to evoke the dour (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 243).

Llewellyn's account is possibly the most complete in my review in terms of how a building happens, combining architecture, building events, and inhabitation to tell the story of Kensal House in a way that shows how its architecture sometimes finds a way to work, and on other occasions does not. This is the start of the transition, in terms of my unfurling question, between "happen" and "within". Imrie (2004) Crang (2000) and Gruffudd (1995, 2001) all detail various ways in which architectural happening occurs forwards, towards and ultimately "within" the lived and experienced building. The difference is that Bryden (2004) and Llewellyn (2004) actually follow such happenings as they are routed within to account for the ways they might work or fail. All six of these readings work to some extent to cross the divide between "happen" and "within", but none of them collapse the distinction as profoundly as Kraftl and Adey (2008). For them, the happening of the building is specific and directional: the building is understood as happening to people, although not in terms of direct correspondence (Ibid: 213-214). Instead, the building changes the possibilities that inhabitants may experience by laying those possibilities (or "virtualising" them) in the path of their encounters with it. As something happening, architecture is again understood as a temporal act extending forward from the point of its design and making provisions in its future for certain affects to arise:

"Architectural design operates via discourse and practice, materiality and immateriality, ephemerality, and stasis to channel, preclude, and evoke particular affects. In phenomenological terms, this observation renders a building with affective and even limited agential power" (Ibid: 226-227)

The happening of architecture and its ability to do something intended of it is one of generating provisions for possibilities and likelihoods: the experience of an inhabitant cannot be crafted directly by architectural means, it must be virtualised as affects that might happen. But it's important to note that this process of virtualising possibilities is also available to the inhabitant. The inhabitant does not "experience" in some basic receptive way, but in a creative way, and the happening of the building (in accordance with the logic of affect) is as contingent on bodily inhabitation as it is a product of design. Capacity is not

the achievement of architects alone (Ibid: 216-224).

Unfurling “within”:

Shared or negotiated capacity may not seem like a particularly original point, given that it is made by both Llewellyn (2004) and Bryden (2004), but the difference becomes evident in Kraftl and Adey’s second case study, the prayer room at Liverpool John Lennon Airport (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 221-224). In this case, the architectural is something practiced by the Chaplain with strategies that instate or configure affective capacities into that space. The affects that she hopes for are those of peace and tranquility “by slowing down the environment in contrast to the outside hustle and bustle of the terminal” (Ibid: 224). How this actually happens is through the creation of a material anti-terminal, clearly demarcated from the terminal itself, softly lit and softly furnished with cues that suggest calmness and persistence, such as the inclusion of books: “Although the books had an obvious textual meaning to them, it was the *practice* of reading that the chaplain wanted the room to afford” (Ibid: 223). The affects of tranquility and peace were hoped for as a relational outcome of engaging with these various arranged materialities, both in themselves as inviting those affects, and by comparison with the turbulent terminal outside. “The affective atmosphere was changed through the room’s relationship (comparison) with the outside, the creation and maintenance of boundaries, and, most important, the micromanagement of the materials that made the room” (Ibid: 224).

The difference, as shown in this example, is that Kraftl and Adey’s architecture is pan-architectural: it is not merely multi-site and multi-origin. It is a property, and its availability as a property allows it to be drawn upon by inhabitants and users of buildings as well as architects and those involved in what we might traditionally understand as design: architecture in this sense is ostensibly the equal property of “within” (understood as inhabitation) as it is “happen” (understood as architects and architectural practice) and it can be practiced by the Chaplain at Liverpool John Lennon Airport *and* a qualified architect like Christopher Day at Nant-y-Cwm with equal efficacy:

“The design and manipulation of affects requires a tremendous amount of work that occurs beyond formal design processes, but as part of what we might

term everyday experience once a building has been completed.” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 219-220).

What Kraftl and Adey have achieved here is not merely resistance from within inhabitation. It is the mass architecturalisation of inhabitation, which swiftly collapses the distinction between “happen” and “within”. In their haptic and performative use of a building, inhabitants can lay out certain constellations of affects for themselves. The teachers at Nant-y-Cwm believe they can virtualise a specified and limited number of “affective potentials” (especially on a theme of “homeliness”) by micro-managing what materials are available and how they are arranged: these constructions are intended to constrain the huge potential field of affects by constraining the human and non-human encounter that would actualise them (Ibid: 220). In this case, it allowed for a non-didactic style of teaching in which the material environment, set up to “gesture” towards homely encounters, was designed to deliver a cache of affects in a gestured relation to particular and proper bodily postures:

“As we saw in our case studies, the organisation and choreography of materials and bodies creates a stubbornness or persistence of affect, to invoke simultaneously repetitive (a school curriculum, or one reader after another in the Prayer Room) and iterative senses of space, and dwelling, simultaneously to create senses of stability and safety [*sic*]. Affect is not merely a random swirling of potential coming to rest at one moment.” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 227)

This is the sort of account that defines what “within” means: it refers to the territory of inhabitation and asks questions about how powerful it might be and what it might mean for buildings. If architecture is to happen within someone’s experience, does that mean that a person will create a space within their experience and draw architecture into it, or does it mean that architecture has a certain weight of momentum with which it forces its way into our experiences? Or does it perhaps mean that it happens because it’s available as a creative use of space to just about anybody (Kraftl and Adey, 2008)? In terms of “membership” I want to see what the architect’s prefigured undertakings mean for an inhabitant-user’s experience and the nature of their membership and, conversely, what using or inhabiting a building does to the performances a building was designed to undertake and what impositions it makes on the architects’ membership. My research agenda, insofar as I’ve

discussed it, suggests that architecture – specifically an architect’s approach to building design – can be thought of as having momentum of a *sabot*²⁵ in that it projects, along with its form, cues for the manner of its experience. Unfurling “within” marks the start of a balancing act for me in which the inhabitant (or user) of a building becomes more prominent. In a way, this is a preamble to the unfurling of “experiences”, if you understand this term as encompassing both the encounters that happen to us (or are engineered for us) and the encounters we engineer for ourselves. This sort of question, of a person’s ability to receive, resist, or create and their agency therein, and of the building’s ability to project itself forcefully or inadequately, or indeed the possibility that the two actually merge into a single property, characterises my understanding of “within”. Such questions will be revisited regularly in the empirical chapters to follow.

A number of the readings I’ve analysed here amplify the idea of within-ness through the lens of inhabitation, and specifically, the idea that the inhabitation of a building can encompass or perhaps eclipse the architectural. In this case inhabitation is understood as a powerful body of acts and meanings which use architecture as a medium to flourish. How architecture matters and the degree to which it can do anything (i.e. its membership) is reliant on being drawn within this more powerful body, so it becomes a subsumed thing. This can be said of Lees’ (2001) work: her processural outlook recognises architecture as something around which people can construct formative discourses, or engage in formative performances. These profound capacities for consumption seem to remain latent until something (like architecture, either existing or proposed) can be drawn into (within) them. Doing so activates the substantial productive possibilities of consumption; in fact, these possibilities seem so substantial that they override and quash the possibilities of architecture. Existing within, the building becomes bland, docile and factual: the fact of its there-ness or proposed there-ness allows consumptions to coalesce around it in a way that seems almost self-sustaining: only at a minimal level does the building matter from such a position, and only at a minimal trigger-like level is the inhabitant/user’s experience stimulated by the architecture.

Lees is not the only author who makes a consumable out of architecture. In Steven Cooke and Lloyd Jenkins’ (2001) *Discourses of regeneration in early twentieth-century Britain* the building is

²⁵ A type of projectile munition whereby a hardened “slug” is encased in a pointed metal sleeve. On impact, the sleeve splits an armoured surface and the momentum of the slug causes it to either carry on through the sleeve, or else it acts like a hammer and shunts the whole sabot forward. Commonly used in tank and anti-tank warfare.

understood in terms of the space that has been made for it within certain social and cultural discourses, and into which the building is imported in the belief that it can perform a certain function and address a certain problem. Like Lees, the building in question is subordinate in terms of the way it happens: it is essentially waiting to be drawn into the discourses that will put it to work. Unlike Lees the building is actively subordinate: it is credited with having some effect, rather than being a docile platform for inhabitation. In this case the building in question is the former Bethlem Royal Hospital for the mentally ill (which now houses the Imperial War Museum). The hospital vacated the building in 1930 in a response to then-current (if unfounded) ideas about the restorative qualities of pastorally located recreation and the tarnished image of mental healthcare (which had become associated with images of gloomy dungeon-like buildings) (Cooke and Jenkins, 2001: 382-384). Lord Rothmere, the building's owner, hoped to demolish it and create a park so that the people of Southwark could enjoy the same rejuvenating recreational opportunities (Ibid: 386). This appeal to bodily health clashed with the interests of the Imperial War Museum, then located in South Kensington, which was seeking new premises. Supporters argued that the museum was important in explaining (and possibly mythologising) the horrors of war to the nation in the cause of generating national (British) unity through education (Ibid: 385).

Cooke and Jenkins tell an interesting story of the way the vacant buildings were caught between competing discourses of physical health, mental health, and education for nationalist purposes. Eventually, the wings of the building were demolished to make room for parkland, and the central portico and dome were retained for the museum, so that the site was geared to reform both body and mind (Cooke and Jenkins, 2001: 387-388). In this case, "within" is not understood at the individual scale, but at a broader social level, and the consumption of the building is strictly pre-defined rather than allowed to generate in its own direction. McNeill and Tewdwr-Jones (2003) don't mince their words in this respect: architectural projects are "tools" used as a means to an end by political and national interests who provide a cache of meanings which are delegated to or enforced into its form.

Architecture, Banal Nationalism, and Re-territorialisation tells the story of how one particular building was conceived to be imported into discourses about nation and national identity in a supra-national EU context and used to perform a preferred version of nationhood on a

global stage – the “architectural mega-project” (McNeill and Tewdwr-Jones, 2003: 738-739). Interestingly, those same discourses meant that it was never built: Cardiff Bay Opera House was designed by Zaha Hadid²⁶ in 1992, but from its inception the idea of the building was dragged between different class-based interpretations of what Welshness ought to be. Hadid’s design was criticised on its own terms, but fundamentally it was also understood to be competing for funding with the (also proposed) Millennium Stadium (Ibid: 741). This understanding opened up class arguments, and as an architectural frontispiece for the nation the Opera House was seen as avant-garde, elitist, and Anglo-centric, whereas the stadium to which it was opposed connected to the world through a more genuine and grounded version of Welshness (Ibid: 742-743)

Between Lees, Cooke and Jenkins, and McNeill and Tewdwr-Jones is a gradually escalating presence of the building, even if it remains stubbornly subordinate to the individuals or social/cultural/national discourses that apprehend and make use of it. Llewellyn’s idea of “within” achieves a more balanced architectural presence that does not, as Lees does, imply that architecture is a no more than a materially articulated array of opportunities for users to apprehend. Part of this is down to his use of Lefebvre’s (1991, 1996) dual distinction of representations of space and representational space (Llewellyn, 2004(a): 230) and the way he sets Lefebvre up to be (slightly) demolished²⁷ in the course of his argument by accounting for the way that these two sites are not actually separate and unitary, but connected in either direction: design and inhabitation do not only have production in common: they are implicated and combined with one another by certain actions and processes (Ibid: 245). These include the continuing presence of Elizabeth Denby at Kensal House in a management capacity, and Maxwell Fry’s efforts to consult the residents (making them feel included), which serve to draw representations of space and representational spaces into one another (Ibid). At Kensal House, Lefebvre’s dualism of production is so collapsed, and in doing so it offers Llewellyn a way to account for how the design team crossed from representations of space to representational space to produce

²⁶ Hadid is a much noted architect who Jonathan Glancey, writing in 2006, described as: “still the world’s only major woman architect, by which I mean an architect who will go down in the history books” (Glancey, 2006). Glancey’s interview is a useful starting point for details of Hadid’s approach and style. Glancey later described the plans for Hadid’s *MAXXI* – the National Museum for the 21st Century Arts (Rome) as “like a surreal motorway intersection imagined by JG Ballard, or a wiring diagram plotted for the palace of esoteric giants”, and on visiting the near-completed building suggested that; “The walls of Hadid’s new museum, unveiled to the public this month, not only curve but change in depth as they do so. There are moments where walls become floors and even threaten to become ceilings, diving and curving like bobsleigh tracks. (When I went there last week, Hadid told me she wanted the building’s concrete curves to “unwind like a ribbon in space”.)” (Glancey, 2009).

²⁷ “Slightly” because Llewellyn still relies upon Lefebvre’s breach of the dichotomy between production and consumption.

certain outcomes within a resident's experience, and how residents produced their own architectural happenings to counter those design efforts they found wanting, whilst reproducing those that worked for them (Ibid: 245-246). Neither design nor inhabitation were securely contained in representations of space or representational space respectively. Compared with Lees' all-powerful within, Llewellyn understands that the architect and the design actually matter and can do something, both in architectonic terms of shapes, surfaces, and volumes, and in terms of building events (namely Elizabeth Denby's personal incursions, which is perhaps the key site where Lefebvre's dualism is demolished). Inhabitants can also dip into these same possibilities.

Such possibilities also feature in Bryden's account, which includes both the way a *haveli* is supposed to happen, and how it actually happens in terms of its inhabitation. She differs with Llewellyn in that the possibilities of successful architectural incursions (or creative consumptions) are afforded by either by shared knowledges or accidents of charm. By design, the *haveli* is a fundamentally gendered building with spaces that segregate men and women and spaces that manage their interactions. This strict spatiality is apprehended within the sphere of inhabitation and actually achieves this effect. Most of the female residents like the way it affords them privacy without enclosure (latticed windows allow them to see whilst they remain unseen) (Bryden, 2004: 34). As for the *haveli's* cosmological connections, Bryden points out that "All the inhabitants of the *haveli* has some knowledge of *Vastu* and its relation to the organisation of domestic space. This knowledge has been gleaned from books, pamphlets [...], television pundits, articles in the press, and 'current debate'" (Ibid: 35). In short, the spiritual logic of the *vastu* on which the *haveli* is based has been reiterated, and this reiteration has maintained a plausible environment for the *haveli* to carry on working as a set of architectonically mediated spiritual instructions. The continuation of the occupant's Hindu beliefs generally, and of the *vastu* specifically, allow for the continued plausibility of the *haveli* (Ibid: 36). It is worth noting, however, that this plausibility is something that is essentially gifted to the *haveli* by the occupants and their cultural context. Technically, it is entirely within their power to annull that plausibility by will of choice, and in this sense Bryden, like Lees (2001), allows for the possibility that the happening of architecture can be controlled entirely from within its inhabitation. As it stands, the plausibility is still intact, but the occupants have changed its extent. The wife of the owner has moved her bedroom from a female to a male area, and western style bathrooms have been retrofitted (Bryden, 2004: 37). Nonetheless, "Although some

scepticism is displayed, on the whole *vastu* is viewed by the families as important for the health of both the domestic space and the body, and for bringing peace and prosperity to the household” (Ibid: 36).

The accounts of Llewellyn and Bryden return me to the challenging pan-architecture of Kraftl and Adey (2008) because both Llewellyn and Bryden allow for a similar possibility in their work. When Llewellyn collapses Lefebvre’s dualism he allows everyday inhabitation access to the processes of design, and the ability of the *haveli* to reiterate the *vastu* could be interpreted as a voluntary affordance of the residents. In both cases, equalising the power between architecture and inhabitation might deliver full control over architectural plausibility to the inhabitants (if they wanted it). Kraftl and Adey’s (2008) approach to “within” and the way they collapse the distinction between “within” and “happen” also implies this possibility (given that their abilities match that of the architect), along with an interesting and possibly unintended side effect. On one hand they understand architecture as a condensing and contracting sort of happening that creates a limited affectual outcome from a mass of virtual potential (Ibid: 215). But they also understand architecture as a widely available property which can be applied to a material environment by anyone, suggesting the unlimited availability of the possibility to restrain affect. In this way, although they foreclose the multiplying encounter, they open another potential for multiplication as architecture’s mass availability. On the face of it, this mirrors Lees’ multiplication (of possibility) at the point of inhabitation, but wielded in different theoretical terms and with a much heavier emphasis on materiality and material encounters.

The use of books in the prayer room as part of affectual micromanagement caught my attention (Kraftl and Adey, 2003: 223). Their connotations of a leisurely and quiet passage of time are part of an extended materiality which goes beyond the volumetric, tactile and spatial and connects to an assumed body of meanings that books have prior to the encounter and which work to limit the affective potentials that might emerge with an encountering body. It’s important to note that in both of Kraftl and Adey’s case studies the materiality they discuss happens as a combination of material facts and material stories. This suggests to me that the material form with which architecture happens is designed (or in Kraftl and Adey’s terms, “design(ated)”) from an understanding that the encounter between architectural materiality and inhabitants’ bodies is foretold before it actually happens. The design of forms and volumes (like Nant-y-Cwm’s cubby holes) and the

arrangement of materialities (like the Prayer Room's books) draws upon how those things have been commonly, normally, habitually, or properly apprehended by people before, and uses that as a basis for how those things will be apprehended again. It is, in fact, a reversed virtuality of precedent, rather than possibility. This is my understanding of what Kraftl and Adey refer to as "gesturing" and its how I understand their architectural concept, in material terms, as extending it's happening to the territory which I would characterise as "within". Reversed virtuality bestows architecture with a degree of currency with which to "buy" some influence over the way people behave in architectural settings, and it allows a degree of control over both sides of the encounter. The gesturing material form is at risk of becoming a shadowy corner of another black box.

It's worth noting that a number of readings here do not really have a concept that correlates with my idea of "within". Unlike Lees (2001), Llewellyn (2004), Bryden (2004), and Kraftl and Adey (2008) they do not ask how people weave architecture into their lives, or how it occurs to them, either because it is outside their remit, or because they assume that architecture happens to people much as it was supposed to happen. Both Imrie (2003) and Crang (2000), for instance, understand "within" in terms of "happen": their accounts discuss how architects reason, imagine, or assume that people and spaces operate in the hope that their buildings can be made to correlate: the prefiguring of within (such as what the body or the folding of space might mean for a building) is part of the way architecture happens and is a way of temporally extending "happen" to "within", but their remit does not extend to investigating the actual inhabitation that follows their (hopefully) correlating intervention within. In a similar vein, those articles that rely on an idea of connectedness or networks do not attend to people directly: whilst Jenkins (2002) and Jacobs (2006) both include people, their potential productivity as inhabitants of architecture is effaced (although for Jacobs they are differently productive as instigators of building events, which I discuss in the next section).

At the start of the previous section I described my basic question as "initially" bipartite: "How does architecture happen" and "within people's experiences". From my unfurling of the left half of the question I have arrived at a far more specific question that I want this thesis to address. I want to understand the way an architect occupies the conical space at the start of a building's life (granted to them by an enhanced membership) in terms of designing not only a performing building in principle, but a performance with momentum,

designed to carry on performing in the building's future and so stretching the architect's membership from the understanding that in future realities there exists a capacity to be performed to or upon. This may owe less to understanding (i.e. reasoning or qualification) than it does to assumption. The core of my research has been to understand these processes of temporal projection, and the architectural geography literature has taken a passing glance at this idea by way of Bryden (2004), Crang (2000), Gruffudd (1995, 2001), Imrie (2003), and Llewellyn (2004a). For a number of reasons I think that architectural temporality deserves more than a passing glance or implicit treatment. The three architects I've studied didn't just have ideas: they have strategies for making these ideas persist and reiterate themselves, not just by way of a design vocabulary, but by crafting incursions into environments that they've tried to understand the morphology of in advance in such terms as (for instance) new spatial realities (Crang, 2000), bodily possibilities (Imrie, 2003), spirituality (Bryden, 2004 and Gruffudd, 1995), availabilities (Gruffudd, 2001) or unfurling modernisms (Llewellyn, 2004(a), also Gruffudd, 1995; 2001).

The forward temporal projection of architecture implies the future experience of the people who live or work there, and this is the second primary site of my research. By specifying as much, I do not wish to provide a simple argument as to whether the architecture "works". By attending to inhabitants and their experiences of a building I am specifically interested in how they have constructed their membership and what, if anything, they credit the architecture with. In short, this is an exercise in bi-directional plausibility, the extent to which inhabitants think it is plausible to be affected by architecture, and their ability to close off plausibilities.

Unfurling "people" and introducing "experiences":

As a textual device "unfurling" is starting to lose its elegance. Once unfurled, it becomes apparent that each individual word in my furled question merges into the next, and now that I'm at the end of the unfurling, I find that the people and how they matter has already been implied. So I suppose that my unfurling metaphor is another form of propellant: it's useful while it lasts, but furled within it are a series of problems that necessitate its end. The main problem I face now is that if the question were allowed to unfurl to its full span there would be too much to cover: being so tightly furled in the first instance occludes the all important limitations. I've already specified some of these, but I have yet to specify a very

obvious one: asking how architecture happens within people's experiences is not the start of an impossible task of mapping out the full experience of a person – essentially, their life – and then working out what sort of place or role architecture might occupy there. But at the same time my work is about what architecture does, or can do, within the wider contexts of their lives. The solution to this problem of scale is methodological, discussed in more detail in chapter two for which I have saved the term “experiences”. But briefly summarised, my approach has been to start with the architecture in their wider experiences. Hence my wording of the furlled question, of architecture happening within people's experiences (as opposed to people's experience of architecture).

An important point to make about people in terms of my research is that we live in a legacy landscape, and I want to address the fact that only limited portions of our surroundings are either new or recent. In the case of buildings, most of our surroundings are older than we are, a point I made at the start of the chapter. This observation is important because the buildings I have researched were all completed between 1889 and 1939, and doubly important because I am interviewing current residents and users, rather than the original clients. From the outset I did not want to look at recent architecture that was inhabited by the people who commissioned it because I don't believe it's pertinent to the current condition of occupying a building in the UK today. Almost everybody inhabits architecture without being the client of an architect, and it's the reality of this gap I want to apprehend²⁸. This has substantial ramifications for my research agenda because the original client would have straddled “happen” and “within” in a very different, possibly more fundamental way. In terms of my basic question, it would certainly undermine all possibility of it being bipartite, initially or otherwise. It might also undermine part of Kraftl and Adey's pan-architectural conception. In both of their case studies, blurred accounts of architects, clients, and inhabitants are deployed to fulfil their argument. In fact, in the case of Nant-y-Cwm (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 216-221), the parents were actually volunteer labourers during the construction of the kindergarten. It causes me to wonder how much pan-architecture owes to these proximities: if the conical space at the start of the building includes the architect, client, and inhabitant (possibly as one person in the case of the airport prayer room (Ibid: 221-224)) then the continuing story of the building would probably be pan-architectural, but I'm not sure that pan-architecture would survive the common discontinuity that I've identified. My approach, then, in terms of inhabitants, is

²² See footnote 1.

that the productive inhabitation of architecture is something different from the productive inhabitation of the architect's conical space, and that difference is the result of the gap.

It is for this same reason that I am interested in the prefiguring and projecting acts or architectural temporality. If the building was always inhabited in the productively diffuse way that Kraftl and Adey outline (and in an unbroken continuum between designer and inhabitant) then I can see the possibility of inhabitants being able to wield profound architectural possibilities, but the reality of the situation is different and most often marked by change and disjunction – a gap. The existence of that gap justifies a study of architectural temporality as a key facet of contemporary architectural reality. This is not a study that is limited to architectonics and architect's codified beliefs and understandings. Crossing the gap may also invoke temporal building events (Jacobs 2006 p.11), non-architectural others that serve to connect the present with the past and support that projection (such as publications, archival data, and other sources of information).

I would also suggest that recent architectural geography may have treated its anti-architecture a little too zealously when it comes to people. In recoiling from work like Goss (1988) and Knox (1987) and their understandings of symbolical and lexical architectures with cerebral appeal, we may have fashioned an individual who injects no thought into his/her architectural experience. With the exception of Bryden (2004) architectural geography addresses the experiencing inhabitant as a primarily sensual, pragmatic, and non-contemplative feeling unit. The books in Liverpool John Lennon Airport's prayer room also reveal this nicely and suggest how Kraftl and Adey (2008) understand how architecture happens to the inhabitant: it can deploy affects that can induce, at best, a contemplative state (as the prayer room is understood to and as the books connote), but it cannot induce specific contemplations. The way buildings "make a difference to their inhabitants" (Ibid: 213) is by way of non-contemplative sensation-like feelings because architecture works in a bodily, rather than a cerebral way. This is something Kraftl and Adey take from more general conceptions of affect and the material turn (Ibid: 214). But it is not something that I feel obliged to base my work around, especially bearing in mind the insights of Bryden (2004). My research at both the architectural and inhabitation sites has been to allow for the possibility that one or both may have a style of engagement that is at least partially based in consideration.

The most powerful people in this account have been those discoursing around or performing in the *ersatz colosseum* (Lees, 2001). Lees' interpretation of the *ersatz colosseum* is highly and selectively peopled, and it is the manner of the peopling, rather than the principle, that is particularly troublesome for me. Her *ethnographies of use* suggest that people in the act of consumption are powerful enough to override architecture and its cues for practice or experience. People are effectively non-susceptible to architecture: they can see right through it, and I mean this in an almost literal way. If Jenkins conceived of existing accounts of architecture in geography as a "black box" (Jenkins, 2002: 225) then Lees' architecture has transparent properties. If it could be thought of as a box, then whatever occupies it shows through clearly and unaffected as though that box were Tupperware, displaying human capabilities and preserving their maximum possibilities rather than arbitrating them. But this isn't entirely fair, because the last thing Lees understands by the term architecture (and in the way it happens within) is as a box. If the relative transparency of the building (and architect) is a flaw in her work, then her considerable strength has been to un-box the building from its architectonic limits and understand it as something always happening during which capacities, or opportunities, open up and allow productive forms of inhabitation to take place. In doing so, she re-situates both the building and architectural practices into a porous story: a trajectory of events and openings that starts well before the building's inception and continues well beyond its completion. Lees' most substantial and important contribution to architectural geography has been this expansion of scope in terms of a building's multi-site and multi-origin occurrence, and many of the post-2001 architectural geographies reviewed here have availed themselves of that principle, especially in attending to the productive possibilities of inhabitation (as with Bryden, 2004; Llewellyn 2004a and Kraftl and Adey 2008).

Conversely, a number of architectural geographies understand the individual person as mediated and connected. Such is true of Jenkins (2002). People are not absent in his architectural conception, but they are not treated with particularity. Instead they are necessarily allied with things that, together, are able to produce formations like buildings. In the networks he envisages, people are not treated independently of anything else, human or non-human, and the "negotiations" (Ibid: 230) that allow formations like buildings to arise gives equal promise to human motivation and non-human action, as in the case of no.11's sewerage connection which requires both in order to happen. Sewage is, after all, a human product, and the idea of sewerage is our human and non-human idea/assemblage

for dealing with it, but for that idea to be realised requires a critical mass of conditions, materials, processes, and knowledges to come together. This is not simply a matter of stating that humans and non-humans are equal: the important point in terms of architecture is how relationality undermines the possibility of non-humans and humans being separate.

Ostensibly, Jacobs lauds the approaches that Jenkins uses to understand buildings, and this includes the equalisation of human users and non-human materialities in terms of capacity and influence. But her first case study suggests to me that some people are more equal than non-human others. Singapore's Housing Development Board (HDB) enthusiastically deployed highrise residential blocks as part of what Jacobs interprets as a "rage for modernity" (Jacobs, 2006: 14-15), but the increased incidence of suicides from the upper storeys (the "highrise leap") started to undermine its position as a key form of modernisation and modern living. This undermining was inflamed by a study of behavioural psychology which determined that the new residential environments were the cause. The HDB sought to connect something to the highrise to reinforce its validity, and the answer came by way of another study which understood that the highrise leap was not born out of any misery caused by the highrise: rather, it facilitated it by accident of its height (Ibid: 14-17). This new connection to the Singaporean highrise and the good work that it did became a popular fallback for the HDB:

"Indeed, the history of highrise housing provision in Singapore is heavily populated with social scientific accounts of highrise quality of life, and for many years the HDB sponsored much of this scholarship itself in the name of "improvement" and "innovation". As such, this scholarship, even when critical, often came to be incorporated in the systems that not only sustained but ultimately enlarged highrise housing, such that today Singapore leads the way internationally in what is now called 'supertall living'". (Jacobs, 2006: .17)

What interests me here is the way that these connections allow people to deploy, as part of a larger building event, intentional and performative discourses that affect a stabilisation of the event into a formation which has been pre-designed, and which that performative discourse was intended to achieve. Although the content of the HDB is both human and non-human, the intention behind and composition of that connection (i.e. the "work") is

specifically human. I have already mentioned that Jacobs' work is more attuned to the possibilities of composing relational formations than Jenkins, but in both his example of no.11's sewerage connection and Jacobs' second example of Ronan Point, I get the sense that non-human or non-architectural others are not equal in their relation, but subordinate. A building may work as a human and non-human assemblage of connections, but the creativity of people seems to provide the gravity that draws and holds the non-human together and specifies the manner of its human interface.

This creative gravity is the principal focus of my research. In the following chapter, I outline a methodology which expands on these themes.

2.

Methodology: Unfurling “experiences”.

In the previous chapter I unfurled the architectural geography literatures, and some related literatures, around the question *how does architecture happen within peoples' experiences?* That unpacking expanded both my research question and discussed the disciplinary terrain in which I will address that question. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how I have sought to reconcile my position within the current disciplinary landscape with the “other” terrains I attend to in chapters three, four and five. These “other”²⁹ terrains are, in the first instance, the hopes that the original architects had for the agency that their buildings could effect, and their understandings of what was needed to secure that agency was present in the inhabitation of the building thereafter. The second “other” terrain refers to the experiences that current inhabitants have of those buildings and what they are (or, indeed, are not) plausibly articulating in terms of their inhabitations. In attending to these I aim to shed light on how the buildings studied are understood as able to contain and reiterate the architect’s hopes, or (less specifically) how they are perceived as places laden with intention. Further, the thesis explores how those hopeful intentions impose upon or, alternatively (and less deterministically) appeal to the indulgence of the current experience of inhabitants. To formulate architectures that would alter people’s behaviours, the three architects I study here rationalised, and believed in particular formulations of, what inhabitants would be like in terms of what could appeal to them, or what they were susceptible to. The reconciliation I intend to achieve with this chapter is to denote what my particular attending of these terrains (the architects’ intentions and the inhabitants’ experiences) means in terms of the insights I can reasonably gain from my position, as framed in the literatures I discussed in the preceding chapter. Put another way, when gripped (metaphorically speaking) what insights can be squeezed from these terrains, and how will those insights be affected by the way in which I grip? From the outset, the terms “attendance” and “grip” denote my understanding that my work as a researcher is implicated in the field, and I am not external to or separate from the things and people I research (and this reflects the largely taken-for-granted understanding in and beyond cultural geography that research implicates researchers into their fields and their findings).

²⁹ I return to the term “other” shortly in my discussion of Douglas Ezzy’s performed interview presences (Ezzy, 2010).

My research, and the methodology it utilises, attended the terrains I'm interested in and, because I was "there" in various different ways, those terrains were modified by my presence and interested attendance. That modifying precedes, but was equally pre-empted by the way I've encapsulated those terrains in my particular understandings and analyses (reflecting particular interests and aims) in order to write this thesis. The end result is a presented version that I've altered through my particular attending of it, before distilling it into particular salient themes, and encapsulating it in a new context of my understandings and analyses. As such, there are at least three stages of alteration and removal from whatever the "original" was before my encounter with it (although the originality of these terrains prior to my attendances, perhaps especially the archive collections I've used, merit further discussion which I will proceed to in the following sections).

In essence, and in the spirit of the preceding chapter, I am unfurling *experiences* from the question *how does architecture happen within people's experiences?* I seek to examine through this exploration not only what those experiences – designed or inhabited – are like, but what they will be like once they've been through the acts of being researched. For this particular unfurling it may be useful to think of *experiences* through a three-strand heuristic. The first and third strands are, respectively, the building as a project (i.e. the architect's hopes and the devices to articulate how the building should be experienced) and the building as an environment (i.e. the currently inhabited building and the nature of its experience among users). Between the first and third strand is a second strand, the building as a presence. This second strand emerges from my research into the first and third strand, that is to say, the way the building is constituted between how it is currently experienced and how was intended to be experienced. To both the first and the third strands of this heuristic, methodologies are attached which suggest the degree to which I can attend these realities and what my engineered presence ("squeezing") in or adjacent to them means for the resulting insights. Much of the rest of this chapter is dedicated to the discussion of these two strands. I look to the methodologies of the first and third strands in this heuristic to generate (not transcribe) insights that tell us something about what is actually there, present and happening at the building – the second strand – from these two productive sites. Because of this, the first and third strands of my methodological heuristic share the work of the second which has, as such, no methodology for its direct discussion, but is instead illuminated from either side and understood as an outcome of considered, unconsidered,

but ultimately creative acts of plausibility, though I do not aim to treat “creative” synonymously with “imagined”.

There are two principal sources (or, following my terminology in the preceding paragraph, “sites”) that are attached to the first and third strands in my methodological heuristic. The first of these is archival. In order to generate insights about how my three architects hoped to design buildings for the production of particular experiences, I have undertaken substantial archival research from their personal papers and publications in which they wrote about and developed understandings of these efforts and reasoned on (or believed in) their plausibility. The second source/site, attached to the third strand, is that of in-depth interviews with some of the people who currently work in, inhabit, or otherwise use buildings designed by my three architects. My interviews with them are intended to produce their accounts of the building’s plausibility and to understand how the original design intentions are noticed and interrogated, or else taken for granted and ignored (and points between), or as the case may be, created anew by a thinking and analytical kind of inhabitation that builds new causes for the forms among which inhabitants dwell. The second strand, the presence of the building is, as I discuss above, an outcome from between which, in attending to the first and third strands, emerges in this study as a disjuncture insofar that there is a temporal gap between the designed production of the building and its current inhabitation (discussed in the previous chapter in terms of its absence from the architectural geography literatures, in which the architectural design of the building is in some way contemporaneous with its inhabitation, excepting Bryden (2004) and, to a lesser extent, Kraftl (2009)). It also emerges across this disjuncture as a complex combination of plausibilities, some of which, as I argue below and outline in the following three chapters, may work to close this disjuncture, though it is not inevitable. The investigations I outline below dwell on what I understand to be the two principal sources that feed this context. Although there are many other aspects that feed into that complexity (such as planning, heritage, the wider architectural profession, an inhabitant’s “status” in economic and cultural terms, and so forth), I believe these can be hinted at by attending closely to my first and third methodological strands, rather than treated explicitly.

Broad methodological arguments:

Before discussing these two strands, the building as a project and the building as an environment, a number of general comments are worth making on the empirical and methodological scope of this thesis as a whole, the most obvious of which is size. This is a large project in terms of empirical scope when compared to other works of architectural geography which, as I noted in the preceding chapter, tend to investigate one or two buildings (or sites) at a time, or one or two architects. My research, in contrast, investigates seventeen different buildings by three architects producing a total of nineteen in-depth interviews, most of which comfortably exceeded an hour in length. A number of architectural geographers have undertaken more interviews, but only relative to one or a small number of buildings (for example, Kraftl, 2006; 2009). My purpose in expanding this empirical scope stems from my understanding that architecture can mean and do various things, a possibility which is ruled out by studies of a comparatively narrow scope which may, inadvertently, produce accounts of commonality, or else accounts of similarities and differences between two alternatives, but not accounts of variety. My intention is to outline and, to a degree, fill out, and definitely not rule out, the variety of ways architecture can be considered, rather than looking at how variously a single project is understood (as in Lees, 2001; Jenkins, 2002; Llewellyn, 2004(a); Adey, 2006; 2007, Kraftl, 2006; 2009), or how two single projects can be understood compared against each other (as in Crang, 2000; Gruffudd 2001; Jacobs, 2006). I do not wish to claim that this is a nomothetic study: the methodologies I outline in the following sections are very definitely idiographic. What I do claim is that it is possible to look closely at variety and possible to admit to variety without making general categorical statements. Moreover, looking closely does not mean looking narrowly, and it has been my aim in this thesis to sketch out the variety of how inhabitations are designed into and lived out from buildings: certainly not the full variety, but enough to demonstrate a wider variety and bring into architectural geography an idea of what alternatives are available within the terms I introduced in the previous chapter.

Each strand of the methodological heuristic I describe above has its own particular methods with which to produce insights, however, before exploring these I want to situate them within the qualitative ferment of contemporary research in human geography and the currently understood (or debated) possibilities for geographical work in the field. I undertake this overview using Crang's qualitative method *progress reports* (Crang 2002, 2003, 2005) and Davies and Dwyer's later *progress reports* (Davies and Dwyer 2007, 2009, 2010). Across these six articles, I suggest that five salient themes emerge: the *reflexivity of rigour*, the

depth of insight, the *problem of words*, the *problem of knowing*, and the *scale of subjects*. These five themes, taken together, form an overview of what is understood to be possible and reasonable of empirical research in human geography, reviewing how closely and accurately geographers can develop knowledge of the experiences and processes that interest us and what might happen to those experiences and processes because of our attentions/attending.

The first two of these five themes can be treated together because the *depth of insight*, that is to say, how close or proximate we can get to the reality of that which we research, is couched in a concern about the degree to which we are implicated in the research we undertake, including the uncomfortable possibility that we may fundamentally induce our findings, concerns addressed under the *reflexivity of rigour*. Davies and Dwyer are generally more hopeful for substantial depths of insight by reflexively closing on, for example, nature: a closeness which is lacking in “traditional deconstructive positions” that focus on how nature is imagined and imaged for given ideological ends (Davies and Dwyer, 2007: 259-260). The accounts they summarise share a common foundation in which the researcher positions themselves to be constituted by nature rather than scanning it for representational potentials in social and cultural milieu, a deliberate kind of vulnerability or porosity that shifts the power dynamic of “traditional” nature studies by admitting to, and indeed, admitting those agencies that are more than the researcher’s interpretation insofar that our individuality as researchers is de-fortified, allowing what defines us to be delegated to the influence of the field we are researching (Ibid: 260-261). A key example of this is Wylie’s work on the covalent nature of himself, his body, and the path on which he walks (Wylie, 2005). The methodological hopes for this creative de-fortification of the researcher are repeated in Davies and Dwyer’s later summary of artistic interventions as geographical research, in which geographers collaborate with artists or are otherwise involved in artistic projects (Davies and Dwyer, 2010: 91-92). This collaboration ideally takes the form of a positioning whereby “awkward questions” can be asked of geographers, along with “ontological questioning of the objects and relations of research” from a different field with different practices and protocols (Ibid: 92), and there is an assumption here, though perhaps not an unreasonable one, that whilst art isn’t academia, it shares with the academe the necessary querying of ontology, albeit from different perspectives that form a useful contrast from which to build those methodological engagements that centre on submission, particular constructions of porosity (perhaps even to the point of

vulnerability), and a resulting openness that displaces those more cartographic and translation-like impulses of representational research with an articulate “learning to be affected” (Latour, 2004: 210, in Davies and Dwyer, 2008: 400). Deliberately allowing oneself to be moved by research participants is a powerful methodological tool (or powerful absence of tools) with the potential to entrain those research participants rather than fixing them through translations into preferred academic terms (Davies and Dwyer, 2008: 400).

Crang is more critical of these possibilities, and usefully so: the various articulations of the close or “insider” information that Davies and Dwyer repeatedly hope for requires a kind of commonality between the researcher and those being researched, alongside an admittance that the research is necessarily and unavoidably co-constituted (Crang, 2003: 494-495), but closing the distance between them to the point of being an “insider” draws on an ambitious understanding of what reflexivity can do and how efficacious a researcher’s self knowledge can be, and Crang warns that “we do need to question the all-too-common assumption that there is one researcher, with an unchanging and knowable identity, and one project, with a single unwavering aim” (Crang, 2002: 652). This questions Davies and Dwyer’s apparent hope to open out a space in the researcher’s self to contain/entrain research others on their own terms. Such space-opening seems to call for a reflexivity that is not guaranteed, indeed, Crang argues, reflexivity can become supra-reflexive if this inward looking self assessment is over-amplified to produce a singular domain of anxious introspection from which we do not – cannot – look out at the field at all, only inwards toward an all-encompassing positionality where the others who we research disappear, making the researcher exceptional again (Crang, 2003: 498; 2005: 226). These are two very different accounts of what reflexivity can produce in terms of depth or closeness, centred on the difference between Crang’s co-present production of research (in which the researcher and the researched meet in a co-constructed research encounter) and Davies and Dwyer’s covalent³⁰ production of research in which the participants are mutually entrained by one another’s presence and where the co-habited space that Crang variously describes is replaced with the hope for an direct enmeshing between participants. In general methodological terms, this is the difference between a close (co-produced) kind

³⁰ The term “covalent”, which I’ve chosen to summarise Davis and Dwyer’s overall argument, refers to covalent bonding, a model of how molecules are formed from their constituent atoms by sharing the electrons (and the vacant capacity for electrons) that orbit around their respective nuclei, such that they are not so much adjacent or proximate as enmeshed like atomic cogwheels.

of adjacency, and a covalent hope for a more unitary encounter. As the following sections describe, my methodology has either intentionally or accidentally drawn on both, and the degree to which I methodologically entrain that which I have studied is a key feature – and ethic – of each strand in my heuristic, much as it may be for the rest of the geographical discipline. In fact, the plausibility of entraining may be the key methodological issue we face in general terms. Because they are so potentially important, these two themes encapsulate the other three themes which I briefly describe below.

In all six progress reports, the idea of bodily co-presence and “being” situated “there” in the flesh and in common situations with those who we research is often discussed in terms of the closer (or, indeed, covalent) engagement such ethnomethodologies claim to offer, being more representative of those people and situations, and perhaps especially more representative of the non-representational aspects of their reality. The idea of representing non-representation is strangely paradoxical, an issue recognised by Crang, and Davies and Dwyer, as part of a larger *problem with words*, but that paradox may not be the main problem. In all but one of these six reports³¹, ethnomethodologies are understood to counter the possibility that asking people for spoken accounts of their everyday lives is to convert those lives out the normal reality in which they happen, a distorting which is also assumed of other approaches which, though they may not be strictly verbal, elicit a kind of up- or down-scaling of what is (or was) actually happening (Crang notes that this has often been the fate of visual methods in geography (Crang, 2003: 500)). Whereas Crang is cautious about these claims, Davies and Dwyer are excited about the potential to go beyond words (even if we return to them eventually) in order to enact that which cannot be, or would not survive, being verbally engaged (Davies and Dwyer, 2007: 258-259), and they are equally enthusiastic, for example, about the ethnomethodological enacting of archival research, to imagine the actual acts that were behind, or can be generated out of, that which is archived: in short, archives suggest performed origins that are worth thinking about, and even performing again (Davies and Dwyer, 2010: 90-91, 92). Perhaps most tellingly it is silence, the very absence of words, which is understood to be a performance full of discernible actions, a performance of refusal, dismissal, and a creative kind of ignoring which forms an exemplar of how things are done literally without words (Davies and Dwyer, 2008: 400-401).

³¹ In his first report, Crang cautions against the assumption that participatory methods automatically or necessarily offer an enhanced kind of proximity or closeness with those we research (Crang, 2002: 651)

In short, words are either too much (in terms their abstracting potential or their wilful fixity) or, except in the event of silence, they are too little (in terms of the need to complete them by animating what leads into or leads out of them). The haptic and materially situated research which emerged from a concern with these concomitant scales of words, and the representational in general, try to avoid the “God-trick of the invisible, omnipresent narrator” (Crang, 2003: 499), to mute a-priori representational structures in the hope of ascertaining what is actually being done through an ethnomethodological closeness. As such, the problem with words is intimately connected with the *problem of knowing* simply because representational research seeks to produce in its final form, and thus (arguably) seeks to find a particular kind of thinking-through in the field it researches that reveals everyday processes and experiences to be deliberately meaning-laden and connected to ideas which those everyday processes re-behave. Such a meaning-laden view may, in fact, impose a more of a meaning burden onto those places and people that we research. The hope to relinquish this burden and discover the non-cognitive reality of how places and people actually work causes Crang to sound a similar warning as he does with ethnomethodologies in general: the non-cognitive turn is not automatically more authentic in terms of the experiences it can access and the politics of representation it can dodge (Crang, 2005: 225) and he recognises an over-confident excitement in the potential for the non-cognitive to produce liberations, recognising that research on dance, for example, demonstrates that it can easily and, perhaps, necessarily be more-than-non-cognitive insofar that what happens to the corporeal body during dance can plausibly be referenced to a representational body of ideas (Ylönen, 2003: 559 in Crang, 2005: 231), an intertwining of the non-cognitive and haptic with the discursive and representational which is missing in some of our work, including geographical work on dance that overestimates the non-cognitive by isolating, and then ennobling it³². Crang’s overall argument on this point, spread across his three progress reports, seems to suggest that non-cognitive and non- or more-than representational research, whilst it may claim to correct a-priori representational assumptions, may work from an a-priori position of its assumed, even hoped-for absence.

³² This is my understanding of Crang’s critique, during which he mentions Thrift but does not actually reference this point to any specific publication, though I assume he means to suggest Thrift’s 1997 work on dance (Thrift, 1997). If, indeed, I am reading too critical a stance into Crang’s summary then I would point to the fact that such a stance exists elsewhere: the problem of ennobling non-representation was recognised as early as 2000 by Nash, who (specific to Thrift’s approach) suggested that it “offers more theoretical guidance for considering practices over representations rather than strategies for bringing them together” (Nash, 2000: 661).

Absences and presences lead me onto the *scale of subjects* and the possibility that attending the noncognitive has the potential to be both an expanding and a contracting of what the “subject” (the people and places we research) can be understood to comprise. And regardless of whether we are co-present or covalent with them, the subject is growing in scope. Part of this growing is less to do with recognising how big the subject is, and more to do with recognising how narrowly we have looked at them, which Davies and Dwyer recognise as an outcome of a certain, singular, vector-like research practice that sought to categorise and close that which we investigate, and which needs to be replaced with habits of openness and reflexivity (Davies and Dwyer, 2007: 258). These habits foreground a different scalar understanding of the work we do, allowing us to extend what sort of possibilities and potentialities a subject can occupy, including what is felt and imagined (rather than witnessed and narrated) and that which extends over the dichotomy between the material and the immaterial (Ibid: 261-262). In short, recognising that we have looked narrowly, and getting out of that habit, allows the subject to reach his, her, or its full scalar potential, which Crang apprehended as the “translocal” subject who is not helpfully still, solid, and bounded, but extensively existing over a field of relations (Crang, 2005: 228-229). One key methodological upshot of this understanding is that uncertainty is deliberately understood of the accounts and experiences we access, folded into our engagements and, hopefully, worked into the accounts we produce thereafter (Davies and Dwyer, 2010: 93). This is the logic behind the temporal and what could be called the trans-verbal stretching of the otherwise time-stilled wordiness of the archive (described above under the heading *problem with words*), so that they no longer capture pasts in stable form (Ibid: 89-90) and further accounts for their interest in the new, much broader subject identities that can be created in cyberspace (Ibid: 94). The *scale of subjects* as I’ve described it here is a useful point from which to start thinking about interviewing and what scales it allows.

Interviews and claims of experience:

Before I detail my interviewing methodology, I wish to briefly start by outlining how many interviews I’ve undertaken, and with whom. Taken as a whole, the interviews I undertook for this project engaged with a substantial mix of people, although owner-occupiers form the largest group. Four of my seven Voysey interviews were with couples (two with young families) who owned or were paying off their individual properties on a freehold basis, and five of my six Lubetkin interviewees either owned their properties or, in two cases, owned

a leasehold on them. All of my Holden interviewees were employees at buildings owned by their employer, as was the case with three Voysey buildings and one Lubetkin building, though one of the Voysey buildings was staffed by volunteers rather than employees. One of my interviewees at a Voysey house was both a tenant and an employee, whereas the rest of the employee inhabitants in this study worked in their buildings and domiciled elsewhere. It is also worth noting that there were two retired architects and one practising architect among the twenty-five people (over nineteen interviews) who I studied, one living in a Voysey house, one working in a Voysey building, and the other living in a Lubetkin house. None of my other interviewees had ever been involved in the architectural profession, or indeed, any immediately related professions such as construction or planning. Additional to the two retired architects, five interviewees were retired from their non-architectural jobs.

Interviewees were contacted by letter in the first instance, in which I enclosed a response card and a postage paid envelope for them to return to me with further contact details if they were willing to be interviewed. The original contact letter suggested that the interview would be informal (and I believe that they all were) and at a time and location to suit them (in the event, all of the interviews took place in the buildings in question, either domiciles or workplaces)³³. From the outset, all of my interviewees were promised anonymity, although all but one suggested that this was unnecessary (and the single instance where it was thought to be necessary was in a discussion with the current inhabitants about the previous inhabitants, and not about themselves). For this reason, I am not able to identify all of the buildings in this project: I can only admit to those buildings which house enough inhabitants to assure me that they could be anonymised among their number³⁴. The purpose of anonymity is without methodological basis in this instance: it is, in fact, my means to maintaining confidentiality and privacy by ensuring that the whereabouts of my interviewees' homes and workplaces are not known or, as the case may be, further

³³ A total of eight respondents rejected my request, and the remainder provided their contact details on the card for me to discuss the interview further. Of those respondents I contacted on receipt of the cards (almost all by e-mail, and the remainder by telephone), only one elected not to proceed with the interview. By this stage, all of the interviewees were aware that my research question dealt specifically with the potential effectiveness of architecture. All twenty-one interviews were undertaken between June 2007 and May 2008 with one exception in August 2008. None of my interviewees were under eighteen years old, but aside from this the age profiles of were fairly evenly spread from early twenties to late eighties. In gender terms however, men are better represented in this thesis than women (of whom there were eight).

³⁴ They are, in chapter order, Voysey: Winsford Cottage Hospital (Beaworthy, Devon) and Voysey House (formerly Sanderson and Sons', Chiswick, Greater London). Holden: Senate House (Bloomsbury, Central London), Arnos Grove underground station (Enfield, Greater London), Morden underground station (Merton, Greater London), and Bristol Central Library (Bristol, Avon). Lubetkin: Highpoint One and Two (Haringey, Greater London). Each of these buildings are staffed or inhabited by at least twenty people.

publicised (to prevent scenarios whereby, as one of my Lubetkin interviewees related to me, undergraduates, postgraduates, and even lecturers would regularly ring his doorbell hoping to ask a few questions or be offered a brief tour). It is, of course, possible that my policy of anonymity, functional though it is, may have prompted my interviewees to disclose more to me and disclose more honestly, but by the same token, anonymity may have produced an artificial sense of safety and comfort within the research encounter which, as I discuss below, seems to be an outpost of a “friendly” kind of interview methodology which may not be helpful to me, and perhaps geographical research in general.

In a sense, interviews are unavoidable in my research because there are certain research methods that I cannot reasonably indulge in if I am to attend the third “strand” of my methodological heuristic. I use (rather than choose) interviews to build an account of the experiences and the variety of experiences in the current inhabitation of the buildings of Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin. “Variety” is the key term here: a participant observation requires a medium- to long-term commitment to a bounded situation which is experienced and engaged with, i.e. participated in. What that situation can actually do and mean emerge from a researcher allowing it to happen to them and observing it happening to others. To experience some of these buildings as an inhabitant, to report back on what happened to me from living in and dealing with the building, and to produce a thesis which analyses the traces the building left in me is a tempting and promising proposal, but implausible given my aim to engage in the potential variety of architectural experience and for obvious practical reasons besides³⁵. Participant observations invest a large amount of time and produce a large volume of detail from a small number of engagements, as with Lees’ (2001) study of Vancouver Central Library, although her work may have more in common with *unobtrusive method* than participant observation, (see Lee, 2000)³⁶. A commitment to variety requires me to substantially reduce how committed I am to each research encounter so that I can attend more of them, even if this multiple attending also marks a kind of truncating

³⁵ I should further point out (perhaps somewhat obviously) that I was not in a position to get a job at, purchase, rent, or otherwise inhabit the buildings I’ve studied in any way other than my brief encounters with them during the interviews I undertook.

³⁶ Lee explains that unobtrusive method is deliberately covert, as it involves the observation of people as they go about their business in public without asking them to narrate or explain it, or indeed joining them or replicating what they are doing. The research act is never admitted to or understood as co-produced on the understanding that data cannot be generated if the subject knows they’re being researched – that knowledge produces different, non-genuine behaviour (Lee, 2000: 1-4). There seems to be an echo of this in Lees’ study of Vancouver Central Library and her “ethnographies of use” (Lees, 2001: 71-75) which seem to record her observant non-involvement in the politics of use that interest her. Lees’ ethnographic vignettes are discussed at greater length in the previous chapter.

compared to the full scope of what a participant observation might attain (for an optimistic account of what is possible, see Herbert, 2000). However, I believe that certain elements of ethnomethodology (understood as I've described it above) can be utilised in interviewing, and in relation to my own methodology I examine the possibility of enabling a closer integration between me and those who I researched through the recent introduction of key feminist theories of the other into interviewing methodology (Ezzy, 2010) which, in terms of interview techniques, may offer a covalent edge to the otherwise co-constitutive encounter that interviews represent.

These integrative tactics, promising though they are, do not excuse me from recognising the primarily verbal nature of interviewing. The centrality of the verbal in this method produces particular outcomes in terms of the shape of the insight I produce, and it constitutes a particular treatment of my interviewees (i.e. the fact that I have rendered them verbally). In the first instance I accept that non-objectivity is a given not only of interviews, but of qualitative methods in general (as I established in the preceding section). Interview data emerges from a relationship between researched and researcher, and that data is best thought of as originating from that relationship rather than directly vended by the interviewee or simply discovered by me. The insights and information are produced by both interviewer and interviewee and reflect a dual absence of objectivity (Crang, 2001: 221 and 2003: 494). Interviewing cannot transcribe the experiences of my interviewees: they do not simply “vend” information. I made particular efforts to produce particular information from the interviews I undertook, so that information will in some way reflect my “squeezing”, along with the interviewee’s relative pliability or resistance. The kind of squeezing I did reflected my tastes, interests, and a position amid a collection of (academic) practices where there are certain norms and expectations that define what it is possible to speak about and what definitions and procedures are valid (Foucault, 1970-1971: 199 in McDowell, 2010: 160³⁷). Jackson and Russell (2010) expand this point in a way relevant to interviewing in general (their work otherwise dwells on life history interviewing). Interviews are, they argue: “a co-production, with authority shared between an interviewer and an interviewee” (Jackson and Russell, 2010: 181) in which the identity offered to the interviewee tells interesting stories of the researcher’s positionality.

³⁷ McDowell mistakenly references p.23 of this collection and dates it to 1977 (i.e. the date the collection was published). The transcribed lectures to which she refers were actually dated 1970-1971 and the material she uses is on p.199.

“Interviewees are sometimes described as informants, narrators or interview partners. The terms are significant as ‘narrator’ emphasises the agency of the person telling the story (compared to the more passive role of ‘interviewee’); ‘informant’ implies a degree of duplicity on the part of the narrator, providing the interviewer with privileged access to confidential material; and ‘partner’ emphasises the relational nature of the life history, produced in dialogue with the interviewer (although the ‘partnership’ may be far from equal).” (Jackson and Russell, 2010: 181)

The idea of creating and managing memberships across the research encounter sits at the centre of both McDowell’s (2010) and Ezzy’s (2010) interview methodology. McDowell considers this through the problem of fixity resulting from academic intention insofar that: “the very act of naming something, perhaps even thinking about it, always, however temporarily, constitutes an ordering or a representation of a relationship” (McDowell, 2010: 169). That naming and ordering may be articulated to appeal to our discipline of origin, to please a certain readership and satisfy certain norms therein (Ibid: 166, a similar point is made by Jordanova on the practices of historical research discussed in the next section (Jordanova, 2006: 91)). The nature of interview memberships, especially considering the researcher’s institutional and disciplinary origins in norms of naming and identifying, requires a continual effort to equalise or reduce power differentials that we might potentially create: this remains the case even though the power differential is (at least initially) weighted towards the interviewee insofar that the researcher is dependent on their goodwill for the interview to happen in the first place (McDowell, 2010: 161). Many interview methodologies emphasise the reduction of these differentials as a means to diminishing the potential oppressiveness of the interviewer’s presence, concurrent with the hope that with this potential oppression lifted, the interviewee will “flower” (Ezzy, 2010: 166) and otherwise reveal not only more in the interview, but more that can be said to have originated from them and their experiences rather than the norms we might constrain them into or otherwise impose. Ezzy’s interview methodology is designed to enable such a flowering, which he understands to be a performed technique rather than necessarily contained in the verbal alone (Ibid: 165). A key element of this is to construct an encounter where the interviewee feels important, valued, and enabled so that being forthcoming is understood to be possible, and is further understood to matter and be beneficial. McDowell recognises that good faith is implicated in this, which normally requires the researcher to

reveal something of themselves (McDowell, 2010: 162) which, I suggest, is a recognition and sharing of the vulnerability that an interview produces. Between McDowell and Ezzy I ascertain a methodology where an overarching idea of care, nurture and friendliness are key devices to be performed across the research encounter which, properly articulated, will allow a degree of closeness by effacing the overarching teleological bias of academic institutionalism and framings.

Exactly how well the construction of friendliness works to equalise the power relations in the interview may not matter if the interview contains an inherent sort of violence which converts everyday processes into verbalised, conversational forms quite different from and lacking familiarity with the fundamentally non-verbal ways in which those processes might have originated. I would, however, point out that some studies question how out of the ordinary interviews really are relative to everyday life. For example Silverman (1993, also Atkinson and Silverman, 1997) discuss the normalisation of interviewing in certain cultures. Silverman's work is noted by McDowell (2010: 161) and Brinkmann (2007: 1117-1118) who argue that it is possible to see interviews as commodified cultural forms that also commodify opinion and experience by packaging it in a particular way. Moreover, the commodification of opinion through the interview as a product is commonplace. We are surrounded by and normalised into an interview culture through printed, transmitted, and electronic media. The idea of the interview, and perhaps also the idea of transferring experience into conversational form, need not be understood as a violent, or even substantial shift from the norm. The interview is not entirely alien to everyday life and does not lie entirely outside of "normal" or "everyday" contexts, and whilst it may not be regularly experienced at first hand (only two of my interviewees had been previously interviewed about the buildings they inhabited, in both cases by the local press³⁸), it is not so far out of the ordinary to be outlandish: interviews are known about, and they have either known or assumed features and characteristics. It could further be argued that interviewing also taps into a more normalised everyday experience of telling stories and communicating impressions conversationally, and that the conversion of everyday happenings into verbal accounts is, in fact, part of the normalcy of the everyday more generally, a conversion to words which Lorimer tacitly recognises, albeit in written form

³⁸ In three additional interviews, though my interviewees hadn't been interviewed before as such, they had talked in a largely incidental way with scholars, journalists, and other authors who came to "look at their house" or take photographs rather than talk to them *per se*. Anna and John, along with Barry and Denise (who inhabit two of Voysey's houses), both recalled being visited by Wendy Hitchmough in the early 1990's when she was preparing her monograph on Voysey (Hitchmough, 1995).

(Lorimer, 2003) and further recognised in verbal form in a 2007 special edition of *Social and Cultural Geographies* on the practices of oral history (see Riley and Harvey, 2007). Furthermore, something like the conversational flexibility of interviews, familiar in the media, has come to displace the question-answer regime that used to pervade interviewing in geography and, in effect, was little better than a verbal questionnaire and aimed for an objectivity which has since been thoroughly overturned (McDowell, 2010: 159-160).

I do not, therefore, assume from the outset that there is something automatically abstracted or less real about the interview, and this marks the start of an account of how, in fact, interviewing can plausibly create a covalent kind of closeness between the interviewer and the interviewee. Ezzy's (2010) methodology seeks to implicate both positions deeply within the respective identities of each participant by drawing on particular theoretical axioms from which to understand the interview and its capabilities. Drawing on the work of Irigaray (2001) and Benjamin (1988 (1990)), Ezzy argues that the hope for a rational autonomous individual is produced in acts of domination, which stem from a cache of ideas which claim that, as individuals, we are autonomous and bounded. Such an attitude dominates the other by refusing to understand or accept that the other is critical to our status, and seeks to subdue the possibility of being constituted by or confirmed through the will of others: in short, the nature of domination is contained in trying to dominate the idea that we have to allow part of who we are be externally granted by others, a fundamental delegation of who we are as individuals to the necessary recognition of us by other individuals (Ezzy, 2010: 164-165). For Benjamin this is understood as "communion", opening a space in one's behaviour to be inter-subjectively confirmed, an admittance based on admitting that such admittances are necessary (Benjamin, (1988) 1990: 18). Irigaray understands this as the "caress" (Irigaray, 2000: 27), through which she criticises the probing nature of certain scholarly discourses and advocates openness, to know others by giving (as in, gifting) them a space in one's own individuality where they can create a discourse of themselves rather than being defined from our particular and erroneously fortified individualities, or the illusion that we are absolutely individual. Irigaray explains:

"To sense you, to preserve a place for you and to speak to you beginning from this memory. To find tone, rhythm, meaning. To cultivate the breath until the words can rise up in me and pass the threshold of myself. [...] To perceive what the other is, while not knowing it. Not to use such knowledge but to make my gaze helpful to him: an aid, a resource [...] capable of contemplating without

violence or capture: to insist on transcendence here and now, with us and between us [...]. To be silent to allow you to speak, to give birth to you. And to us as well.” (Irigaray, 2000: 14)

Only these last sentences, “To be silent... us as well”, are quoted by Ezzy (2010: 166), and they neatly describe his primary example, an interview with “Celeste”³⁹, and his overall argument. In short, Ezzy uses the idea of communion/caress to offer her, in the manner of a gift, a covalent opportunity to speak. I return here to my earlier use of the term “covalent” to describe Davies and Dwyer’s overall hopes in their *progress reports* insofar that Ezzy believes that communion/caress was drawn upon to allow Celeste’s otherness to become a constituent of his self in the interview process, for her to be confirmed by him in a space he gifted her in his own, but unfortified, individuality (Ibid). The excellence of the responses she provided in that interview were resultant of Ezzy’s particular methodological gifting, producing in Celeste a gratitude for the opportunity to speak to another who is, almost literally, caressing her speech rather than othering her to further secure a fortified individuality: it is that gratitude for such a willing and confirming space, or a recognition from the interviewee that is in some way akin to gratitude, that seems to form the logical corollary of the gift in Ezzy’s argument (Ibid: 165) and it is in such circumstances that interviewees will speak most frankly, most openly, and most fully of themselves (Ibid: 168). As a methodology, to caress or have communion is to be simultaneously expansive and diminutive as an interviewer, to expand a space for others as both a gift for them and a constituent of you, but to achieve this expansion through a diminution of the self or, more accurately, the selfishness of the self in terms of its assumed autonomy. The covalency of this is in the way the interviewee attains defining properties in the research encounter that researchers like myself might otherwise hoard, and the overall plausibility is contained in the fact that we need to be recognised as individuals (and researchers) by our interviewees if the research encounter is to happen at all, that is to say, if we expect to be told anything at all.

This mutually covalent entraining is an exciting prospect, but I have certain misgivings about Ezzy’s communion/caress methodology, and these misgivings also extend to the way interviews have been undertaken in architectural geography (not that these particularly

³⁹ In common with Ezzy, all of my interviewees in this study have been identified with pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity, an approach which I discuss at the end of this section.

incorporate communion/caress). The problem lies in the presumption that interviewees are malleable and susceptible to providing our preferred answers, which further suggests that their own insights and opinions are so lacking in potency that they can be very easily occluded. Methodologically, ideas such as communion/caress, theoretically advanced though they are, form an a-priori model of how the interviewee works and, having stated or implied that we find them to be fragile, we believe we must be careful, that they must be treated gently (or, indeed, caressed), or else the robust kind of analytical discourses academics engage in will displace their “real” insights. This assumed malleability, and those methodologies that prevent the interviewees being deformed into statements of our a-priori philosophies, strips the interviewee of the ability to analyse us, understand and challenge our motivations, and problematise our questions and the parameters that we set in asking them. As I discussed in my introductory chapter, there seems to be an implicit, sometimes halfway explicit assumption that people’s architectural experience will generally be characterised by vague impressions, loosely defined and clustered around general preferences, and I am worried that this precludes the possibility that inhabitants analytically consider the architecture they inhabit thoughtfully, insightfully, and even technically, and that interview methodologies such as Ezzy’s and McDowell’s (2010) may inadvertently stupefy those qualities and produce a skewed understanding of what inhabitations are possible⁴⁰. The people we interview may be more astute than our interviewing allows for, and I wonder whether Ezzy’s methodology offers the interviewee the best position from which to speak, and whether interviewees wouldn’t speak “better” if they were positioned, or indeed entrained, in a more stimulating methodology.

This possibility is described in a number of methodological statements including Denzin (2001), Kvale (2006), Tanggaard (2007), and Brinkmann (2007) whose statement seems to be the most powerful among them, not least from his opening suggesting that most interviewing is just opinion polling, generally couched in the norms of a biographical account (Brinkmann, 2007: 1119-1120). Most interview methodologies, he argues, are *doxastic*, that is to say, they set out to engage with and collect *doxa*, the unreasoned opinions and experiences of people (Ibid: 1117). This, Brinkmann argues, is problematic because people may not live *doxastic* lives in which their opinions simply count and are unwaveringly

⁴⁰ I am also concerned some geographies are understood to be unspeakable not because they deal with subjects that are too complex (haptic, affectual, taken-for-granted or un-reasoned) to be verbalised, and not necessarily because they are unlikely to survive the (perhaps destructive) shift from those subjects’ native expressions to a verbal solidity. I believe, in fact, that some geographies seem unspeakable because we don’t position our respondents so that they can adequately speak about the more-than-non-cognitive and more-than-non-representational lives they lead.

affirmed in an unlikely kind of benevolent context. It may be more useful to consider that people's opinions and experiences happen in an *epistemic* context with normative qualities, in which opinions, beliefs, and actions have to be justified and subject to argument about whether they ought to exist (Ibid: 1123).⁴¹

If this sounds somewhat oppressive compared to Ezzy's communion/caress methodology, it might be worth considering what a *doxastic* understanding of the interviewee restricts them from. Crucially, mapping *doxa* onto interviewees reserves the epistemic for the researcher to indulge in, which may mark a failing to open ourselves out acts of confirming the other as Ezzy hopes that they can be if, in fact, we are not allowing them to access that part of the self we analyse with. There is an uncomfortable possibility that interviewees may be put an inadequate position from which we risk stupefying them (Brinkmann, 2007: 1119). By constituting them in a different kind of self from the one we use to write our work, and further constituting them in a caressing kind of entrained context that may differ substantially from *epistemic* everydayness, we risk producing false impressions and analyses of them, that is to say, analysing responses which our own methodology prompts participants to (quite innocently) fabricate (Ibid: 1121-1122). If we ignore this potential, though plausible extreme, we are nonetheless presented with the problem that a *doxastic* interview will generally produce a list, or a poll, of people's opinions and experiences, which fails to adequately connect into the reasoning (literally, why they are thought to be reasonable) that forms them. What an interviewee says under *doxastic* circumstances, which may actually be more accurately described as the absence of circumstances, is potentially unreal for having been produced outside of the epistemic norms that animate opinion, insights, and knowledges. Whilst I recognise that, in interviews, we always deal with the real in a mediated way, the *doxastic* interview seems to risk the generation of fictions in unmediated space, and I detect in Ezzy's communion/caress (and McDowell's more general friendly co-constituency) the idea that opening out a free or unimpeded space for the interviewee to be more forthcoming does not question adequately what will come forth in those essentially false circumstances – it represents a substantial methodological assumption (Brinkmann, 2007: 1125-1126).

⁴¹ Both *doxa* and *episteme* are terms from Socrates' understanding of dialogue "whose purpose was to move the conversation partners from *doxa* to *episteme* (i.e. from a state of being simply *opinionated* to being capable of *questioning* and *justifying* what they believe is the case)." (Brinkmann, 2007: 1117.)

My methodological approach, whilst recognising Brinkmann's critique, does not suppose that Ezzy's (or McDowell's) insights are necessarily incompatible. Ezzy's overall point is that interviews can be oppressive if we do not undertake something like communion or caress and open ourselves to confirmations of the other (Ezzy, 2010: 164-165), and Ezzy's explanation of how this would work as a method combines habits of quietness and listening (a quietness which forms a productive absence crafted to do important work, a notion which might appeal to the performativity of silence as Davies and Dwyer discuss it (Davies and Dwyer, 2008: 400-401)) and the ability of a researcher to apprehend that which might impede the interview dynamic, especially the verbal and non-verbal manifestations of discomfort that may come from interviewing those who are very different to the researcher (Ezzy, 2010: 167). But these confirming efforts sound *doxastic*: they describe an onus of care and the creation of that which might ease the flow ("dynamic") of the interview, which in Ezzy's case is represented by a particular kind of quietness, or the defusing of awkwardness, which would be absent in the episteme. This need not be the case, and whilst I am not suggesting that we should argue with and challenge interviewees at every opportunity, I am suggesting that the confirming space that Ezzy describes does not have to be blank so that interviewees can narrate themselves without impediment, but epistemic, recognising that spaces without impediments are both abstract, and contain their own potential impeding. As such, I have tried to combine the covalent possibility of Ezzy's work with the *epistemic* nature of Brinkmann's critique by creating a capacity for the other in my interviewing methodology which invites them not into an apparently unimpeded space of *doxa*, but into a differently confirming *epistemic* space in which I offer them not only communion, but also a conforming of their *epistemic* potentials and the complexities behind their opinions and experiences that would otherwise be dulled by too simple a conception of communion/caress. I believe Ezzy's understanding of how research participants can be made covalent is as important as making sure that we place (or entrain) them in a context that will not denigrate them, and in achieving this we have to do more than simply "let" interviewees speak, and much more than hope that the more we "let" interviewees speak, the more forthcoming they will be with genuine insights.

The results of my combined methodology, evident in the three chapters that follow, are interviews of a particular shape and accounts of a particular style. The first obvious point is that, rather than just making a list of what has happened and what opinions are there ("polling"), my interviews have also produced an idea of what *could* happen. My interviews

do not only account for my interviewees explanations of their experience as it exists and has existed, but also (and I believe, resultant from extending our discussions beyond *doxastic* listing and toward *epistemic* reasoning) how their current experiences are understood proportionally within a wider field of potential experience which could happen, but which they have not actualised into their everyday experience. Perhaps most evident in my interviews with Holden inhabitants (chapter four), I found this analytically realised background of potential to everyday experience hugely interesting, but it has required me to carefully denote when my interviewees were discussing what their experiences were, and when they were discussing what they plausibly could be and in some cases why those potentials were left waiting.

Reflecting my aim to invite the interviewee into potentialities of analysis, and recognising their *epistemic* potentials for analytical inhabitations, the following three chapters contain large tracts of what I understand to be the more analytical edges of their inhabitations rather than their more haptic or non-cognitive inhabitations (not that these are absent). The fact that these analyses are there and, I believe, more obvious than the norm for architectural geography, reflects the opportunity I made in my attending for them in terms of normative space, rather than a space for me to jump start their *doxa* into my particular *episteme*. And because that space was normative, it encouraged them to argue against me and the assumptions and preconceptions that I would otherwise have “squeezed” into the encounter. The normative space I opened in my attendance was one in which interviewees were encouraged to criticise me, by discussing the interview process with them prior to the interview and encouraging them to point out if I had, for example, asked a leading question (having explained first what this was) – which a number of them did. In this way I strived to combine Ezzy’s and Brinkmann’s insights and open out a friendly space for them to be productively unfriendly in. It is my hope that this encouragement to find the errant or presumptuous in my line of questioning also encouraged my interviewees towards an epistemic mode which may, in fact, retain Brinkmann’s argument in reverse. Brinkmann could be criticised for believing that it is the researcher that is responsible for the epistemic conversion of the interview, and his examples reiterate the interviewee’s continual probing to force (or, of course, reveal) the *epistemic* behind the *doxastic* (Brinkmann, 2007: 1128-1131). In contrast to this belief in the need to push interviewees, I believe that if we are to take interview respondents seriously and understand their capacities, we need to invite, rather than induce (or at least use the act of inviting to gently induce), the epistemic in a

way more attuned to Ezzy's covalent understandings. As such, a key element of the method I generated from my methodology was to explain to interviewees exactly how problematic I was, of which a potential for leading questions is one possibility (a self-honesty that might appeal to McDowell's idea of good faith (McDowell, 2010: 162)). My interviewees were, in short, not so much invited as requested to problematise the questions and my assumptions.

In what can best be described as a pre-interview briefing, I suggested to each interviewee that the questions I asked were not solid and final, but more like proposals. I asked them (in terms of a request for help, rather than an invitation by my grace) to interrogate my questions and the limits or preferences they imposed, rather than answering within the confines and assumptions I had produced by myself. I suggested that some of my questions might ask them to read more into their experiences than seemed plausible, or indeed, might ask them to diminish their experiences. I also asked them to re-frame questions that might have seemed geared to generating the kind of answers that I might find most interesting, and that it was necessary for them to reassert the pitch and plausibility of the interview, which included rejecting certain questions, explaining to me how my questions were errant, and availing themselves of the opportunity to produce new questions (in fact, my last question asked them what they would and wouldn't have asked if they had been me). My interviews exercised a method of delegation that reminded participants that it was important to apprehend the interview and change it, and not simply as a reminder that they could choose not to answer questions. I was less concerned with the option of opting out, and much more inclined to remind my interviewees that they could define the shape and style of how they opted in. This briefing, or preamble, was the initial means of opening out a friendly space in which they could safely choose to be unfriendly, and my understanding of my questions as, in a sense, deliberately sacrificial, aimed to stretch that friendly unfriendliness throughout the interview. As such, my reframing of the interviewee as thoughtful and aware stretches that thoughtful awareness to the conduct of the interview, and edges away from the idea that only the researcher is qualified to be ethically aware of, for instance, the potential for leading questions, or a pitch that is too abstract or literal. The questions themselves, insofar as their original form survived, did not assume that their experiences or their understandings of their experiences were going to be simple, and I deliberately asked about the (potential) analytical aspects in their inhabitations.

Some of these questions were non-specific and intended to let the discussion “roam” in a descriptive manner, some of which were pointed and intended to focus the discussion, and some of which were abstract – a patina of different modes of query which opened with an explanation of the way I thought about buildings as a postgraduate student (that is to say, a bisecting, inquisitive and explanatory posture). The first question I posed was; “...that’s how I think about buildings. How do you think about buildings?” My aim in doing so was to create a sense that the purpose of the interview was to deflect the discussion away from me and what I might make of the building, and give the interviewee something to diverge from (or, indeed, accord with). The questions that followed included their initial and changing feelings about the building and the appeal (or annoyance) of certain features, and questions such as what they knew about the architect (and how they’d come by that knowledge). These were followed by questions concerning the creation of impressions and the delivery of effects through the building, ranging from a general conversational level (“What impressions do you think this building might be trying to make (if at all)?”) to a more pointed level (“Would you be able to suggest how those impressions are being made?”) to a point of analysis (Do you think it’s reasonable to say that the building can actually have effects on people, designed or otherwise?). The interview was not, however, strictly structured around these questions and in some instances the interviewees had already covered many of them before I’d had chance to ask them. An example of an early interview (preceded by some examples of the cue cards I used in these interviews) is provided in the appendix to this thesis. Throughout each interview, “friendly unfriendliness” was consistently invited – in fact, the last question in each interview was: “If you had been doing this interview, what would you have done differently, and what do you think you might have asked?” The opening quotes from the start of the second half of chapter five demonstrate how useful some of the responses to this particular question were.

This is not, by any means, a watertight methodology because, to reiterate my point from the start of this section, it probably isn’t possible to correspond directly with and thereafter wholly import the thoughts and experiences of interviewees over a research encounter and into the final written piece. Rather, my methodology hopes to ensure that my interviewees’ accounts are more sure-footed and amplified in the three chapters that follow, and not squeezed so hard that they end up compressed and shapeless. I have tried to create a

membership for my interviewees in the research encounter that specifically invited the possibility, and pointed to the benefits, or refuting and altering what I might have been trying to do, especially as the sort of information I wanted to produce was based, in the first instance, on the habits and expectations I am normalised into, and in the second, on a degree of ignorance on my part which led me to presume, before beginning my interviews, certain things that were quickly refuted. I presumed, for instance, that the role of heritage agencies (English Heritage, Historic Scotland, and Cadw) would be critical through inducing inhabitants to toe the original architectural lines that Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin originally laid down, but this was not so and, in fact, the influence of heritage agencies in my interviewees' experiences has been minimal. I further presumed that key texts such as Hitchmough's 1995 book on the life and work of Voysey (Hitchmough, 1995) would profoundly narrate the buildings in a way more powerful than the buildings they discussed, a kind of textual defibrillation of architectural forms which made explicit the messages that the buildings had failed to reiterate. Again, my assumptions were refuted, and I want to make it clear from the outset that, whilst such accounts are not unimportant, it is the experience of the building that has emerged as definitive in this study, rather than the narration of that experience by the corpus of literature that has inevitably accompanied the three architects I studied (an inevitability resulting from their respective statuses, which I discuss in the final section of this chapter). The source of this and the other refutations and reframing which define my interviews in the following three chapters was, I believe, a product of the interview method I distilled from the methodology I've described above.

Their friendly unfriendliness towards me was, in a sense, also a friendly unfriendliness towards the architect who, in a form particular to me, I entrained with me and reproduced in the interviews. It is this entraining that I now turn to examine.

Between inhabitations and architectures, presents and pasts:

The first strand of my methodological heuristic is about architectural pasts, with the intention of understanding what the architect hoped to achieve by forming buildings from particular ideas and in particular ways. The nature of what is possible of architectural history, that is to say, what can be claimed and what limits ought to be assumed, is a relatively little-discussed subject within the specialism. I have found, much as Lorimer (2010: 249-250) found with archival methodologies, that the provision for such

considerations is limited. In common with Lorimer, Ballantyne notes that this widespread absence in architectural histories generally produces work that conforms to a largely unconsidered genotype (and I will detail what he considers this to be shortly) (Ballantyne, 2006: 45). In this section of the chapter I outline the methodology and the cues from (or against) which I've developed an understanding what it means to study architectural pasts, but this is an inherently uncertain methodology. The hub of that uncertainty is, simply, that I do not know how accurately I can claim to study the past, or how I am supposed to claim that the architects and buildings I study are definitely "past", either of themselves or in the context of my research. I will return to this problem in more detail as this section progresses, but this issue notwithstanding, I still require a methodology of residues and remainders to apprehend this first strand in my heuristic. If I am not definitely studying the past, I am nonetheless still dealing with something whose origins and ideas which have survived in a form that is in one sense fixed (unless new documents are discovered or purchased and added to the archive), and cannot be narrated, redacted or re-framed in the co-present way that interviewees can negotiate with the investigating researcher. Regardless of how "past" my architects and their buildings actually are, my investigations of them need to deal with and understand the temporal implications of this research site and, perhaps moreover, the political implications of what it means for something to be understood as "historical".

I should first explain how I arrived at the three architects who I study in this thesis. My choice of Charles Voysey, Charles Holden, and Berthold Lubetkin was based, in the first instance, on the parameters of my research question and the fact that I needed to select architects who had practised far enough in the past to create a disjuncture between their designs and current inhabitations of their buildings. I maintain that such disjunctures are important, representing as they do a potential underlying tension in the way buildings in the United Kingdom are occupied (see chapter one). And, it goes without saying, there had to be substantial surviving archives (or publications) for (or by) those architects, and each architect had to have produced a reasonable quantity of buildings so that I had a reasonable number of potential interviewees to contact. From this, I assembled a shortlist of archive collections, almost all of which were managed and made available by the R.I.B.A. From this point, I was able to rule out certain architects on the basis that to study them would have undermined the onus on variety on which my empirical work was based. So, for instance, architects who had only designed ecclesiastical buildings or mass housing projects were

sidelined in favour of studying architects who had produced different kinds of building, to secure the maximum possible variety of building that I could engage with through interviews thereafter.

From those archives that remained (all of which were, by this point, located at the R.I.B.A) I discounted all of the collections that had minimal or incidental engagements with the idea of plausibility in terms of architectural affects and effects, and selected from the remainder those three architects that made the most sustained engagements. Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin were the three architects selected based on how well they met the parameters of my research question and the emphasis on variety therein, not on the basis of my preference or a particular taste for their work. In terms of variety, these three architects represent an interesting combination. Voysey and Lubetkin were both highly ambitious and hoped to assist quite profound effects to fruition through their work, albeit by very different means, with Voysey emphasising spirituality and Lubetkin emphasising rationality. Holden, as a useful counterpoint to both, emphasised service and pragmatism in the generation of effects which were, in general, less ambitious, but no less considered as to their plausibility.

How, then, should architecture to be investigated from a historical perspective? There is a fairly small body of methodological literature that addresses this, and raises the question of how architecture should be incorporated into and treated by narratives of and about the past. Güven distinguishes between the “history of architecture” where architecture is understood to be history’s object, treated as history treats other objects of analysis, and “architectural history” which denotes a particularly architectural way of thinking about the past (Güven, 2006: 76-77). Güven firmly rejects the idea that architecture should be used as a stage on which historical enquiry reanimates the past as “history of architecture” suggests. Such a positioning is problematic as it would allow history to transcend its object, such that architecture would default to a container-like space rather than having agency by means of space in the formation of histories (Ibid: 76). As such, Güven prefers the possibility of “architectural history” and argues for a methodological separation for the sub-discipline from other forms of historical enquiry: not only from “history of architecture” but also art history. The logic in peeling away architectural history from art history is, in the first place, generated from the idea that artworks work in a narrow kind of way which is (plausibly and innocently) piecemeal and constrained: artworks are isolated and contained events with

defined boundaries to both their physical form and the nature of their encounters (i.e. they are going to be seen insofar that people go to see them: they are, in a sense, attractions, the visiting of which forms a particular way of paying attention to them) (Ibid). Architectural history, on the other hand, requires a much broader methodology to reflect an understanding of architecture as socially and culturally diffuse in the way it is conceived and put to work, aiming to include those things that art history, understood as the history of artworks, can plausibly preclude. Architectural history is obliged to reflect the different way it is encountered, and expand beyond the going-to-be-seen encounter to include spatial dynamics,⁴² wider functionalities, and being populated, a far wider scope than art history requires, and enough of a reason not to assume that architectural history should draw on methodologies from art history (Ibid: 76-77). Mumford (1924) is seen as a trailblazer in this approach, and Güven argues that Mumford did not simply catalogue buildings and their immediate histories, but accounted for their wider membership of and implication in larger systems (Ibid: 77). More contentiously, Güven argues that we ought to proceed as Vitruvius⁴³ proceeded, expanding beyond the immediate architectural object in a lightly polymathic style, and correlating working knowledges of the multiple fields that architecture connects to (I say “lightly” to reflect the fact that these multiple fields require a general, rather than a sustained, kind of engagement in Güven’s methodology) (Ibid: 79). Güven’s methodology is, in short, to research architecture through its connections from an understanding that architecture exists in an inherently connected way.

It may be prudent to consider that Güven’s lightly polymathic methodology invokes a heightened, perhaps artificially heightened, sense of how effective and important a building can be by understanding buildings as widely constitutive of other processes in society and culture as opposed to the object of art history, which is not connected into the necessary day-to-day work that architecture does. Architecture is understood in this sense to have its fingers in many pies, and this may explain why Güven argues that architecture should be given a privileged status as compared to the other things that history might study – its

⁴² In using the term “spatial dynamics” Güven refers specifically to the planar and volumetric surroundings, along with the routes and vectors, which are created by the plans and elevations of buildings.

⁴³ “Vitruvius” usually refers to *Vitruvian Man*, a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci c.1486, rather than Vitruvius himself (a Roman engineer who lived around 10BC), whose architectural treatise *De architectura*, denoted many standard practises for architectural design such as heating and ventilation, but most notably the standard bodily-derived proportions on which da Vinci based his drawing. The measurements derived from Vitruvian proportion include the yard (the distance from the sternum to the middle finger of an outstretched arm) and the foot (the width of four palms) – all such measurements were multiples of a smaller body part (so a palm was the width of four fingers). “Vitruvius” and “Vitruvian” in contemporary architectural terminology generally refer to an effort to produce some form of standardised and repeatable architectural “rule” or procedure, as Vitruvius did. See Nuttgens (1997: 91, 102-104) for a brief overview.

connectivity does not allow it, in Güven's understanding, to be anything other than crucial. The problem with this idea of connectivity is that it seems monodirectional in that architecture influentially pulses outward from a central point through these many connections, almost the opposite of Jenkins' (2002) understanding of networked connectivity as discussed in the previous chapter (whereby the building seems to accrue from the convergence of multiple and more powerful external positions). Güven, whilst recognising that these connections can be theoretically bi-directional in principle, avoids hinting at how these connections might work in the opposite direction to impact upon and influence architecture, to become (at least partially) the outcome of contextual processes. It seems likely that this is an outcome of his hopes for a privileged historical status for architecture.

The potentially special status of architecture is similarly appealed to by Yegül (2006) who outlines the methodological pitfalls of those approaches that appear to dismember the past of architecture and architects through a Derridean kind of deconstruction, although as Yegül demonstrates with a psychoanalytical deconstruction of Vitruvius, it is tempting to produce deeper understandings of things by carefully dismantling them (Yegül, 2006: 62). Nonetheless, Yegül is concerned by the imposition of Derrida's idea of the "absence of presence" whereby historical narratives are logically understood as a product of arbitrary structures like language, and this is seen to prompt a potentially unfair understanding of history as a constructed indulgence (rather than the articulation of findings) by filling in – essentially fabricating – past absences with currently familiar meanings (Ibid: 63). Yegül's argument is that the deconstructive stripping and unmasking of the past is undertaken from a platform of certain key tastes and beliefs such that, in much the same way as those historical practices it criticises, it finds what it admires, and it admires an arbitrariness which may not represent the reality of architecture in its original form. It is here that Yegül starts to outline an ontology of buildings which allow buildings and the practices of architecture therein to solidify and preserve concepts and meanings, a kind of ontology that deconstruction inevitably misses because its a-priori institution is the arbitrary, which it holds invisibly prominent. Deconstruction relies on a world formed discursively, and this undue prominence results in a concern with the social and political ideas that can form, shift, and reform about architecture rather than the ideas that architecture can solidify (Ibid). Architectural history, if it were to employ deconstruction as a methodological aspect of its enquiry, may occlude the meaningfully secure (even truthful) possibility of particularly

architectural pasts because of its inclination to discover the absence of such securing and the prevalence of the discursive, and the suggestion here is that architecture works in a more solid medium.

The “nihilistic core” or deconstructionism in history does, at least, address the problem of truth and the enormous power claims that being “true” tap into, but that same nihilism is too apt to efface and delete that which may be significant and enduring (Yegül, 2006: 64). Perhaps, Yegül argues, the half-truths and word games of postmodernism and, moreover, the “reciprocating scale of time” therein (Ibid) may be a more promising avenue insofar that it allows the past to interrogate the present and potentially presentist tastes, including the presentism that dismantles pasts which may, in fact, be rather more coherent than that dismantling presumes. Yegül’s alternative is to consider that past architectures might be phenomenological things that are more securely present because of what they hold together, and because they are adept at holding things together. In Heideggerian terms this represents a gathering, not a dismantling, and architecture understood thus is a privileged situation or, after Satre, a “perfect moment” (Satre, 1964: 195-199; in Yegül, 2006: 65). The hope here is to tap into the intentionality that past architectures might retain, of a building solidifying certain formulations of togetherness, rather than always ready to spin apart through a centrifugal arbitrariness. Yegül argues that places and architectures are laden with this sort of deliberate poetics which reminds us that we are somewhere, not nowhere, and this can be traced through the practices of architect (Yegül’s example is critical regionalism, in which the brusque quasi-automatic perception of global architectural forms is interrupted by deliberate architectural acts that puncture this familiarity with “highly appropriately chosen poetic devices of defamiliarisation” (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 1990: 31; in Yegül, 2006: 66)). Yegül makes an overall argument for architecture’s history to be privileged: certainly too privileged to be deconstructed if we recognise that a key feature and capacity of built form is to assemble and gather. To deconstruct is to falsify a present taste for the arbitrary onto a past that holds together far more assuredly than deconstruction presumes.

Güven and Yegül both offer methodologies of architectural history that emphasise something special about architecture that would be missed by what they variously understand to be the prevalent discourses of historical study. Ballantyne (2006), on the other hand, is cutting in his criticism of these special discourses, and his commentary on

architectural historiography is laden with disdain for the way that historiography, such that it is, has emerged through the exercise of architectural conceits. There is a sense that the study of architecture in history has simply emerged through the uncritical preferences of practitioners in a wider discipline for the kind of privilege that Güven and Yegül variously argue for. He argues that the methodology of architectural history needs to be bedded on a key admission to the strange context of power in which an architect works. Like Ezzy's communion/caress methodology of interviewing (Ezzy, 2010: 165) where the interviewee confirms the interviewer, Ballantyne argues that the client confirms the architect and makes him possible. Unlike Ezzy's communion/caress, the power relationships in the history of architecture are fixed firmly in the favour of the client. Architects do not love or are addicted to power *per se* despite accusations to the contrary: they are attracted to (not by) clients with power and money and the inclination to express as much, as these clients will provide the best opportunities for an architect to afford the indulgences of his⁴⁴ art (Ballantyne, 2006: 40). To be engaged by a wealthy client is not, however, a means to opening up unmediated possibilities for architects: it is emphatically not an open invitation, but more like an empowered leasing of their resources to the architect they employ, a lease that is highly conditional on what the client wants, and conditional on a wider context whereby architects have to express, additionally, the architectonic expression of the ideal being in society to which their clients aspire (Ibid: 38). This interwoven economic and social reality is, Ballantyne argues, often absent from architectural history discourses (Ibid: 40) Architects have to perform those actions that would keep them employed or else they cannot undertake to perform anything at all: architects are, as such, either powerless or

⁴⁴ All three of the architects I study in this thesis were men, which reflects the overwhelmingly male constitution of the R.I.B.A manuscripts collection. In her introduction to the more interesting corners of the collection, Mace's 1998 guide mentions only two women: Miriam Wornum and Jane Drew, with an additional mention of Lady Emily Lytton, wife of Sir Edwin Lutyens. A search through Mace's names index reveals few more (Mace, 1998: xiii-xv). This in turn reflects the constitution of the architectural profession both currently and in the past. In 2005 *Building Design* launched their 50/50 campaign in an attempt to address the fact that, at the time, only 14% of practising architects were women (Building Design, 2005). Without doubt, the architectural profession is a male dominated field, and Walker confirms that this has been the case, quantitatively speaking, from the 1700's to the present (Walker, 1995). However, Walker's account reveals that behind this quantitative expression, striking though it is, is a substantial history of women in architecture which is worth remembering. Women's involvement in architecture's history is by no means insubstantial: before the professionalisation of the discipline (when architecture was primarily an artistic pursuit for the aristocracy which Walker refers to as the *amateur tradition*) it was understood that certain kinds of buildings ought to be designed by women (Walker, 1995: 93-94, admittedly these buildings were often connoted with domestic or nurturing functions and were often philanthropic, rather than commercial, in their functions), and following professionalisation in the mid 1800s women were often employed in architectural practices, though rarely at a senior level (this would not follow until the twentieth century, and Walker's argument is that women had a more equal footing in architecture *before* its professionalisation). Women were generally found working in technical roles that required delicacy and care such as detail drafting (ibid: 97). Without doubt, the architectural profession is and was dominated by men, and this is true of the period I study, but that domination shouldn't be taken to mean that women were either absent, or else so marginalised as to be insignificant or without the power to influence, and the fact that this thesis deals with the work of three men should not be taken to mean that they practised in environment from which women were completely absent.

more-than-powerless. Historical accounts of architecture, he argues, have to account for the willing, not wilful, architect and work from that image, simultaneously empowered and disempowered by drawing on a very conditional and leased brand of ability (Ibid: 42).

However, historical accounts of architecture are not so candid about the nature of architecture in general. Ballantyne suggests that architects value most what they can control, and this is reflected in the methodology (or absence thereof) that architectural history utilises in which undue value is placed on form, colour, texture, light, and especially “style”, a cache of design options which are discussed as the central focus of architecture. “Options” is the key term here, because architectural history documents architectural indulgences, amplifying those features which architects can decide upon and control as the larger and most significant part of architectural practice (Ballantyne, 2006: 44-45). An enquiry that amplifies architects’ options results in a neutron-bombed historiography in which the building as an outcome of architectural craft is considered more important than the impact it can generate on people’s lives (Ibid) and it also ignores the particular life, lifestyle, and empowerment of the client who, in truth, specifies most profoundly what a building should and can be (Ibid: 45). The historiography of architectural history is, thus, intimately connected to a wider self-deception of the (mythical) significant architect in the field of architectural practice.⁴⁵

Ballantyne’s proposals can be seen as a vicious pre-methodology, that is to say: he proposes an approach to the historical understanding of architecture which assumes, prior to that approach, that all architecture is produced in the vicious context of the architect-client relationship where the latter dominates. I hope to diverge from this (pre-) methodology. In the first instance, Ballantyne understands but may also fail to understand architecture as a marketed commodity. He proceeds from a “customer is always right” understanding where the market is contained entirely in the client’s wishes: the client owns the terms of the market and architects respond to their invitations in a necessarily acquiescent kind of way. However, it seems no less plausible to suggest that architects can also invite within the

⁴⁵ Some of these criticisms have already been recognised and deflected by those architectural geographies that outline “the bodily traces of the building’s occupants” (Llewellyn, 2003: 269). Llewellyn’s interviewing methodology is based on an understanding that “To engage solely with the drawing board reality of architectural ideology and ignore the experience of inhabited reality seems to answer only one set of questions about architecture and space” (Ibid: 266), a recognition of a trend which he attributes to Lees (2001) and which, as my previous chapter demonstrates, has been continued in later works. In a sense architectural geography already recognises the problems of overemphasis on forms and features and the way they void inhabitation from the question of what architecture is. It’s also worth noting that architectural geography is not intimately bound to architecture’s inflated opinion of how profound and effective it is, as Ballantyne suggests of architectural history.

logic of a market: they can utilise their brand of design and claim exciting possibilities thereof, and such an understanding needs to address the possibility that an architect can apprehend and alter that which clients want, i.e. that an architect might convince a client that he knows better as to what is actually best for the client. An architect might, for instance, point to his experience, training, professionalism as a commodity within this market-like dynamic that puts him in a certain position that may not be empowered *per se*, but is at least positioned to recover some power in the relationship. The architect can also limit the choice of what is on offer, not necessarily through outright refusals so much as arguing for (perhaps selling) certain ideas and combinations of ideas, lacing them with suggestions of how exciting, life-changing, and altogether attractive they are, and creating what is attractive rather than submitting to client- or context-generated ideas of what is attractive. In short, I suggest that the dialogue between architect and client is not as directionally fixed as Ballantyne suggests, or that the norm of being employed by a client is as solidly normative as he suggests, and it may also overemphasise what the brief is capable of. The brief is implied in Ballantyne's methodology as part of the solidity of client power, but the brief may not be that simple. I do not believe that the process of a client issuing a brief to the architect can logically be considered as absolutely constraining the architect (if the architect was constrained to an act of transcribing a design from a brief, would the brief not be the actual design?), the design is not irrevocably contained within its terms. Fulfilling the brief's expectations is a space, rather than a vector, where there is capacity for an architect to indulge his own tastes and beliefs which, when presented back to the potential client, remains a space in which he can tend to, argue for, and persuade into an existence those forms and features that suits him and which suits the client's changed mind (depending on how convincing the architect is) (see Tomes et. al., 1998 and Ryd, 2004 for overviews). I would suggest that it is not reasonable to drop the idea of commodification into a methodology or pre-methodology of architectural history without seeing the possibility of it being co-constitutive of the architect and the client, rather than the exercise of the client's power, backed up by cash and/or cultural capital. It marks a substantial generalisation that I do not consider tenable.

I am more sympathetic to methodologies of the present and the possibilities for an idea of how current the past is (see Chattergee, 2006). In fact, this has become more of a methodological necessity in various subtle ways which I explore in the following three chapters, and in the rather more obvious overall sense that these buildings are, with two

exceptions, still put to the same or very similar uses they were designed for. Though there may be a recognition that these buildings were constructed in different and interesting social and cultural contexts, and although they may belie their age through varying degrees of wear and tear, most of the buildings in this study are understood, to varying degrees, as belonging in contemporary circumstances much as new buildings do (although this belonging is not always very secure, and I will complicate this point in the three chapters to follow). The upshot for me and my methodology was that, as my empirical work progressed, I found it increasingly difficult to classify, for example, a Voysey house from the 1890's as being or belonging in the past any more than a house built in the 1990's. Similar difficulties are faced by Güven (2006) who notes that each newly completed building is a potential member of "the club of architectural history" (Güven, 2006: 74) which inexorably expands the body of what is (potentially) historical, along with the fact that each individual building, regardless of age, builds up layers of its own history in its re-use and re-understanding (Ibid: 75). In short, what architectural history has as an object of enquiry is increasingly numerous and, in each incidence, increasingly verbose.

This inexorable expansion seems to de-stabilise the past and the present as separate entities by recognising the very fluid relationship between them, and as an overall methodological strategy it may be prudent to proceed on the basis that my work is not, strictly speaking, a historical geography. I am looking at how current inhabitants experience a building that is currently there with the emphasis on *current*: I am not discussing these buildings as if they happened in or belong to a past time. As such, my research has more in common with longevity, the extensiveness of being current and the tenacity of "old" things to remain current, rather than being understood as left over. Although I study accounts from archival sources, the products of those accounts still exist and are still being inhabited, and I am very uncertain at the prospect of interpreting the age and oldness of these buildings as though they are antecedent of the contemporary, and that their current existence is in a semi-dormant form largely displaced by more recent and relevant offerings: indeed, there is a risk of understanding that semi-dormant status as a kind of retirement from the contemporary, whereby an old building is re-cast as something that helped lead into and prepare the way for those currently affirmed things that displace it. However, the nature of my research and the way this thesis is structured denies this "leading-to" validity where an old building is a pre-echo of something more valid. Without doubt, the buildings I study in this thesis have a distant inception, but this does not mean it is reasonable to understand

them as any less current than something that was built in the recent past. They are, after all, still inhabited, and almost all of them are put to the same uses that they were originally designed for. They also exist in a context in which it is relatively normal to inhabit and use buildings in the present that were not built recently or, in fact, during our lifetimes (see previous chapter). I find it difficult to countenance a methodology on the terms that something of the past is “past” and no longer belonging in the current unless it is very particularly labelled as being of the past. It appears to me that longevity is a better frame to approach my work through rather than antiquity. Longevity does not rule out the potential to be current (taken literally, it actually suggests a recursively successful articulation of being current), and it is not easy for me to replicate the dustiness of Lorimer’s archive here (Lorimer, 2010: 248-249). That which I study does not seem to settle, or indeed give the appearance of being settled, into the past.

This worrisome temporal ontology does not alter the fact that I have utilised archives for my study of Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin. Lorimer (2010) suggests that the practices of archival research are rarely discussed in detail, and this is partly because they are stored written documents (written in the past, by people of the past, about past events) and, being written, the assumption emerges that even if they are not self-evident as research objects, the way we engage with them is by sitting down and reading them, which is as self-evident as how one handles an article (academic, news, or otherwise) (Lorimer, 2010: 249-250). In the absence of a methodological statement, certain acts coalesced and became the traditional norm which Lorimer describes as a taste for forensic detail and scrutiny, the cross-referencing of those forensically produced findings to other similar findings so that they are mutually supported by mutual precedence (a kind of quantitative edge), and an ability to spot bias and tainting (Ibid: 251-252). The outcome was an objectivist-positivist style of inquiry that understood archives as datasets waiting to happen, and rejected acts of inference, conjecture, speculation, and other such interpretations as errant (Ibid). Lorimer’s archival methodology hopes that some of this conservatism can be rejected, starting with a rejection of the masculinist trope of conquering the past by rendering it into a particular kind of sensible format which appeals to a particular kind of sensibility (Ibid: 261). The emergence of Lorimer’s “making do” methodology further hopes to produce archival vitalism, not least by extending the idea of an archive outside the traditional sedentary bounds of the reading room and, he notes, perhaps geographers have always imagined the archives they read into imaginatively animated scenarios:

“It is now inaccurate to figure archival work as an entirely sedentary exercise. However, on reflection, this was never so. While the body is ever present on site, thoughts are restless and nomadic. [...] Oftentimes, without any great act of will, researchers call on their geographic imagination to picture, to populate, and to personalise the pasts to which they are dedicating such time.” (Lorimer, 2010: 257)

Lorimer argues that a plausible next step is an archival portability that capitalises on this geographical imaginary by locating the archive in landscapes which that archive refers to as a corollary of imagining the landscape from the archival setting (Ibid: 257). Lorimer also hopes, additional to portability, for the generation of a more collagist archival methodology, the logical result of abandoning the attempt to violently staple findings together into academic triangulations and a respectful kind of light-footed presence: “In such a fashion, the principles of beachcombing and ‘freeganism’ – reclamation and accumulation by other, less wasteful means – can be turned back on the exercise of research” (Ibid: 259).

My archival work is differently vital to Lorimer’s. His methodology displaces the masculinist-positivist approach of facts arrived at by intra-archival triangulations, and I do not doubt the value of this, or the light-footed presence with which he places himself in an archive understood to be collage-like. I agree that it is not reasonable to claim facts out of archival sources, not least because the archives themselves are specifically produced to meet certain criteria and interests (I discuss these below), and my attendance (in fact, the attendance of any researcher) in an archive is similarly produced to follow up and elucidate certain aspects of pre-defined interest. Neither the archive, nor my attending of it, produce a full or factual account of each architect I study. In fact, my attendance at the archive performed surgery on the traces of the architects I studied. I was specifically looking for insights into what they wanted their buildings to do, and how they hoped this could be plausibly achieved through combinations of assumptions and/or architectural devices. There are many other aspects of their biographies, practices and thoughts which (unless they spoke directly to or immediately contextualised the architectural intentional) I pared away in order to specifically look at this aspect and reflect my interest. I ought to emphasise “interest” in this instance as a reminder than I am interested, not disinterested,

and I would suggest that only disinterested researchers could synthesise and constrain the full scope of each architect I study in this thesis, possibly resulting in the exhaustive triangulations which Lorimer describes as exactly that which ought to be avoided (Lorimer, 2010: 251-252). My surgical conversion of the manuscript collections of Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin into a research resource is a heavy-handedness that might offend Lorimer, and in an indirect way also serves to corral and connect findings in a way similar to that which he criticises of traditional archive methodologies (though in my case, through a medium of dismissal). And yet it is only through this very heavy-handed vector – the simple need to constrain this study, the recognition that I can't look at everything – that I can expect to treat archival finds with the “freeganic” delicacy that Lorimer hopes for (Ibid: 259), which I couldn't possibly replicate except at this immediate and immediately contextual level. It is a surgical violence that allows me to tend, rather than corral, the archives.

This is not to say that I follow Lorimer's methodology with precision thereafter. In the first case, I did not create or perform archival portability as he does, not least because I never thought it was my place to perform it, and because I assumed from the outset that a portability for the archive I used already existed insofar that the insights that were recorded by Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin were intended to be “placed”: that those ideas were destined to be architecturally produced in some form, though not necessarily a secure or sure one. Indeed, Lorimer's insights almost suggest that the archives we use were created for the sake of archiving, which is obviously erroneous (and may represent my erroneous reading, or reading too much into, his arguments). My understanding of archives is that they exist for and because of something outside them. A methodology intent on vitalising them seems surplus to requirements from this perspective and, moreover, to assume that archives need this treatment seems to assume that they are ordinarily stilled. I cannot help but feel that we are better off, and potentially more light footed, by connecting archives to the vitalism they connote in and of themselves rather than dragging them into our imaginations, in situ or otherwise. It is no less possible, and perhaps more plausible, to look at archives less as scripts or reviews of performances, and more as pre-performances of the actually performing things that a given archive is about. In other words, what I read in the

archive can be thought of as having a corollary (at least in hopeful form) outside the archive⁴⁶.

In the second case, I am more inclined than Lorimer to arrange my archival collage differently to how I found it, an approach that rejects his fleet-footed attendance. In doing this, I recognise a strange combination in his account between affirming the geographer's creativity through imaginative and off-site (but in-situ) reanimations of the archive, whilst restraining the geographer from creative vectors through the archive itself: to tend, rather than attend. I do not, by any means, wish to be ignorant to his point that the archive is violently treated by the sort of attendance which dismembers delicate collages to produce certainties from their original rambling forms. Nonetheless, if one of my architects made the same or similar points in different locations in his archival collection, dated to different times, I have generally brought them together and treated them as emergences from and evidence of an original idea, repeated down the years. This could be criticised as a neatening of the practices of an architect in a way that he never actually practiced, but this criticism aside, I felt that I had to take the recurrence of things more seriously than a collagist approach might, and whilst my methodology may inadvertently neat the architect, I hope that it also attests to the potential for Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin to have practiced neatly and consistently too, as I do not wish to impose a messiness on them which I cannot be sure was the case (indeed, the repetition of the same or similar idea in different places and times suggests a consistency that might not be suited to a collagist approach). By the same token, I have to bear in mind that Lorimer's archives seem altogether more naturally, almost organically produced than the institutional archives that I used, and some sort of rearranging and triangulating, masculinist or otherwise, has already been visited on the archive before researchers like me have a chance to make their own surgical inroads.

The rearranging and triangulating of the R.I.B.A archives is therefore worthy of note. There are certain aspects of this thesis which have emerged somewhat by accident: sometimes this errant quality has been deliberate, as reflected by my interview methodology, and sometimes they are inadvertent. One such inadvertent outcome is the

⁴⁶ In fact, in the course of my archival research, I found that many of the archive documents I was reading were written in hindsight after the completion of a given building or, indeed, the architect's retirement, and we might argue that this is a case of the situation being reversed in which, rather than the archive being animated outwardly, the archive is in fact doing its own kind of animation which is, potentially, not unlike the extra-architectural events that Jacobs describes (Jacobs, 2006: 10, see my discussion in chapter one).

high profile of each architect I've studied. Most architects do not get their personal and professional papers archived and made available, as this often requires a substantial investment by the organization that would archive them. The purchase price marks the start of that investment, and even if the archive is given in the form of a bequest, there are ongoing archiving costs that have to be met. As a result, the archives that are made available are generally those that are understood to be important, either in general terms or specific to the organisation who is investing in the archive. Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin were all lauded by the profession, though not always consistently. Eventually, all three architects received R.I.B.A Gold Medals (Voysey in 1940, Holden in 1936 and Lubetkin in 1982) and all three architects have been reviewed in substantial monographs (on Voysey, Simpson 1979 and Hitchmough 1995; on Holden, Karol 2007; and on Lubetkin, Coe and Reading 1981 and Allan 1992). If nothing else, this is an important commentary on the constructed nature of archives and a recognition that what gets archived and what gets ignored is the result of a larger narrative as to what the archive should ideally do, and what architectural history ideally is. It's my understanding that R.I.B.A's archive rationalises the history of British architecture into key practitioners and the key buildings they produced, and understands that these practitioners generated certain ideas and practices which contribute to, perhaps even institute elements of, the current practice of architecture. It is, in short, a list of the most important breakthroughs and innovations in the field, a register of achievements and achievers, on which basis Voysey, Holden, and Lubetkin seem to have been included, and others ignored.

What gets "ignored" is a surprisingly complicated act that the term "ignore", if interpreted as unequivocal rejection, might belie. In the case of the R.I.B.A archives there are different ways of ignoring papers in the manuscript collections of each architect I've looked at, and most of these relate back to the OPAC which the manuscripts and archive service shares with the R.I.B.A British Architectural Library (R.I.B.A, 2010). The Voysey collection is sufficiently compact to have an OPAC record for each item with descriptions (sometimes quite detailed and, for smaller items, transcribed in full). Thus, in one sense, the size of the collection influences how much or little of it is ignored. The Holden and Lubetkin collections are vast in comparison, and only receive this kind of detail in certain cases. Whereas the Voysey collection is detailed page-by-page, the Holden and Lubetkin collections often have whole folders described as "assorted notes" (an archival box might contain over twenty folders and each folder might contain up to approximately forty loose-

leaf, stapled, or clipped documents). Those items that receive lengthy descriptions are, generally speaking, those which are associated with important events (such as Holden's and Lubetkin's Gold Medal acceptance speeches), those which discuss what are understood to be the key works of each architect, and those which are understood to form microcosms of their ideas and philosophies (as is the case with the way their Gold Medal speeches have been recorded). In this tripartite nomenclature of events, works, and microcosms, certain things get "ignored". As an example, I would refer to Lubetkin's notebooks (which I have made substantial use of in Chapter Five). These receive minimal attention in R.I.B.A's OPAC, despite containing substantial amounts of some of Lubetkin's most personal thoughts, and the way he worked through, considered, and reconsidered his philosophical and ethical approaches. However, it does not easily fit into the tripartite nomenclature I've identified, not least because they are rough notes. The OPAC tends to dwell on that which is more finished, polished and, perhaps, representative. However, what I hope is clear from this is that the R.I.B.A do not outright dispense with anything. They emphasise and de-emphasise key aspects of the archives they hold through their OPAC, and the printed "handlists" shelved in the archive and manuscript reading rooms, but this ignoring does not constitute outright dismissal, and definitely not disposal. The R.I.B.A received both the Lubetkin and Holden archives as bequests (the transfer of the Lubetkin archive actually began whilst Lubetkin was still alive, and continued after his death in the manner of a bequest) and every item originally bequeathed remains available. It is the degree to which those items are admitted to in the subsequent organisation of the archive that constructs what is "ignored".

Conclusion:

The point on which I ended the previous section raises the question of whether my findings in the three chapters to follow actually tell us something about inhabitation generally, or whether they are special inhabitations limited to special buildings that are different and debatably relevant to that (possibly) far larger body of architecture that is ostensibly normal, achieved but lacking achievement. This possibility may be reflected in the fact that each building in this study has been listed, mostly at Grade II or II*, and a small number at Grade I, another accidental outcome, but one that shouldn't be surprising given that the interests that confirm the importance of archiving certain architects are

similar to and linked with those that decide what ought to be preserved outside the archive too.

In answering this, and in closing this chapter, I return to my assertion that it is possible to look closely at variety in a way that architectural geographies have only partially achieved. This thesis aims to make a start at looking closely at the various ways buildings are designed to be experienced and the various ways inhabitants experience them. It is not my intention to state how or to what degree my insights can be generalised (this additional question falls outside the scope of my thesis and would be better suited to an altogether larger document, assuming that “variety” is compatible with generalisation at all), and the fact that I have studied three ostensibly important architects means that some of the varieties I will now proceed to outline may be greater in number and more “special” compared to a more diminutive and modest array of inhabitations in buildings understood as being of normal and modest origins. But I do not believe that these insights are so special, or located so far outside of architectural norms, to be irrelevant to architectures of inhabitation or inhabited architectures as a whole. To assume that this is the geography of a special enclave is, I believe, unreasonable. It may be more reasonable to suggest that I am delineating an empirical attendance around the more vigorous and vibrant aspects of architectural inhabitation to see what is possible and plausible, and that elements of these inhabitations may be present in reduced form in other inhabitations at buildings which do not have the “special” veneer that the buildings I study may have. In admitting this possibility, however, I am concerned about the concurrent possibility of writing off a large body of architects, buildings, inhabitants and inhabitations as relatively basic in comparison. To identify them as basic would be thoroughly unsuited to a thesis which aims to complicate the capacities of inhabitation in architectural geography with ideas of perceptive analysis in inhabitations and “pre-” habitations. I cannot, and would not, suggest that the architectures and inhabitations I haven’t studied or generalised toward are diminished in their vibrancy. As such, this thesis forms an exploration of what is possible, and contains no guarantees as to how widespread those possibilities are. It is enough, for now, to sketch out what those possibilities are unto themselves, which the following three chapters undertake to do relative to the methodological points I’ve outlined in this chapter.

3.

Voysey:

In this first (of three) empirical chapters I aim to expand both on Charles Voysey's understanding of architectural plausibility, and the plausibility that is created or offered by the current inhabitants of Voysey's buildings. "Inhabitants" is a key term here: the idea of plausibility that this chapter and the following two chapters engage with will revolve around the inhabitant. This focus may seem obvious (where else would an architect of inhabited buildings aim to be effective?), but a building does not have to be effective towards its inhabitants *per se*: it can, for example, try to be effective at blending into the surrounding landscape, and a given architect may not consider the need to be specifically effective at all. This possibility notwithstanding, the three architects I investigate in these three central chapters all understood that the effectiveness they were trying to plausibly create was supposed to have effects on the inhabitants of their buildings. This chapter, and the two that follow it, aim to outline what effects a building attains as a result of the planned inhabitations and the actual inhabitations that shape it. That is to say, firstly, its inception at the point of being designed, and secondly, its conception at the point of being inhabited. These two sites, which form the first and third strand in the heuristic I detailed in the previous chapter, are the points from which I construct the building and the various plausibilities of it being or failing to be effective (the second strand). I ought to reiterate that I am not seeking to outline how the angularity and sinuosity, smoothness and roughness, wideness, thickness, colour, balance, or any other such property of the building might have an effect. To fix or otherwise discuss the inherent properties of a built form in such a way lies outside the scope of my work here (though for an introduction, see Dovey, 1999). Instead, I look to either side of the building, towards the inceptions and conceptions that produce it as an intersection of plausibility between the architect and the inhabitants. Those forms and things are still there, but they are discussed here as to the plausibilities that are attached to them, rather than the inherent mechanics of what they do.

Because I look to either side of the building to better understand it, this chapter and the two that follow share a common structure whereby the inception – the architect's intentional work – and the conception – the latter inhabitations – are treated one after the other, clearly demarcated by images of the work of either Voysey, Holden, or Lubetkin.

The first half of this chapter is formed by my discussion of Charles Voysey's architectural approach and what his approach could plausibly project into and through the building. As I seek to understand what he was trying to achieve and by what means, it will become increasingly evident that the plausibility he developed was based around a postulated, virtualised inhabitant who had certain capacities and characteristics that would be amenable to the effects that Voysey was trying to create. Put another way (one that might appeal to Jenkins' (2002) understanding of a network-emergent building), Voysey's plausible architecture was based on enrolling an inhabitant that he hoped and reasoned would exist, and who needed to exist in order for the architectural effects to properly, plausibly materialise. In this way, inhabitants were as much a constituent material for Voysey as were bricks, stones, timbers, and cement: to an extent, people had to work as he hoped they did, if the building was going to plausibly work as he argued it should. This may suggest that Voysey maintained a simplified, material understanding of his future inhabitants who co-operated silently. In fact, he demonstrated and worked from a merged ontology where personalities and materials converged and combined producing, he hoped, a building that could assert itself meaningfully almost as if it had a personality itself.

The possibility of architecture being effective in its current inhabitation depends, to extents which I will explore in the second half of this chapter, on how astute and efficacious the current inhabitants of Voysey buildings believe that Voysey was in predicting them and their needs, tastes, and analytical capacities. Here, what the inhabited buildings can plausibly do is based around a concept of inhabitation which is quite different from that which currently prevails in the architectural geography literature, specifically because I aim to demonstrate that inhabitants can bring often perceptive and enquiring modes of inhabitation to the buildings they live in or use. People do not simply take up space in buildings. They do not simply find things nice, pretty, and convenient, as is sometimes hinted at in recent work in architectural geography and in some of the attendant literatures (as I discuss in my introductory chapter). Inhabitation includes the astute, knowledgeable, and analytical projection of plausibility toward the building. Between this projection (my "third" strand) and the architect's projection (my "first" strand), I set up the conditions from which to produce an account of how buildings are intersections and co-constructions of plausibilities, some of which dissipate and become lost, some of which remain, and some of which are in contention with one another.

An additional aspect which I will explore in this chapter is that of the disjunctures between Voysey's work at the point of completion and the current inhabitants of his buildings. There is, potentially, something productive about these disjunctures, though it would be easy to suppose that the opposite is true. In this and the two chapters to follow, I begin to outline the possibility that these disjunctures do not split inhabitants off from the architects and the architectural effects they intended the building to have. In fact, the disjuncture is a potential amplifier to the plausibility of those effects. The possibility of a strange and different origin of the building that is tangential to current norms and expectations is, for some, enticing and sparks in their imaginations a process whereby closer attention is paid to the building and, therein, to the possibility that it was produced to contain and effect particular intentions. In some of the arguments to follow (in the second half of this chapter) the fact that the building is understood to originate outside contemporary norms is a cue for them to be un-taken for granted, to receive closer and more analytical attention which may make them, despite the time elapsed, at least as present, and perhaps more present by virtue of being closely examined, as contemporary buildings which, being contemporary, emerge from norms which can be assumed of them.

Such arguments represent a complication of the inhabitant and a complication of Jacobs' (2006) building event. Her understanding of the event is that it is externally formed with non-architectural narratives that explain and animate the plausibility of the building (Jacobs, 2006: 11), but in my research I detect the possibility that building events can be, at least in part, internally formed through the behaviours of inhabitants which, like Jacobs' external props, keep the building going in a way similar to what the architect intended, or what is imagined that the architect intended (as I do not wish to suggest that the enquiring nature of inhabitation is able to simply transcribe and reiterate those original intentions). There is the possibility of considering that people's inhabitations are like narrating events, produced by the closer attention that these buildings merit over a disjuncture, and that this contextually produced interest has the effect of internalising the event into the inhabitant, whose interest forms a narration that keeps the building going as intended, much as Jacobs thinks that published narratives keep buildings going (or explains their failings) (Ibid).

Returning to Voysey, the following section begins to discuss how, and for what reasons, Voysey hoped to secure effects in his buildings that could overcome a variety of

Box 3a: Charles Francis Annersley Voysey.

Personal events and associations:

- 28th May 1857: Born, Hessle, nr. Hull (East Riding of Yorkshire) to Rev. Charles Voysey and Frances Maria Voysey *nee* Edlin.
- 1859: Voysey family move to Craigtown, Jamaica.
- c.1861: Voysey family return to UK: Rev. Voysey becomes curate of Great Yarmouth.
- c.1861-1864: Rev. Voysey is transferred to, and then dismissed from, St. Mark's Church, Whitechapel (London).
- c.1864-1871: Voysey family move to Helauh, North Yorkshire, where Rev. Voysey is made curate, then vicar.
- 1871: Rev. Voysey expelled from Church of England.
- 1871: Rev. Voysey inaugurates Theistic Church in London.
- 1881: Voysey commences his own practise in London, but receives no commissions for buildings, designing wallpapers and textiles instead.
- 1885: Marries Mary Maria Evans.
- 1890-1906: Voysey's busiest period, during which the majority of his works are completed.
- 1912: Rev. Voysey dies
- 1917: Unofficially separates from Mary Voysey and moves, alone, into a flat in central London.
- 12th Feb 1941: Dies, Winchester (having been moved from his London flat at the outbreak of war).

Education:

- c.1871-1872: Attends Dulwich College.
- 1874-1879: Articled to John Pollard Seddon.
- 1879-1880: Employed in the practise of Saxon Snell as an assistant.
- 1880-1881: Employed in the practise of George Devey.

(Source: Briggs and Hitchmough, 2007: Hitchmough, 1995: 8-30)

hypothesised disjunctures to productively reach the inhabitant, including the potential for planning authorities and building contractors to annul his carefully designed incursions. Moreover, implicit in his philosophies on the plausible effects of architecture is the possibility that his work would be lasting, and in my introductory discussion above it should not be assumed that the effect of Voysey's architecture is one that only happens in friendly acts of activation by inhabitants. Whilst the inhabitants' engagement with the disjunctures they experience is important, Voysey's designs and, to some degree, the thinking behind them, may have solidified effects into the building that, arguably, work. That is to say: he designed certain experiences to happen whose happening is actually experienced by current inhabitants.

Charles Frances Annersley Voysey (see Box 3a for basic

biographical details) can, and has, been classified as an Arts and Crafts architect. Such classifications are largely problematic, given that they serve to neaten and homogenise individuals into groups with common characteristics. Nonetheless, his work does bear

certain hallmarks of a movement which extended across the creative arts to include architecture, and which emphasised simple, natural forms. This does not entail actual

Box 3b: Charles Francis Annersley Voysey.

Professional timeline and key commissions:

- 1879-1880: Supervises construction of various projects for George Devey.
- 1880: Voysey starts his own practise.
- 1880-1888: Voysey is employed principally on non-architectural design work including furniture and interior designs, but principally wallpaper and fabric patterns.
- 1882: Completes first independent work, interior designs for a summer-house in Surrey.
- 1888: Publishes speculative cottage design in *The Architect* leading to his first architectural commission.
- 1891: Completes 14 South Parade (Bedford Park).
- 1893: Completes Perrycroft (Malvern).
- 1895: Completes Annersley Lodge, for Rev. Voysey (London).
- 1898: Completes Broad Leys and Moor Crag (Cumbria).
- 1902: Completes Sanderson and Sons wallpaper factory (Chiswick).
- 1906: Completes The Homestead (Frinton-on-Sea).
- 1911: Completes house in Malone Road, Belfast – his last commission for a full building.
- 1911-1927: Commissioned for various minor works, including alterations, interior decorations, furniture designs, and church fitments.
- 1915: Publishes *Individuality* (Voysey, 1915)
- 1924: Elected Master of the Art Workers' Guild.
- 1929: Elected a fellow of the R.I.B.A.
- 1940: Awarded R.I.B.A Gold Medal.

(Source: Hitchmough, 1995: 8-30, 230-234)

transcripts of natural forms in design (though this was not uncommon), but emphasises the natural way of creating forms, that is to say: honest to the functions they were to be employed for, and to the materials they were made from. By recoiling against superfluous and ostentatious over-decoration that seemed to define the Great Exhibition of 1851 (Davey, 1995: 13) and the machined harshness of mass-produced products (Cumming and Kaplan, 1991: 9) the Arts and Crafts movement aimed to produce materialities without artifice, but also without the inhumanity of pure functionality. In architecture, the figurehead for Arts and Crafts was A. W. N. Pugin⁴⁷, and he expounded two essential principles. In the first place, the building should contain no features superfluous to what was appropriate or necessary, and

in the second (and closely related) place, ornamentation should not be appended to buildings, but should be included as part of those appropriate and necessary parts (Davey, 1995: 15-16). Voysey's work broadly accorded with these principles, but found in them sufficient breadth to create his own particular interpretations, and to claim that he, and his

⁴⁷ Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852) is credited with shaping the early Arts and Crafts movement around a kernel of Gothic and medieval revivalism – although Pugin's understanding of the medieval is famously rose-tinted (Davey, 1995: 13-16)

work, were absolutely and necessarily *individual*, the complexities of which form much of the discussion in the first half of this chapter.

Voysey's buildings, illustrated in a plate section in the middle of this chapter (marking my transition from archival to interview analyses) sit low in the landscape, generally in emulation of the natural morphology that surrounds them, and weighted there by large pitched roofs as if to keep them from immodestly poking out or protruding. Asymmetrical and buttressed, so that the walls slope to the ground instead of chopping into it at right angles, their frontages are carefully arranged with simply detailed windows, doors and ancillary features. Although these features are arranged in bands, their positions alternate within these bands, and few features are repeated exactly like another – each has its own stylistic treatment, which shares a theme with neighbouring features, rather than copying them. The result is a variegated facade which is, at the same time, consistent. And although his buildings are simple, Voysey was not a minimalist (and it could be suggested that he accorded with Arts and Crafts principles in this respect). There are no wide blank expanses of wall or glass in his buildings. It would not be too unreasonable to describe their aesthetic as cottage-like (though Voysey House⁴⁸ (fig. 3.1) is the obvious exception), but they are far more precise, efficient and assured in their execution than any cottage I can imagine, and far more functionally adept, with fit and purposefully designed features and the relative absence of obstacles. All of these features that I have described here (and illustrated in the plate section in the middle of the chapter) can arguably relate to particular motivations and ideas which I now proceed to discuss.

Introducing Voysey:

Voysey's most introspective thoughts are to be found in *The value of hidden influences, as disclosed in the life of one ordinary man*. Dated 5th June 1931, it is the only lengthy autobiographical document in the R.I.B.A's manuscript collection. It was also written in hindsight: Voysey had turned seventy-four two weeks previously, and excepting sporadic commissions for minor works, he had not practiced architecture⁴⁹ for twenty years. This

⁴⁸ Located in Chiswick, London, and completed by Voysey in 1902 for Sanderson and Sons, manufacturers of wallpaper, Voysey designed the building so that its width would comfortably accommodate an open roll of wallpaper, with large windows to illuminate the work in progress. It has since been converted into offices (at which point it was renamed "Voysey House"), and a small penthouse was later added behind the roof parapets, which itself has also been converted into office space (see Hitchmough, 1995: 232).

⁴⁹ I make this point in terms of the completion of buildings. According to Hitchmough (1995) Voysey's practice stalled briefly until a flurry of commissions arrived between 1907 and 1909. He designed four houses in 1909, one of his busiest

may explain its resigned, melancholy tone as he outlined his perceptions of his unpopularity as an architect. It is here that Voysey seems most honest, perhaps brutally honest (but by no means apologetic) about his professional life, and I would suggest that he took this opportunity to cast a similarly frank and critical light on his personality. In this opening section, I detail Voysey's account of his personality, not for the sake of contextualising an argument, but because Voysey understood that architecture could form personalities through the same ontological means that his own personality had been formed.

The specific characteristics he listed here are couched in an understanding that his personality was delegated to some degree, and he traced the origins of those key aspects of his character away from himself, crediting their initiation to certain situations, the influence (directly or indirectly) of social and cultural contexts or, as in the following example, his immediate family and friends. He was the third of ten children and the eldest son, inheriting his father's name (it was through his father's side of the family that Voysey could claim to be descended from John Wesley⁵⁰). He shared the company of his elder sisters (Frances and Mary), who, he wrote, "exercised a very salutary and humbling effect upon their brother" so causing the emergence of "highly strung, imaginative, and nervous" aspects of his personality (Voysey, 1931a [Voc/4/6]: 1)⁵¹, qualities which he found beneficial to the many varied tasks he recalled undertaking when, after completing his pupilage, he worked as an assistant in the offices of noted domestic architect George Devey (1820-1886) (Ibid: 4)⁵².

The effect that Voysey's sisters (allegedly) caused in him, and the possibilities these effects enabled in his professional life, show us only one small corner of Voysey's interesting childhood and adolescence. Those authors who have written about Voysey tend to dwell extensively and linearly on this period through what seems like a common "policy",

years of practice, and Hitchmough argues that "when Voysey designed them, at the age of fifty-two, he probably did so in the belief that his practice was regaining momentum after a fallow period of a few years" (Hitchmough, 1995: 201). However, after the fourth house only one more confirmed completion is documented (in Belfast, 1911), and thereafter, the most substantial commissions he received were for small extensions and decorative schemes (and the flow of these steadily dwindled: he received only three such commissions in the 1920's, see Hitchmough, 1995: 230-234). He was asked, and presumably paid, to produce a number of initial designs for clients who, ultimately, lost interest, and he also produced a number of (failed) competition entries (for details of both see Simpson, 1979: 129-137), but these sporadic projects didn't require anything like the scope or detail of a full design scheme. Some of the extra scope and detail required outside producing plans and elevations is explored later in this chapter through the correspondence between Voysey and one of his clients.

⁵⁰ Charles Voysey's great, great grandmother, Susanna Wesley, was the sister of religious reformer John Wesley (who founded the Methodist Church in England) (Hitchmough, 1995: 9).

⁵¹ Although autobiographical, Voysey wrote *Value of hidden influences* in the third person.

⁵² Devey was a member of the Theistic Church, which was founded by Voysey's father, the Reverend Charles Voysey (Durant, 1992: 9).

whereby key aspects of Voysey's adult personality are traced back to a series of trigger-like events and encounters in the first twenty years of his life. This tendency is evident in the work of Brandon Jones (1978, 1998⁵³) Simpson (1979⁵⁴), Hitchmough (1995⁵⁵) and Davey (1995⁵⁶), who all project Voysey's childhood and adolescence indelibly forward into his adult life, prompting (or at least explaining) many of his actions right up to his death (12th February 1941). As such, both Voysey and his biographers share an understanding of his development that proceeded along trajectories, the directions of which were founded early in his life. To understand Voysey and his character as a lifelong reiteration of boyhood influences is undeniably problematic. Then again, their approach may not be entirely incorrect or unreasonable given that Voysey made it clear that this is indeed how he chose to understand himself in certain respects, and that some of his most valued attributes were deliberately and proudly reiterated results of a formative youth, rather than automatic reiterations of the habitual and normal (like his highly strung nervousness): he valued these attributes intensely and consciously chose to reiterate them throughout his adult life in a way more deliberate and voluntary than these authors always allow for.

Voysey's father, Reverend Charles Voysey (1828-1912, "Reverend Voysey" hereafter) features heavily in these reiterations. The first twelve years of his life were frequently disrupted by his father's career, which took them to various locations, mostly in the UK, but also including eighteen months in Craigtown, Jamaica, where Voysey claims that "a kind black nurse found it necessary, in order to keep the baby boy of three quiet, to give him so much sugar that it developed jaundice, which was followed by a weak digestion that lasted for the rest of his life" (Voysey, 1931a [Voc/4/6]: 1). Shortly after the family returned to England, Reverend Voysey's controversial sermons began to attract widespread attention (they had already caused him to be dismissed from his previous parish in London,

⁵³ Brandon-Jones' suggests that Voysey was a staunchly individual "old-fashioned Tory" (Brandon-Jones, 1998: 98), but also suggests that his father, Reverend Voysey, was instrumental in introducing Voysey to the work of John Ruskin, and he further reports that Voysey inherited some of Ruskin's books from his father (Ibid: 96). Out of all the authors mentioned here, only Brandon-Jones ever met Voysey: he was christened by Reverend Voysey and worked in the architectural practice of Voysey's son, (Charles) Cowles Voysey (Ibid: 92-93).

⁵⁴ Simpson suggests that Voysey was "as unyielding to change as his father" (Ibid: 13)

⁵⁵ Like most other authors, Hitchmough argues that the influence of Voysey's father and his tribulations, is "worth evaluating in some detail because they had such a profound, and in some respects disastrous, effect on his *adult* character and behaviour" (Hitchmough, 1995: 11, emphasis added) and whilst she recognises that the effect cannot be quantified, she attributes a number of Voysey's adult beliefs and characteristics to Reverend Voysey's influence (Ibid: 13).

⁵⁶ Davey's opening statement on the continuing influence on Voysey's childhood is interesting for the way he connects that influence to (what he understands to be) key forms and treatments in the nomenclature of his architectural grammar: "Voysey's early years must have been very happy, if strictly regulated, and, perhaps as a result, there is an element of what some have condemned as childishness in all his work: a delight in simple jokes, such as designing an iron bracket to the profile of a client's face, and a love of obvious symbolic imagery: hearts, bull's-eye windows and big green water butts." (Davey, 1995: 89)

after which time he was appointed curate, and then vicar, at Helaugh (North Yorkshire). He was charged with heresy in 1869 and found guilty by the local church authorities. When he appealed to the Privy Council (conducting his own defence) his ongoing trial caught the attention of the national press (Hitchmough, 1995: 10-11). He was found guilty again and offered the opportunity to retract his claims: instead, he re-affirmed them and was swiftly deprived thereafter. Those claims included denying the divinity of Christ and Christ's miracles, and refuting the idea that a loving God could cast his subjects into hell, claims that reflected his rationalist re-reading of the Bible (Ibid).

However, the trial had harvested a number of key supporters and generated sufficient interest and support that, on moving to London shortly after, Reverend Voysey founded the Theistic Church, which solidified the key aspects of his beliefs into a theology. The impact of this on Voysey was assumed sufficiently potent that, prior to an exhibition of his work in 1931, a particularly famous admirer said of him:

“What his father preached to thousands in London, Mr. Voysey has interpreted in stone and colour.” (Betjeman, 1931: 93)

Voysey and his father were close, and part of this closeness may stem from to the fact that Voysey did not consider himself academically adept. Like all the boys of the family he had been sent to Dulwich⁵⁷ for his schooling, but “the eldest son was so backward and stupid that the headmaster was not keen to admit him. The preliminary viva voce so upset his nerves that he appeared more stupid than he really was” (Voysey, 1931a [Voc/4/6]: 3). Because of this, Voysey was schooled at home by his parents: he was taught by his mother at first and, alongside his elder sisters, learned needlework and knitting (Ibid). Thereafter, Voysey recalled that he was “taken in hand to be taught by his father. [...] The father was tender hearted and affectionate to a degree seldom surpassed. And suffered far more than his son when he felt it to be his duty to rap his son's knuckles with his keys, to cure his stupidity” (Ibid: 2). This tongue-in-cheek comment belies the importance of his father's company in terms of the personal result Voysey credited it with:

⁵⁷ Dulwich College (in Southwark, South London) list Voysey as one of their famous alumni: his school number was 892 and he attended from 1872 to 1873 (Dulwich College 2010).

“And he [Rev. Voysey] visited his parishioners throughout a struggling parish in company with his son, who in this way to some extent imbibed his father’s principles, and learnt to reverence his generous nature, which in after life proved to be of more value than a classical education” (Voysey, 1931a [Voc/4/6]: 2)

In this way, Voysey understood that he was receiving important faculties from his father, and of these faculties, one in particular stood out for the possibilities it offered:

“When Providence wants to affect the movement of men’s minds collectively, he sends a few pioneers to work individually. Individuality, not egotism, was a passion with this man, who in consequence disliked all forms of collectivism.” (Voysey, 1931a [Voc/4/6]: 6)

Voysey thus credited the combination of his father’s company and teaching with a lasting appreciation of the human faculties of character and intellect. A much wider world was opened up to him in the realisation that he was not, in fact, obliged to “collective” forms, established elsewhere and followed by (but restraining) the multitude. He could, instead, develop his own ideas and approaches into thoughtful territories of his choosing rather than simply dwelling, uncomfortably and perhaps unhappily, among the ideas of others (such as the staid environment of scholastic learning). This may mark the germination of *individuality*, a concept of key importance to Voysey, and one that he credited to his father’s example⁵⁸. Specifically, individuality was inspired by Reverend Voysey’s aversion to Anglican dogma and his concurrent rejection of fixed, imposed ideas whose fixity quelled the possibility of new ideas and annulled the faculties for generating them anew. This fixity was the natural opposite of individuality, and Voysey termed it *collectivism*. The interplay between defective collectivisms and corrective individualities motivates Voysey’s whole philosophy, and I’ll return to that interplay throughout this chapter to illustrate it. It is worth noting now, however, that he did not understand individuality as a licence for unrestrained journeying into new territories and possibilities: in fact, Voysey credited his

⁵⁸ It should also be noted that Rev. Voysey was credited with introducing Voysey to the works of Ruskin (see footnote 52), whose influence may be equally as potent. John Ruskin (1819-1900) was an acclaimed and highly influential polemicist, and an art/architecture critic who suggested that if architecture was pared back to the perfectibility of rules, anybody could learn them by rote. Humane architecture, he argued, had to be imperfect, or “savage”, because it allowed for invention in the absence of rules, and de-mechanised the human in that process. Davey argues that this had a profound impact on the Arts and Crafts Movement as a whole (Davey, 1995: 18-19).

individuality with producing a highly territorial aspect in both his architectural philosophy and his personality. The territoriality of individuality was a product of the discipline required to produce one's own ideas, which entailed the rejection of the external and different:

“He was insular to the backbone. And could not admit that familiarity with foreign countries was necessary for true culture. The avoidance of fashionable practices [of architectural revivalism] was congenial to his rabid individualism. Obviously this type of mind was regarded by many as a form of egotistical self-isolation. And a form of eccentricity only understandable to those of similar temperament and mental outlook.” (Voysey, 1931a [Voc4/6]: 8).

There is, here, a hint at the price he paid for his beliefs in social and cultural terms. Writing shortly after his death, Voysey's son Cowles⁵⁹ stated that Voysey never had a hobby as such, did not play games, never holidayed, and never travelled overseas (Voysey, C c.1941 [Voc/5/3]: 5).⁶⁰ Nonetheless, in Voysey's own writings and the writings of those who knew him (such as Betjeman (1931) and Brandon-Jones (1976, 1998)), is a sense that individuality produced a defensive stance. Voysey's thoughts were at once freed from collective dogma after his father's example, but in their individuality and the “rabid” attention that individuality required to one's own faculties, they simultaneously produced a constraining, insular logic.

His reflections in *Value of hidden influences* seems to allude, a little sadly, to this irony. Furthermore, despite his germinating teenage discovery of individuality and the recognition that traditional scholarship (such as that he received – briefly – at Dulwich) was a collective instrument, he always regretted his supposed minimal academic ability. He was “haunted by the consciousness of being insufficiently educated in the generally accepted sense of the word; so increasing his natural shyness that he shrank from society and the meeting of strangers to the day of his death” (Voysey, 1931a [Voc/4/6]: 8), although those who knew and wrote of him suggested that he was wry, adequately sociable, and aside from being perhaps a little intense, charming company. Perhaps the melancholy tone in which he wrote

⁵⁹ His full name was Charles Cowles Voysey, but his friends and colleagues referred to him by his middle name, a convention which I will follow here to avoid confusing him with Voysey and Reverend Voysey.

⁶⁰ In fact, this last observation is incorrect: Voysey travelled with the Art Worker's Guild on a brief trip to the Netherlands in 1906 (Brandon-Jones, 1998: 93).

Value of hidden influences fails to do him justice here, and perhaps this is a useful reminder of two important points: the first, that archived manuscripts are by no means unmediated or “clean” sources, and second, that although archives are stilled and unchanging, the person behind the archives was a changeable complexity of moods, ideas, and attitudes.

What these points demonstrate, or at least start to demonstrate, is that Voysey thought of himself as intrinsically caused: he argued, as those who have written on him since have argued, that he was re-behaving attitudes that he had been previously exposed to. From the outset, there is an ironic contradiction between the delegation of his personality to the influences of others and the claim that the principal characteristic he entrained by such means was the necessary fortification of his personality against dogmatic impositions, to wall himself off so that nothing errant or dogmatic would prevent him from forming his own ideas. The principal instance of this contradiction is his apparently unyielding reverence for and emulation of his father’s anti-dogmatic individuality. The apparent impossibility of delegating the acts of possessive self-definition – of being induced into not being induced – is a conundrum that animates and complicates Voysey’s whole approach to architectural design, and the rest of the first half of this chapter is formed by my efforts, and my understanding of Voysey’s efforts, to work through this conundrum and to ascertain how it was implicated in, and productive of, buildings that could manifest effects on future inhabitants. I have started to discuss this here because, as the following two sections demonstrate, personalities and externalities (i.e. that which lies outside the mind) existed in an osmotic relationship, each infusing into the other and mutually entrained. This ontological understanding and the way it informed his architectural output was, I suggest, not merely a model reserved for architectural design. More fundamentally than that, it described the formation of his personality and how he’d become who he was, an unusual mix of fortification and delegation that included preferred ways of being affected, alongside the means (and the conditions that would merit those means) of retreat and deflection. For Voysey, the formation of his personality was a precedent for the process of creating architecture along the same lines and he was, in a way, his own prototype in terms of how to influence and be influenced. This is why I have opened this chapter with a discussion of his personality, and why the remainder of the first half of this chapter discusses how architecture could alter personalities by apprehending them where they could be most profoundly affected.

Thinking at the point of Love:

The task of discussing Voysey's philosophy would be easier if it had a neat, central node through which his conceptions were linked, and from where they radiated out. In place of such a node is a diffuse ethical charge which flows outward and through his more defined understandings. But whilst the centre is indefinite (and perhaps unreasonable of me to hope for), the cause to which he dedicated himself is clear, and his conceptions and observations, though they are variant in themselves, are all routed towards it. This cause – Voysey's overriding aspiration – was to improve thought, and the purpose of his philosophy was to map the ways that thought could thrive and attain a particular kind of excellence, the ways it could stagnate and fail, and the conditions that would lead to either eventuality. Critically, he also believed that thought (of any quality) could not be withheld and would inexorably find some form of outward expression, arguing that the "true motive of our desires will dominate, and turn the scales for good or evil" (Voysey, 1906: 7, 8, 21-22; Voysey, 1932: 4⁶¹). This understanding acts as a loadstone within Voysey's ontology in which the mind cannot have or occupy a sovereign territory (or manifest a solid barrier) between it and the material/social outside world. Introspection was therefore a temporary state, and he conceived of thought with an inexorable, centrifugal momentum.

The importance of thought for Voysey reflects and is reflected by the substantial pleasure he derived from the accumulation of various different considerations: my lasting impression of him is that he enjoyed being thoughtful and found satisfaction in assembling his thoughts into remedial theories that provided steadfast truths and answers (it may have been the quiet thrill of arriving at answers that provided a substantial part of that pleasure). At the same time, thinking was more than just a pastime for Voysey: his philosophy, both in general terms and specific to architecture, relied upon the possibility of a co-existence between what people liked and what people thought. He believed that the most fundamental, normal, and purposeful human act was to develop affections, and it was at the point of affection that thought could potentially achieve both its zenith and its most dismal low. He wrote⁶²:

⁶¹ Many of Voysey's published and unpublished writings include statements to this effect: some are veiled or couched in explicitly moral terms, whilst others are stated in a more factual manner that specifically attended to material incursions or inhabitations. His (unpublished) 1932 *Bookplates, symbolism and philosophy* makes the simplest statement in this respect, that to create something was to inevitably discharge "passions" into it (Voysey, 1932 [SKB458/2]: 4), and the same was true of our deficiencies.

⁶² In my discussions of Voysey I will often span large periods of time between quotes: this is because his outlook, from the early 1900's to his death in 1941, remained fundamentally the same. The only real differences are in the examples he

“No-one will deny that “love” is the most potent motive power known to man. Throughout all ages men have felt this so keenly, that life may be said to be one great struggle towards a just classification of the objects of our affection...” (Voysey, 1904: 71)

And,

“...to enquire of oneself the why and the wherefore of our likes and dislikes is immensely helpful, and stimulating to reason and justice.” (Voysey, 1915: 40-41)

These affection-based acts of liking (and disliking), loving, and enjoying were fundamental to Voysey because he believed they were fundamental to the emergence of character (“our existence here,” he wrote, in the opening to his only full length book *Individuality*, “is for the purpose of growing individual characters.” (Voysey, 1915: 7)⁶³). By identifying the “most potent motive power” of human existence, he identified a point of origin where his hopes for better thought would need to work. In doing so he also hinted at the cerebral and enquiring forms that thought ought to take (hence the emphases on terms of enquiry like “why”, “wherefore”, and “classification”). Locating this eudemonic fountainhead of human character at the affections offered Voysey a site from where he hoped to weave such considered thought, and the nature of that consideration was to analyse, understand, and classify the affections according to the qualities (or deficiencies) they offered. “All we need to acquire” he wrote “is the power to discriminate between good and noble thought and feeling and the baser sort” (Voysey, 1909: 107) and, “It was not enough to have a vague sentimental liking for artistic work, for sound reason must be sought to explain one’s likes and dislikes.” (Voysey, 1931(a) [Voc/4/6]: 6)⁶⁴

used or the subjects he discussed as new influences came to bear on society and architecture. More of these will be outlined as the chapter progresses, but for now it’s important to note that in almost all cases Voysey apprehended changes in society and architecture with the same philosophical rubric rather than changing his philosophy to allow for them, a trait he shares in common with Lubetkin, who also stuck to his guns fiercely. Of my three architects, only Holden allowed for the fallibility of his conceptions to any substantial extent.

⁶³ The full quote reads: “Let us assume that there is a beneficial and omnipotent controlling power, that is perfectly good and perfectly loving: and that our existence here, is for the purpose of growing individual characters.” (Voysey, 1915: 7)

⁶⁴ Similar points are reiterated in Voysey, 1906: 6-7, 25.

Voysey's hopes for architecture were firmly attached to this ethic of confirming, rescuing, or otherwise assisting the emergence of good thought by strengthening human reasoning at the point of affection. This appeal to reasoning should not be interpreted as an appeal to scholasticism. Such efforts, he argued, were limited to the collection and listing of facts as they were materially manifested, whereas Voysey sought and hoped for wisdom, a more intuitive and "spiritual" sort of insight which extended factual knowledge to include the richly meaningful properties that things possessed, but which science (understood as paying attention to the physical alone) could not apprehend (Voysey, 1915: 17-20). Voysey's use of the terms "spiritual" in his written work does not indicate an understanding of material things as god given (although he was clear in his beliefs that there was a "beneficent and omnipotent controlling power" (Ibid: 7)⁵¹), but rather that all things had (and could not be bereft of) character, and that character had to be understood and accounted for in the way things worked. The inevitable suffusing of everything with character in Voysey's conceptions is the start of a complex and interesting ontology which I discuss in the following section. The shape of Voysey's epistemology, on the other hand, is indicated by his recoiling against pure scholasticism as a means of reasoning about this world, though he had no problem with scholastic approaches so long as they were always tempered, perhaps subdued, by spirituality (Ibid: 19). His alternative way of accurately knowing an interconnected ontology of material facts and spiritual apprehensions proposed that objects of study should be broken down into their constituent parts and investigated, almost as though each small part was related in a constructional way as though one were building it (Ibid: 13: 14-15). This process of disassembling, looking, and reassembling was far more productive than simply creating facsimiles of the whole (this was simply imitative, rather than knowledgeable (Ibid)). This would, as I understand it, invoke a kind of wonder, or reverence, for the beauty of the way things fitted together and worked, for the idea that they were the product of endeavour and will. It appears that to work out how something worked was, in some sense, to personify it, that to pay a particular kind of attention to such things that recognised the effort they went to in order to hold together.

His architecture was thus designed to appeal to and assist this very personal and potentially very analytical process which, arguably, reflected the personal and analytical process by which he claimed to have developed his own thinking (through his relationship with his father) and his uncomfortable (if brief) tenure at Dulwich. The nature of that process is outlined in the following section.

The Eudaemon:

“Eudemonic” is a useful term when discussing Voysey’s conceptions: meaning *conducive to happiness* and deriving from the Greek *Eudaemon* – a benevolent demon – it has come to connote a more considered, cerebral happiness, as opposed to the raw hormonal force of elation or ecstasy. It neatly mirrors Voysey’s project of weaving reasoned consideration into the fundamental eudemonic acts of being human (as he conceived it). It also sits well with Voysey’s understanding of the word “love,” which excluded either being in, or falling in, love (hence, I suggest, his recourse to inverted commas around the word (Voysey, 1904: 71)). In excluding the romantic or sexual from his understanding of the term he was left with a remainder which was not only platonic, but also pragmatic and highly reasoned (or at least, with an enhanced capacity to be reasoned about). For this reason I will use the term “affection(s)” instead of “love” to more accurately represent what he really meant, i.e. developing an appreciation, taste, or otherwise reasoned enjoyment for something. Eudemonic is a term of my choosing and I think it best describes this aspect of his thought, though I am not aware of Voysey having used it in his manuscripts or published work.⁶⁵

To describe affection as a fountainhead within Voysey’s philosophy may suggest that he interpreted the affections people formed as somehow elemental, pure, unitary, and influential to the point of deterministic. But Voysey’s thinking did not allow for such simplifications. Affections could not be invented in the confines of the mind: in fact, affections were not even possible unless they were for or about something from an outside world full of things to encounter and like (or dislike). The reality of affections was that they could only exist in a conjoined state, and those things that affections conjoined with brought with them all manner of influences. Voysey understood that affections, being conjoined, were at least as delegated as they were determining, and he understood that “character” was principally the aggregated result of those affections we chose to retain and return to. In other words, character was both motivational and habitual: to build a life that

⁶⁵ That said, Eudaemon-like imagery arises at least three times in his commissioned work and personal effects: first, in a plaster book-end which Voysey is said to have made himself and which he based on his own facial features (Brandon-Jones, 1978: 29), second, an upscaled version of the bookend, carved in stone at a house he designed for George Müntzer (of the building firm F. Müntzer and Son) at Guildford in 1906 (Ibid), and third, in a wallpaper design, *The Demon*, of 1899 (reproduced in Hitchmough, 1995: 50). In all cases the demon seems smiling and benign (as befits Voysey’s religious beliefs), and this repeating motif has often caused me to wonder whether he was aware of the *Eudaemon* or the concept of eudemonia, despite never mentioning it *per se*.

would continue to include those encountered things that our affections identified as good and worthy, and to develop more and better personal faculties to apprehend them with. So understood, a person's existence in the world was inexorably centripetal as well as centrifugal: our most fundamental thoughts leached back into the world of encounters with which they had conjoined.

I've chosen to make and reinforce this point early in my discussion because Voysey's affections profoundly intersect the individual human with the more-than-human. The way Voysey mapped out this populated human existence emphasised an osmosis (rather than a simple "encounter") between a material world with its many objects and morphologies, and the individual together with his/her faculties. The term "encounter" suggests two discrete things becoming proximate or adjacent: osmosis adds a sense that these things are susceptible to one another and that they might encroach on one another in some way, which better describes Voysey's ontology. Clearly, for Voysey, the more-than-human world was far more than a collection of interesting things for already-formulated thought processes to be applied to: at the point of an osmotic encounter they provided fundamental components that completed our fundamental eudemonic circuits, inciting fundamental human faculties of affection, from which to build characters the sought our likes and eschewed our dislikes (Voysey, 1909: 118; 1915: 7). This was emphatically not a matter of correspondence (of messages or impulses being projected over some form of divide and with some form of delivery medium). It was a conjoining which, along with "eudemonic" and "osmosis", are terms that Voysey did not use, but which I've chosen deliberately to describe his understanding that human existence (understood as fundamentally affection-driven) can only be, at least initially, profoundly more-than-human.

In fact, my explanation of this process and the terms I've chosen are rather more analytical than Voysey would have liked. He conceived of affection, character, and the analytical understanding of both in a more symbiotic and organic way, and he understood this to be obviously natural and self evidently normal⁶⁶:

⁶⁶ When Voysey made his claims and observations, they were often made with little to support them. Whereas we might keep our claims "upright" by buttressing them with reasoning, precedent, or evidence, Voysey relied on bold statements delivered with the forceful confidence of his belief (and those things that his belief rendered obvious to him) hoping this would firmly plant his claims. For instance, in his discussion of the importance of "love" (affection) he stated: "No *sane* creature was ever born without the power to love..." (Voysey, 1904: 71, my emphasis) invoking at once a sense of one's potential idiocy/insanity by countering this assertion. Similarly, he would often describe his statements as "obvious" or self evident in some way, and fall back on powerful but untenable comparisons (such as his claim that viewing ugly surroundings was harmful to us in the same way as foul odours were (Voysey, 1909: 113): this was at a time when germ theory was yet to be fully accepted and foul odours ("miasma") were still widely understood to be the means by which

“Reason, conscience, and love are the three faculties that should operate in all we say and do; and by love we mean that emotion of reverence, respect, and admiration for all that we regard as noblest and best. [...] Motive is the keynote to all subsequent action and the fruit of character.” (Voysey, 1906: 6-7)

Whilst the more-than-human is central to Voysey’s philosophy, this quote (from *Reason as a Basis of Art*) suggests that “central” should not be misinterpreted as “equal”. The emphasis on enquiry and reasoning here (and in his written and archived work generally) suggests that the more-than-human should be subordinate, and that its centrality should be functional compared to the attendant human faculties like “reason, conscience, and love...” (Ibid) whose powerful ethical illumination outshines the material and social. Within the osmotic dynamic of affection, the effect of individual faculties seems to be more profound and purposeful and constitutes a cerebral reach that can capture and discipline that conjoined-with existence and exert an ethical influence on it, highlighting the “best” things, and especially the “noblest” things, to be apprehended in the osmotic encounter. This sort of apprehension would seem to be substantially beyond the realm of emotion as that term is understood in sensual or impulsive terms. Voysey believed that the affections could be intelligently attended and ethically equipped, and Voysey’s project was to assure this attending and equipping, so maximising the human command of an inherently more-than-human reality. When I discuss Voysey’s principal aim of improving thought, I refer in particular to these faculties and the noble attributes they were understood to harvest: the thinking that qualified people to command the best from a conjoined reality at the point of conjoining.

This idea of command describes, theoretically speaking, the ideal way for a person to exist in a more-than human reality; with their affections buttressed by reasoning and ethical faculties. However, Voysey’s project to locate the affections within an enhanced intellectual sovereignty was not assured: he was sufficiently astute to recognise from the outset that thought and feeling did not automatically guarantee ethical fortification at this key point. In fact, a substantial element of Voysey’s architectural approach was to create a story of human existence in which lofty capacities were ostensibly the norm (and always the ideal),

disease was transmitted). Such approaches kept Voysey’s critics well nourished. A review of *Individuality* (Voysey, 1915) in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* freely admitted to his skills as an architect and designer, but described his outlook as “without systematic reasoning” and “full of trite moralities” (J.R.F., 1915).

but a very fragile norm that could be threatened by certain key vulnerabilities. The possibility of these vulnerabilities – the key vulnerability, as it were – was provided in his ontology because affections, to exist at all, had to enmesh with and allow the influence of a world beyond the individual and his/her faculties (a world full of things to like and dislike). By definition, affections could not be insulated in the mind, and the world they conjoined with (especially the world at the turn of the century when Voysey was practising) seemed to be full of malign influences that had been crafted with an appealing nature, using that appeal as a currency with which to charm our affections and by-pass those processes of consideration and evaluation on which he placed such importance. The affectionate osmosis between the individual human and the social and material worlds provided equally for nobility and fallibility.

Investigating this fallibility will eventually return this discussion to collectivism. Before doing so, however, I want to trace how the above line of thought outlines another key feature of Voysey's ontology. Although he specifically aimed to equip the mind with faculties of reason and ethics at the point of affections, he simultaneously realised that the material and social aspects of the world were also equipped. The material aspect of the world – that of stuff and objects – had a dual capacity. It had the capacity to affect the mind *per se* in an unaltered state, but moreover, that capacity was accessible to people who could expand and alter its influence. He wrote: “All objects possess intrinsic qualities, having a direct influence on our minds and emotions, but, in addition, we invest them with associations” (Voysey, 1911: 60). Voysey outlined this latter process with a (very) simple example:

“If I cannot be graceful and comely, I can at least have a graceful and comely umbrella, and in that way help keep up my interest in those qualities” (Voysey, 1909: 112)

In short, things could be given ideas that they did not ordinarily have – the capacity of material was porous and accessible such that people could commandeer, expand and direct it to a given purpose. Voysey's umbrella, in this instance, was suffused with some typically noble qualities which could be conjoined with it. It also demonstrates Voysey's thesis that the world we were encountering/conjoining did not exist in some blank and natural state: it accommodated a huge variety of human intent, some of which was, like his umbrella,

graceful and comely, and some of which was not. In this way, our characters, via our affections, yielded to the ideas and intentions contained in the things and objects we encountered (in a centripetal sense), and these things and objects also absorbed the thoughts, feelings, and intentions that we inevitably expressed (centrifugally). Voysey outlined this point a number of times, for instance: "...the ugliness in our homes is due to ugliness in our character far more than to poverty or ignorance," he wrote (Voysey, 1906: 22) and "Sincere thought and feeling is transmittable through things material, soul responds to soul. [...] How else do we explain the emotions we receive from works of art?" (Voysey, 1915: 17).

The possibility that this presented to Voysey was that, with sufficient reasoning and exercise of faculties, not only could people apprehend the best, noblest aspects of that which they encountered affectionately, but they could return that favour to the material world in that same osmotic moment. This raises a number of interesting possibilities, all of which seem to share an essential feature: that of rationalising a plausible interface between people and materialities from which to practice architecture that could have an effect. Voysey's understanding of plausibility was formed between the possibility that we could define the content of what could be encountered, and the possibility of engineering the key point of the encounter, the affections, to conjoin with only the best kind of encounters.

The porosity of material things in Voysey's philosophy assumed that materials could both absorb our thoughts and feelings, and repeat them or render them legible in some way, which raised ethical questions for Voysey himself. In what sounds like a quantitative understanding of a qualitative logic, the osmotic encounter that affections allowed for (and which allowed for the mutual manipulation and vulnerability of both characters and materialities) could be purified by the sort of reasoned thought that he proposed. If, by attending the affections with "reason, conscience, and love", we could favour the best things to affect and constitute us and reject or somehow annul the more malign influences we might encounter, that system of personal purification would eventually extend to the world of objects and materials. As long as we hoped for and sought the noble and ethical from the world and remained able to reject the inadequate and malign, this dual regime of demand and rejection would leave inadequate and malign forms in a state of disuse, and the demand for the noble would lead to a more-than-human world replete with noble forms waiting to be encountered. This self-reinforcing logic seems to sit at the heart of Voysey's

hopes, both as a means to the better (nobler) thought he wished to see of people, and as a means to remove the malign influences that might threaten it. It also demonstrates his understanding that the key to achieving nobility was not contained entirely within the faculties, but in generating an environment replete with noble possibilities, thus:

“It is for us to kindle the thought and feeling that shall form the motive power by which material forces are turned to good account.” (Voysey, 1909: 103)

And,

“Let us then see to it that our work is palpitating with sincere and noble thought and feeling, whatever our work may be.” (Ibid: 109)

It is also clear that having affections, if interpreted as a particular act of consuming, was also an act of crafting: Voysey looked to and hoped for an element of craftsmanship in everyone. In the first instance, the simple act of choosing had implications of craft for the way its regime of demand and rejection re-made the material world. Our surroundings were a crafted reflection of both our tastes and our grasp of noble faculties. For the most part, this was how the centrifugal part of Voysey’s ontology worked, although the individual may not believe it...

“[T]he great majority do not regard their possessions as having anything to do with their own personal characters, and will resent such a suggestion.” (Voysey, 1906: 23)

For those like Voysey, however, who were actually involved in the design and production of these materialities, the ramifications were more immediate and demanded “generosity”: that is, to be literally generous with the noble and benevolent content of a designed or produced material form (Voysey, 1909: 118, 120). Because Voysey understood that the materials he worked with were porous (that they could be commandeered and used to reflect and reiterate ideas), he also understood that it was the concomitant duty of designers and craftsmen to take advantage of this porosity. There were, however, no specific means of doing so: Voysey understood this to be the natural and normal result of an osmotic reality, and the intentions of designers and craftsmen would essentially flow into an object

as it was created by virtue of proximity and absorption rather than inscription. Unfortunately, this provided equally for the possibility of failure: material could just as easily reflect our base motives and inadequacies. And when such materials provided inadequate cues to our affections, it was a very human act of inadequacy given that those materials simply acted as extensions of our intentions.

Indeed, it was not so much an ambition to render the osmotic encounter to the benefit of our faculties as it was a necessity and an obligation. Voysey recognised the possibility that, if we failed to engage with the world in this particularly wilful manner, we were essentially submitting to it instead, allowing a sensual world of material offerings to define us without question:

“...we have run after the perfection of the machine and preferred it to the perfection of the human heart.” (Voysey, 1909: 108)

Running through Voysey’s ontological understanding is an ethical imperative to avoid this by consistently bringing ourselves to bear on the material world and that, if we are lacking, or if our faculties fail us, we would default to base and unconsidered offerings which profoundly undermined his principal aim (of improving thought). If people were too content (or idle) to form affections for things without adequate faculties in attendance, the things they liked, and the characters they developed, would remain stagnant.

The philosophy outlined here, in which an osmosis between the individual and the more-than-human is enabled by affectionate acts of liking and disliking, is the source of Voysey’s architectural approach, his system of ethics, and his motivation. But, interestingly, there are points in his published and archival work where he abandons the osmotic idea in favour of an idealised separation between “physical” and “spiritual” nature (“spiritual” connoting the faculty-laden individual mind⁶⁷):

“Our nature has always been twofold, viz., material and spiritual.” (Voysey, 1909: 104)

⁶⁷ In Voysey’s earlier publications, he used the word “higher” instead of “spiritual” to describe the noble thinking he hoped to find in people.

In an early pamphlet, he went so far to describe them as “separate spheres” (Voysey, 1906: 11). This may reflect the complexity of an approach that attempts, as he did, to combine and account for the cerebral and the corporeal in the same moment (of affection), and it may equally reflect the fact that this conjoining wasn’t supposed to be equal so far as he was concerned, but skewed in favour of people and subordinating the material to their command. It may also admit to the tension between trying to combine two things that obviously engage one another profoundly, but are self-evidently distinct: this causes me to wonder whether he used the idea of affection as a third “sphere”, activated by the encounter and lifting elements from both the physical and higher spheres, ordinarily distinct, into a different space of affection that is neither “physical” or “higher” but surrogates elements of both, always aiming to render the result to the advantage of our faculties. As he wrote:

“[I]n early life men learn to separate their characters, and live two lives. One which has a moral purpose, and one which is purely material. Instead of which we ought to combine the two, and so remain more conscious of the moral significance of all matter, mindful too, that matter is merely the vehicle for the expression of thought and feeling, and the school-house of character.”
(Voysey, 1915: 53)

This suggests the possibility that Voysey’s “separate spheres” (1906: 11) is a statement of policy, and whilst his ontology admits to the osmosis between the individual mind and the external world of materials and things, it may be that he sought a degree of distinction between them in practice so that the more cerebral faculties might remain ascendant.

At this stage in my account we can start to review the construction of plausibility in Voysey’s approach to architecture, despite the fact that architecture has not been particularly emphasised so far. Indeed, it is apparent that when Voysey considered the plausibility of enacting ideas through materials he worked at a general level which included architecture only as part of the general schema of a combined ontology and epistemology. Specifically, the combined contradiction of his personality, understood as both delegation and fortification (which I discussed in the previous section) starts to emerge as a key aspect of how to be affected and how to manage affects with and through non-human things at the point of their encounter, which Voysey understood as inexorable *per se*, a constantly

reiterating osmosis wherein the personal and internal had to be constituted by and constituting of impersonal externals. This combined centrifugal and centripetal ontology was, I suggest, as true for existence generally as it was for him personally, a plausible up-scaling of his delegated and fortified character as he understood it.

The affect of affections, the sense that they faced onto and inexorably encountered the full force and scope of a world to encounter (so producing that osmotic connection) were empowered: they could, in the face of vast potential, discriminate, curtail, and sustain in a way that did not allow the person and personality in the osmotic dynamic to control what they encountered as such, but *did* allow them to retain in some sense those more favourable encounters. Affections were, in this sense, affectually astute by utilising the contradiction of delegation and fortification that Voysey understood from his own experience. It admitted to the necessity of an extra-individual world and how we (and he) were constituted by delegation through an osmotic ontology with it (as affectionate beings in need of a body of things to like), but it also outlined affectual empowerment therein that converted the vulnerability of delegation into an astute presence of deflection and retention.

Plausibility seems to spring from this principle in two ways. In the first instance, there is an understanding that people were accessible through their affections and the discrimination that was attached to them. As an architect, Voysey could use the fact that people constituted the inner self of personality through the affectionate experience of the encounterable world outside them. But crucially, this centrifugal and centripetal process repeatedly exposed the outside world to affectionate faculties in a cyclic motion within that osmotic process which, through processes of discrimination (reasoned preference) was able to gradually reproduce and populate that social and material world with accretions of those preferences. The more astute you were, the more this possibility was asserted, and Voysey constituted his approach to architectural design around such an astute presence (itself based on his finely honed affections). As an architect, he could create spaces for inhabitations which his own affections had purified of the malign and mediocre, and suffused with more favourable ideas and features. In essence, he could return a purified material form to the world of encounters, and by making that encounterable world more acceptable to the affectionate encountering that defined osmotic human existence, Voysey arrived at a route-like plausibility for his buildings.

Collective failures of thought:

I noted earlier that for Voysey the whole point of refining the affections by the application of thought was to allow those more noble attributes to fill and beneficially define the mental inner sanctum of “character” (which, in Voysey’s terms, can be understood as the reverently filed cumulative proceeds of the affections, a mental shrine to the things we like and seek and a reminder of what to eschew). Evidently, those same affections were also intended to identify and reject the malign, that which might harm and diminish us. But the very nature of human affections left us vulnerable in key ways, thus:

“What we love we imitate, and we love the line of least resistance. We love to contemplate rules and regulations, and flow with the great river of officialdom. But were we left without control to work out our own salvation, the native love in us would still lead us to imitate what we thought best. We should still try to perpetuate all that we thought good.” (Voysey, 1919: 25)

Malign, but, as the above quote (from *On Town Planning*) shows, contrived with an appeal, and crafted to slip through the affections using appeal as a currency. It also hints at Voysey’s complex relationship with and understanding of imitation, as both something couched in the affectionately reasoned individual character (“the native love in us would still lead us to imitate what we thought best”) and equally liable to a more base existence: as a lure to wean an individual off thought as a process, and onto thought as already-thought provisions that were shared *en-masse* such as “rules and regulations” and “the great river of officialdom”. Voysey referred to this as *collectivism*, and to understand his view of collectivism is to understand the most substantial threat to thought and the affections as Voysey conceived them, not least because collectivism operated on affectionate terms: it was fundamentally easy to like.

Voysey discussed collectivism in terms of a natural opposite: *individuality*. Interestingly, he expended more effort (and many more words) describing collectivism than he did individuality (this was even the case in *Individuality*, his only full length book (Voysey, 1915)). Perhaps he believed that a full description of the evils of collectivism would leave the only decent route (i.e. individuality) starkly evident without the need for clarification, especially if it was a natural opposite (and, thus, simply required a reverse logic to

collectivism). But I would argue that a more convincing explanation can be found in the above quote and the suggestion that, if a way could be found to ameliorate the oppressive weight of collectivism, peoples' indigenous natural faculties would re-assert and beneficially serve their characters at the point of affection (“[W]ere we left without control to work out our own salvation, the native love in us would still lead us to imitate what we thought best...” (Voysey, 1919: 25)). Essentially, Voysey's project to invigorate thought was not so much a case of creating new and better faculties, but having considerable faith in the normal (albeit oppressed) human faculties and the possibility of their liberation.

Collectivism, put most simply, was understood as provision of and submission to already defined and established standards: it displaced the individual thought processes by providing a ready-made alternative that one could, in a sense, acquire complete and ready for use, without need of investing thought and consideration into creating one anew. What Voysey found most offensive about collectivism was the way it mothballed the intellectual and ethical faculties of the individual and devolved those considerations to mass provisions that were, essentially, lists of behaviours to be repeated. That is, the displacement of character with conduct.

“Individuality being the basis of character, collectivism can have little effect that is not harmful to its development. Conduct can be controlled by collective action, but conduct is not character, nor is it always the result of character.”
(Voysey, 1915: 37-38)

In providing lists of acceptable conduct and proper behaviours, collectivism essentially starved independent thought. Voysey believed that a person should conduct themselves as a result of the choices they formed, which followed the logic of their characters, and therefore their affections – that which they liked, disliked, and (Voysey hoped) that which they found ethical and just. Collective behaviour severed the umbilical between character and conduct so that a person did not behave themselves, but behaved another disembodied self, or perhaps more accurately, a homogenised non-self. Collectively provided conducts looked after themselves: they were pre-formed and pre-justified.

The horror of collectivism, for Voysey, was the way it isolated and annulled our own thinking through such acts of collective imitation, which dulled the potential vibrancy of

thought into habitual following or aligning (Voysey, 1923: 3). To follow a pre-ordained way of life did not require much in the way of consideration (because it did not really require an individual to arrive at decisions). Collectivism allowed for a passive absorption of ready-made behaviours, and Voysey recoiled from this casual passiveness because of the way it truncated the need to engage with higher thoughts and considerations. What collectivism actually did was to deploy motivations and actions into people's lives that were not their own, self generated, thoughts and characters. Collective imitation did not call for this exercise of feeling and consideration. As a result, Voysey understood these behaviours as inherently false. A true act was a direct outcome of an individual's own thoughtfully mediated character, but if the act came from another source, as was the case with collective imitations, then it was effectively a pretence (even if eschewing such pretences gave rise to an antisocial kind of peculiarity):

“It is better to give expression to honest personal feeling than to pretend to feelings which we have not got. It is painful enough to feel peculiar, and attract attention, but far worse to live a false life – to make false pretences and either deliberately or carelessly to convey a false impression.” (Voysey, 1906: 20)

The logic of collectivism meant that dishonesty would come to define the way people acted: it didn't just dull the vibrancy of thought, it also undermined an individual's ethical self-containment and the possibility of sincerity. To have this self containment breached meant that an individual was no longer his or her own outcome – a sincere outcome – but a surface of pretences. For an individual to be original (as in, of their own origin) Voysey believed he had to restore something of this self-containment to them, from which sincerity would follow. Thus;

“True originality is the outcome of sincerity. If the artist's motive is to purify character and stimulate the higher affections, he is engaged on a mission of common interest to humanity.” (Voysey, 1906: 28)

As the opposite of individuality, collectivism also starved character, and the individual development of character, by offering the individual a ready-made suite of behaviours which, again, could be repeatedly deployed in everyday life without having to build up a strata of personal reasoning and motivations that attached those acts to the service of a

body of noble and ethical outcomes. Voysey believed that such “higher” thoughts could only be arrived at through individual effort, and that a large part of their value lay in the fact that an individual had worked to achieve them. If no effort had been expended in their creation – if they had been essentially purchased whole – then a key part of the process had been circumvented. To understand how or why collectivism worked is to return to the fundamental affectionate acts of Voysey’s ontology: something like collectivism works when it combines with and completes (in an osmotic kind of way) an individual’s affections, and brings to that combining an offering that is likeable or attractive.

Collectivism’s attractive offering was to provide a route of minimal resistance, and especially minimal mental effort, with a suite of ready-made answers and behaviours that were both neat and widely shared, which solved a number of inter-personal problems into the bargain. Voysey was suspicious of this neatness: “It seems fatally easy”, Voysey wrote, “to generalise and fasten onto general likenesses. And so much more easy than to perceive differences. Symmetrical arrangement is more ready to the hand of the unskilled than the harmonious arrangement of differences and unlikenesses [*sic*]” (Voysey, 1919: 25). The displacement of individual thought with neat and easy collective offerings damaged thought not only by denying it a territory (by capping and stilling ideas), but also denying it nourishment by blanching the variegated nature of reality with likenesses and symmetries. He referred to it as being *material* by which he meant, most simply, the stripping down of everything in the encounterable world to a format so blandly functional as to form a strange kind of servility: one which did people’s thinking for them, but which rendered them servile to the process of being thought for too insofar as it divorced them from their will. As he described it in *Individuality*:

“The fascination of having our thinking done for us is very real to minds already jaded by material interests, and so the needs of the flesh will jostle out the thoughts of the spirit. And thus we find collectivism most powerful in relieving us from personal responsibility and anxiety, we require little mental effort in obeying established habits, and after a time become more automatic in thought and action. It’s a kind of lathe process that turns off all individual knots and angles, and smoothes us all down to one standard pattern.” (Voysey, 1915: 40-41)

Voysey's understanding of collectivism is perhaps most interestingly described in *On Town Planning* (Voysey: 1919) in which he noted that people enjoyed considering how other people should behave, and enjoyed creating social prescriptions that would unify and order human affairs. However, he suggests and then hovers between two explanations for the collective preference. He explains, on the first hand, that we seem naturally predisposed to such collective modes of thought, and that "we delight to picture how other people should behave..." and that we enjoyed arriving at generalisations (Ibid: 25). Alternatively, and in almost the same breath, he suggests that the prominence of science and material provision, resultant of an industrial age, has produced a starvation of the spiritual and imaginative faculties wherein "the throb of the machine has taken the place of the throb of the human heart" (Ibid). It is difficult to know from this whether it is circumstance (an industrial age) that has foisted collectivism on people, or whether its origins are far closer and emanate from a dark corner of the human psyche. A further possibility, which Voysey outlined in *Reason as a basis of art* (Voysey: 1906) is a critique of contemporary polite society; that to do as others do is polite, sociable, and the height of manners (Ibid: 15), whereas to act as your individual character suggests is, at best, ostentatious and, at worst, repellent (Ibid: 20). He variously extended this social critique to institutions and traditions that reinforced such behaviour, such as trades unions (Voysey, 1915: 42) and planning authorities (Voysey, 1919: 25), and he saved his most bitter criticisms for a scholastic tradition which had always judged him to be inadequate (Voysey, 1906: 19; 1909: 107, 121; 1915: 20). All of these institutions, along with the influence of polite society, created an environment that was oppressively rich in collective impulses.

It's important to note that, for Voysey, sameness and collectivism were not the same thing. Collectivism was an imposed sameness, but sameness could also be produced through a common core of goodness (spirituality). To be the same or to be similar wasn't the problem, and Voysey's anti-collective stance was not some precursor of postmodernism or anarchism or the start of unbridled choice. The difference was that collectivist sameness was imposed and degenerated the faculties because it was a sameness that was copied, whereas individual sameness was arrived at and chosen individually by analytical effort of will rather than copied: the sameness in this case was the logical outcome of those naturally occurring fundamentals, revealed as collectivist aberrations were removed from consciousness. Individual sameness, in contrast to collective sameness, was made up of noble concepts, and their being *discovered* was key to cementing that nobility. Imposed

collective behaviour couldn't achieve such heights: it had to operate at lower levels of habit, sensuality and materiality, whereas the retention of the use of discriminatory faculties at the affectionate point of encountering retained the ability to recognise and deflect the errant.

To take an example, Voysey considered that revivalism in architecture was a potent outpost of collective impulses in general (although it wasn't an exact fit). To apprehend architectural history as if it were a catalogue, selecting and assembling already-designed forms and features into a building, seemed to exemplify imitative behaviour in the architectural profession: it certainly emphasised the minimal thought it required, as Voysey argued that such selections were made not from a basis of consideration, but of whim, fancy, and fashion. This particular architectural historiography had particular material effects: it made it easy and normal to produce vulgar buildings that bristled with over-elaborated historical indulgences. Voysey did not make such criticisms as an outsider: he had experienced this at first hand whilst working in George Devey's practice, recounted in *1874 and after*.

“Asked by his client to join a house party, he [Devey] would make the most fascinating, catch-penny sketches while dressing for dinner and present them during dessert, charming everyone, but getting them worked out by clerks who had to make all detail on the traditional lines of a bastard Jacobean period. [...] Given the style and period, books were drawn from the library shelves and approved examples of details were chosen; a chimneypiece or chimney, an oriel, a door, or a window from several books. Such things as these were copied and welded together and like the ingredients of a Christmas pudding, equally hard to digest.” (Voysey, 1931(b): 91)

To Voysey's mind, this imposed a homogenised and unitary approach to a profession which, by definition, required a far more flexible, insightful, and deductive stance. More specifically, that approach was the homogenisation of precedence, such that revivalism (sustained and eased by a particular architectural historiography), produced buildings that served the needs of their original creators, rather than the current needs of contemporary inhabitants and inhabitation. This is not to say that Voysey was disparaging about “other” forms of architecture, in that:

“The finest architecture the world has ever seen has always been the honest expression of human needs and aspirations. And this is equally true of the noblest classical buildings. If we lived and thought and felt as Greeks, Greek architecture would be a true expression for us.” (Voysey, 1911 [Voc/3/2]: 60)

Rather, Voysey disparaged revivalism for the way it eroded and enfeebled the architect’s faculties through the cumulative effect of multiple acts of imitation: the assembling of already-designed forms required minimal consideration as compared to designing a building anew, and not merely because of eschewing a labour-saving historiography. Honest design required the application of analytical thought at a number of complex levels: from an understanding of the character and needs of the inhabitant, to a further understanding of how the building might accommodate this and the nurturing of spiritualities. This was a substantially bigger task than “Christmas pudding” architecture which was, in effect, a habitual and stilled practice of architecture that repeated existing work from a historical repository without doing anything new, with the aim “that we may create beauty intelligently, with a holy purpose; and not imitate as apes the semblance of fine feeling, while remaining gross and stagnant.” (Voysey, 1906: 14)

Voysey’s discussion of revivalism is useful at this point because it reveals two further ramifications of the collective way of thinking as he saw it: the first of these is a particularly still type of “gross and stagnant” temporality. For a collective idea to be made available to (or foisted upon) the public, it had to give the impression of being finished, stilled, and in a way, insulated so that progress would not invalidate it, nor the passage of time cause it to decay.

“[T]he great danger of collectivist action is in the acceptance of a given idea as final, and fixed in its value; silencing the individual conscience and discouraging personal criticism and enquiry.” (Voysey, 1915: 39)

The danger in accepting these ideas as complete and irrefutable from the outset was that it left no room for their criticism, modification, or rejection. Voysey also considered it unnatural: he argued (in an unpublished article of 1923 titled *Tradition and Individuality in Art*) that perpetual progress was a universal law of nature and, by understanding nature to be

inherently beneficial, Voysey was always suspicious about the fixity of social or material offerings that were declared “finished”:

“[W]e must leave the door perpetually open for progress and welcome (critically if you like) all attempts to improve our traditional modes and methods.” (Voysey, 1923 [Voc/3/1]: 5)

This, Voysey’s preferred temporal understanding, can be traced back to the Rev. Voysey’s heresy trial. To declare that an idea is finished (i.e. that it represents the maximum possible extent of progress and is the final and best outcome) logically demands that alternative ideas, such as the Rev. Voysey’s alternative practices, are inferior and hazardous to a shared dogmatic perfection. Voysey recognised that such forms of collectivism generated a powerful temporal component of stillness, often understood as “tradition” (Voysey, 1923 [Voc/3/1]: 3) and countered this with a progressive temporality.

Having identified collectivism as an errant mode of imitation, and having defined revivalism as a particularly temporal example of collective unconsidered imitation in architecture, Voysey also developed an understanding as to the correct kind of imitation for architectural practice to proceed from. *Fitness* was central to this understanding and Voysey’s view of nature is essential to his understanding of fitness: “If we would go humbly to nature more” he argued “we should have a juster [*sic*] reverence for mans’ work [...]. What we want is a more reverent study of nature and nature’s ways” (Voysey, 1909: 111). Voysey’s own reverence for “nature’s ways” was in its fidelity to current requirements and current conditions, and he hoped to emulate the way that nature, as he understood it, addressed the world by attending to the world directly, rather than falling back on, for example, revivalism: he argued that “If fitness is to be our law, as it is nature’s law, we must not pin our conceptions to pre-existing forms too rigidly” (Ibid: 116). Voysey did not propose transcribing nature as a keynote of architectural design, but he did appreciate its logic as a metaphor for how architecture ought to think about the production of buildings. Nature, observed Voysey, developed into the forms it needed to thrive most effectively, and no individual part clashed with another, or wasted any of its efforts on frivolity – it only worked towards achieving the very best form, as fit as possible for its purpose, its conditions, and its requirements (Ibid: 114-117; 1915: 14-16), though there were also more

directly architectural cues as to how errant imitation should be displaced by fitness, and Voysey had an abiding admiration for Gothic architecture in this sense:

“Gothic architecture grew out of the careful consideration of requirements and conditions, and obedience to the natural qualities of materials, in fact, all the best building throughout the world has grown that way, and was ever so created, until men became corrupted by materialistic ideas, and the mode of expression was regarded as more important than the conditions and requirements with which they were dealing.” (Voysey, 1915: 61)

The brilliance of the Gothic, for Voysey, was a function of an isolationism which, in the same moment as isolating itself from collectivist impulses, implicated Gothic architecture deeply into the task it had to fulfil in a way that was more connected with genuine needs and aspirations: it was, in effect, a replication of the fidelity of nature in architecture and a deflection of the errant idea that we ought to live as, for example, Greeks. Instead, fitness provided for the very best interests of people and, I would suggest, it was this provision and the honesty of that provision that would appeal to affections and allow Voysey’s offerings to be *liked*.

An ontology of cyclic osmosis through which Voysey understood personal engagements with a world of encounters defines Voysey’s theoretical hopes for plausibility, one in which the affections were understood as faculties that could control what, from the encounterable world, was knowingly imitated and combined with other fundamentally *good* imitations. Voysey hoped that he could improve people by filling those parts of the encounterable world he controlled with good things to imitate (though their goodness was, of course, identified by his own affections which he never really saw fit to question). Perhaps more than this, he also hoped that he could make his offerings liked and likable by routing them through an understanding of natural logic (and a compatible appreciation for the Gothic) which resulted in fitness, to serve people’s needs directly and beneficially, without frivolity, and in a way that was directly relevant – “fit” – to them. I would suggest that he also hoped this would work as an example of what proper affections, attended by consideration, could achieve in terms of seeing past or deflecting already-thought and already-finished provisions which were not fit. Voysey’s understanding of plausibility appears to hope that dwelling in a fit environment might produce fit people who would appreciate not only the

fitness of his architectural offerings (the eudaemonic first stage of being accepted through their affections), but the agency that the building also embodied through ignoring and deflecting the errant: in short, that it might act as an exemplar that was not only beneficial to future inhabitants, but demonstrated, or at least hinted at, the knowing fortifications and delegations through which it had attained that beneficence, and offered itself as an example of how inhabitants might also achieve cogent deflections in their affectionately osmotic relationship with a world which was habitually errant, through materialism, revivalism, and other –isms that he treated under the heading of collectivism which provided ready-made thinking and already decided decisions which appealed to that errant corner of people’s selves that appreciated such offerings, albeit mistakenly and to their continued detriment. Perhaps the most overt suggestion of this possibility comes from *On Craftsmanship* (Voysey, 1904) in which he stated:

“Undoubtedly the love of ideas outside ourselves helps to make joy in our work manifest. Think of the merriment of the medieval craftsman who rejoiced to see other people laugh with him. Happiness is only possible when shared, and so we feel most happy when we see others derive happiness from our craftsmanship, when we can turn men’s thoughts and affections to the highest in nature. For art is not intended only to please. Hence we must love the best in order to inspire such love in others through our own work.” (Voysey, 1904: 72)

I outline some of these offerings in their apparently mundane forms (doors, rooflines, floorboards, bath enclosures) in the next section in terms of how Voysey tended to these forms (essentially a cache of his own imitations articulated materially) in the process of their being actualised into actually existing buildings, in which different articulations of plausibility are opened up and explored, before I proceed to discuss the plausibilities that are produced by current inhabitations of Voysey’s buildings.

Extending Voysey’s affections through the built form:

Depending on the stage of progress, architectural design occupies a variety of different materialities which vary in their intensities. The least material of these materialities – the one in which the actual materiality is held in virtual potential rather than taking form – is the two-dimensional stage of drawings and ideas. Voysey’s sovereignty over this stage,

whilst not absolute, was profound and allowed him the maximum scope in terms of design possibilities, ideas and indulgencies, before the building started to solidify into its actual form. In addition to being the most “virtual” stage, this was also the most personal and exclusive stage, where the building was captive to (and emergent from) Voysey’s efforts alone with only the client’s means and needs to consider (which I will discuss shortly). Voysey obviously relished this stage of his work, and something of this is recalled by his son Cowles:

“I was always astounded by the rapidity of my father’s method of working. He generally made his own drawings [...]. During a week-end he would make a set of one-eighth scale working drawings for a medium sized house.” (Voysey, C. 1941 [Voc/6/9/6])

The transition from the personal and virtual materiality of design to the actual materiality of executing the design is marked by an abrupt shift from a bounded and unitary territory (commanded by Voysey and occupied by the proto-house and (ostensibly) the client) to a networked existence of delegations and negotiations which involves a variety of others: human others (like masons, decorators, plumbers, and etcetera) and non-human others (like stone, paint, drainage, and etcetera). These “others” default to an ideal and highly compliant existence during the personal-virtual design stage, precisely and quietly achieving Voysey’s ideas in advance, but when the proto-house is no longer insulated in the virtual it becomes necessarily connected to the imperfect reality and vagaries of the others it needs to enable its actual materiality. The architect’s presence in this new environment is mostly textual, contained in drawings and documents that are passed to the contractors. I will not discuss the drawings at any length here: Voysey was evidently a skilled draftsman but his plans and elevations are, for obvious reasons, standardised to show locations and dimensions in much the same way as any contemporary drawing⁶⁸. Of more interest to me are the Specification of Works, a document that accompanied the drawings and ordinarily contained instructions as to, for example, surface treatments, glazing, joinery, fittings, and etcetera.

⁶⁸ His working drawings are a different matter, and were painstakingly drawn and coloured.

A copy of the specification for *Broad Leys*⁶⁹, one of Voysey's larger projects (a lakeside holiday home for a prominent industrialist, now owned by the Windermere Motor Boat Racing Club) survives in the R.I.B.A Manuscripts (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]) and charts the networked spatiality of the house by specifying the extent and destination of the various connections. For instance, the cement had to be procured from one of two specific companies⁷⁰, whilst specific materials from specific suppliers were defined for the kitchen floor⁷¹, chimneypots⁷², roofing slates⁷³, ventilation grills⁷⁴, and paints⁷⁵. *Broad Leys'* Specification of Works begins to sound more and more like a spatial exercise in which Voysey, recognising the networked existence of *Broad Leys'* construction and the multiple influences displacing his sovereignty, apprehends those multiples and constrains them, attempting to spread his sovereignty along the connections that were necessary for achieving, for example, a chimneypot. When, for instance, it came to the front door, Voysey created a precision network, defining the direction, extent and purpose of each connection required (having specified separately that the timber should be English oak):

“Front door. Strap hinges to be provided by Mr W. B. Reynolds of 28 Victoria Street, p.c. £4.5.0 the pair exclusive of packing and carriage and two 9” brass barrel bolts No. “819” from Messrs Comyn Ching and Company, Castle Street, Long Acre, WC, p.c. 3/9 each and provide the sum of £1.10.0 for lock and two knobs and 3 keys to be approved.” (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: ixx)

Voysey's approach to the network and the way the building came together seems to replicate and extend the control that virtuality had offered him by petrifying the network

⁶⁹ Located at Ghyll Head, near Windermere, Cumbria, and completed by Voysey in 1898 for a wealthy industrialist, Broad Leys is currently the home to the Windermere Motor-boat Racing Club, who operate the building as a club house and boutique hotel with restaurant. As at nearby Moor Crag, the gardens were laid out by noted landscape architect Thomas Mawson (see Hitchmough, 1995: 231).

⁷⁰ From Messrs. O. Trenchmann and co. of Hartlepool, or Messrs. Graves, Bull and Lakin of Paddington. (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: v)

⁷¹ Voysey specified 1½” Shap granite from Shap Granite Paving Company for the most part, otherwise local stone tooled, rubbed and bedded onto 3” concrete (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: vi)

⁷² Voysey specified 3’ red earthenware chimneypots for each flue from Stanley Bros. Ltd of Nuneaton. (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: x)

⁷³ Voysey specified: “Roof. Cover the roof with 2nd quality Green Westmoreland slates from Tilberthwaite Quarry.” (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: xiv), worthy of note because he almost always specified highest quality materials.

⁷⁴ For each exhaust flue, Voysey specified one “Voysey” pattern exhaust ventilator from Comyn Ching, painted white four times (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: ixxx) – this was a pattern of his own design, and Comyn Ching was one of a handful of companies who produced Voysey metalwork designs. Comyn Ching seemed to produce larger ironwork pieces, whereas Thomas Elsey and co. produced smaller more delicate items (such as light fittings) to Voysey's designs in steel, bronze, brass or copper. Items of a more mechanical nature were provided by W. Bainbridge Reynolds (see Bury: 1978).

⁷⁵ Voysey specified that the colouring would be made with best oil white lead and purified linseed by Mander and co. (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: xxxvi)

and systematically deleting the alternative possibilities and agencies that a network might offer (and which might undermine him). A closer examination of *Broad Ley's* door, for instance, reveals that all the connections he petrifies there lead to a foundry or blacksmith that produced Voysey's own metalwork designs (on which see Bury: 1978). It appears as though his efforts served not only to constrain the network and the potential agency of connectedness, but also to enhance his position in the network, achieved in a two-pronged manner by strictly defining particular connections, and contriving other connections that looped back towards him.

Voysey did more than tightly define the networked materialities of *Broad Leys*. He also extended his enhanced presence to the site and the contractors: that is, the location on the shores of Windermere where that network came together. One of the first requirements of the specifications was that his physical presence there was accommodated among them. He wrote:

“Office. Provide office for the use of the Architect with desk, stool, basin, towel, soap, and clothes brush” (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: i)

Voysey reasserted and reinforced the need for his presence throughout the specification by creating opportunities for further design decisions at various points during construction, decisions that he had deferred with terms such as “to be approved” or “as approved” that allowed him to define the nature and frequency of his presence and influence. Moreover, he did not limit this presence to himself: he extended it to the bodies and behaviours of the contractors by virtualising himself as the ideal workman and declaring what that should entail, namely the same kind of ideal, diffident, proficient and deferential workman he had imagined at the personal-virtual design stage. At one level, he stated this as a simple reminder that he expected excellence of them: “All materials and workmanship to be of the best of their respective kinds and the Contractor is to leave the work in all respects clean and perfect at the completion thereof.” (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: ii) Equally simple were his instructions on how to handle certain materials and processes, such as applying two coats of paint to all non-visible ironwork (Ibid: xxxiv). Similar instructions include:

“No lead or iron pipes are to be buried in the wall or plaster but must be fixed on battens on the face of the plaster” (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: xxxiv)

“[Floors are...] not to be secret nailed” (Ibid: xx)

Understood as part of the network, not unlike the connected-to materialities of doors and chimneys, the contractors themselves required much the same treatment through which their potentially errant influence could be made compliant. The most interesting examples in the specifications occur when the human and non-human strands of the network merge: when the contractors were actually handling and applying craftsmanship to the materials. In the structural elements of *Broad Leys* to be dressed with stone, for instance:

“The whole of the stone to be of the best quality of the stone specified free from vents, flaws, sand or clay holes and any other defects, and to be set in cement on its natural beds and to be left clean and perfect in every respect.”
(Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: xiii)

The disciplining of the stone into a flawless and compliant state is matched to its ideal treatment by the stonemason, displacing the possibility of what he might do and replacing it with an ideal of what he must do. There was no point in fixing the material connectedness of *Broad Leys* if that material was wielded incorrectly or deficiently at the point where it was incorporated into the emerging house. This is a fairly simple example as compared to what the contractors had to do for those areas of frontage that were not dressed in stone:

“Cement roughcast all external walling, buttresses and chimneys exposed to view except those parts specified to be in dressed stone with clean washed sharp sand and well washed gravel or stone chips finished to a very rough surface with pebble or stone chips as approved; the last coat to be mixed pebbles or stone chips and cement mixed together and applied with a spoon while the second coat is soft. The first coat to be scored over to form key for second coat.” (Voysey, c.1898 [Voc/3/5]: xxx)

In this case, the contractors' behaviour was doubly important. Up to a point, stone could look after itself, as a large portion of its material existence preceded human influence, and this also applied to the individual constituents of the roughcast: its sources (i.e. preferred

types and suppliers) could be easily defined. However, the creation of the roughcast as a finished substance was achieved by the contractors, who would define both the quality of the finished material in combination and the efficacy of its use thereafter, and the particular specificity Voysey issued for the roughcast (also evident in his specificity regarding the front door), suggests to me a nervousness about what the contractors might do that belied Voysey's intentions, (in a way that the materials unto themselves could not) producing the pre-material politics that seems evident here insofar that the behaviour of contractors is petrified into the behaviours Voysey postulates of them.

What has gone unsaid so far is the influence of the client, and an obvious criticism would be that Voysey exerted such control over the networked existence of the building that it undermined clients' choices in terms of materials, features, and etcetera. Indeed, I would suggest that Voysey was no less wilful with his clients than he was with his contractors, and sought to exert a similar type of discipline on them. On this aspect of his practice, R.I.B.A's manuscript collection is virtually silent; however, a 1949 article by John Brandon-Jones (*An architect's letters to his client*) transcribes a number of letters from Voysey to an early client, Cecil Fitch (an up-and-coming lawyer (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 494)). Fitch had commissioned Voysey at some point before 1899⁷⁶ to design him a house in Wimbledon that later became known as *Gordondene* (and which has since been demolished). Brandon-Jones didn't include transcripts of every letter between Voysey and Fitch (and only one from Fitch to Voysey): in fact, the transcripts in this article seems to have been selected and pruned by Brandon-Jones to favourably counter a generally held opinion: "Voysey can never have been an easy architect from a client's point of view, yet his disarming reply to Fitch's letter shows that he was not always so obstinate, as legend has painted him; in this case he was prepared to make a sensible compromise..." (Ibid). In order to make this point, I get the impression that Brandon-Jones had to swim against a substantial current that eventually subsumed him. The resulting transcripts reiterate Voysey's continuing belligerence with only a brief glimpse of his obliging nature. Brandon-Jones admitted that a Voysey client would have to have substantial reserves of faith to allow Voysey the full exercise of his insistence, but countered that Voysey himself must have had courage to have taken responsibility for the whole creative task (Ibid).

⁷⁶ The drawings for *Gordondene* are dated 1899 (Hitchmough, 1995: 231-232), though the commission may originate from 1898.

The overwhelming theme that emerges from *An architect's letters* is that Voysey understood the project as a territory whose bounds were always firmly within his reach, and over which his sovereignty was (ideally) unchallenged, a combination which allowed him a profound degree of ownership. The fact that *Gordondene* was for somebody else did not alter the fact that it was from and by him: a material execution of his ontological philosophy and an architectonic transcript of his personality. Challenged by Fitch on the form and extent of the stable block, he replied:

“I cannot spoil my proportions by cutting off the stable roof. We must manage by moving the stable building 5ft to the east and the house 5ft to the west and 3 or 4 ft. to the south. You won't mind that, will you?” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 10th October 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

Understood as a material excursion of his personality and character (and in accordance with his ethical logic and osmotic ontology) Voysey could no more devolve command of *Gordondene* any more than he could allow his character to be externally animated. If anything, the extension and amplification of himself into the plan and forms of the house was even more profound than his inhabitation of the site and construction processes: the continued effacement of Fitch assured a strict depopulation of the virtual design “territory” that Voysey fashioned around him, especially if Fitch's wishes required further compliance from him by way of, in this instance, building regulations.

“If you move your house further to the hedge you increase the height of your walls, so adding to the expense as the building act will require you to have thicker walls.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 23rd September 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

That said, Voysey's letters to Fitch can be disarming: in the first letter that Brandon-Jones transcribed into his 1949 article he addressed his client on equal and friendly terms, before proceeding to outline his role as one of diminutive servitude, especially as regards the overall cost, which appeared to be Fitch's overriding concern:

“My dear Fitch,
I hope you will agree to drop the *Mr.* on both sides.

Let me know the reasons for your objection and I will meet them. It is what I am meant for. Tell me what you want and I will tell you how to get it most economically.”

(Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 23rd September 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

This quote offers no evidence of the Voysey I have so far outlined: instead of treating the design as a limited territory over which he could enjoy sovereignty, Voysey seems to open a (much less rigorously delimited) space big enough for the client to object, interject, and otherwise co-habit on terms that appear at least equal, and perhaps even diminutive on Voysey’s part. Given Brandon-Jones’ particular (if tentative) aims, it probably made sense to open with this excerpt, but the excerpts that follow demonstrate a more vehemently territorial Voysey that strains his argument to breaking point:

“Certainly you had better not see the drawings until they are finished and coloured. They will not give you the slightest idea of what you are going to have. All artistic questions you must trust to me to decide. No two minds ever produced an artistic result.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 4th December 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 496)

This excerpt is a useful microcosm for Voysey’s approach to his client: most of the other excerpts that Brandon-Jones transcribes share one of the typical features outlined here. The first sentence: “Certainly you had better not see the drawings...” serves to limit potential involvement to Voysey himself, either by drawing the design territory tightly around professional processes that exclude laypeople (drawings) or fortifying that territory in temporal terms, whereby any involvement outside Voysey has to wait until an advanced “finished and coloured” stage, a point at which the design is more consolidated than it is pliable. Similarly, the last sentence (“No two minds...”) necessarily de-populates that territory and qualifies the singular sovereignty that the third sentence (“All artistic questions you must trust to me...”) demands, and which insulates Voysey from compromise, allowing him the full scope of his artistry. The second sentence (“[the drawings] will not give you the slightest idea...”) is aimed squarely at Fitch and serves to efface him from the design process, either by the proximity of Voysey’s inviolable professionalism and artistry, or by emphasising the inferiority of his lay insights, thus:

“As to the light in the hall, I hope you will forgive me for saying you know nothing about it at all. You will ruin the look of the hall from the outside and the in if you alter the staircase window, which is going to light the hall magnificently.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 10th October 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

But the commission couldn't continue without a client: there had to be someone (with some money) to build for, and that person had to be allowed some sort of opportunity to decide the outcome of his investment. This admittedly obvious point is reflected by the rift between Voysey's invitational, even servile, posture in his letter to Fitch (of the 23rd September 1899), and his fiercely territorial letter to Fitch less than three months later (4th December 1899). It appears that Voysey resolved these two extremes (in favour of the second extreme) by creating a space for client's ideas and inputs, and energetically pitching himself against those ideas on their arrival: a space that was simultaneously invitational and hostile. In fact, the tactics I have just outlined are at their most evident when Voysey had to confront some of the choices and demands that Fitch felt inclined and able to make. In the above quote (10th October 1899) Voysey achieved this by emphasising how ruinous and mistaken the client's input could be, as compared to the magnificence of his design and the associated benevolence of his professional considerations:

“If you have the cupboards altered a fresh detail will have to be made for which my fee is three guineas. And I think you ought to pay me some compensation in addition as it involves my doing what to any professional eye would be considered a gross blunder... the wilful planning of a huge dust trap.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 25th March 1901) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 498)

Benevolence is a key point to understand in these interchanges: Voysey understood that in effacing the client, he was insulating them from their own harmful impositions. In design terms, Voysey's approach had a firm basis in avoiding the sort harmful and ruinous possibilities that constantly tried to assert themselves on the design process: innocently enough from his clients, and rather more insidiously from other sources. This approach of identifying and excluding the ruinous from design allowed him to reveal a remainder of quality, a process that happened alongside those more creative acts of (perceived) architectural quality. Negation and exclusion were as important to Voysey as achievement

and inclusion, and those things he didn't design – the absences – are as important as the things he did.

Whichever means (or combination of means) Voysey used generated his territorial retention of control, a common effect was the amplification of his own responsibility: he effectively denied himself the feeble claim (as he perceived it) that key design outcomes were merely the loyal execution of the client's express wishes (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 494). His benevolent effacement of the client widened the scope of his liability and deepened his involvement, and I think it's important to understand that the sovereign territory he created was not a shamelessly unconstrained space in which to indulge his ethics and artistry (although it offered this possibility): it also obliged him to – and served his deep-seated sense of – the exercise of duty to the clients he ultimately silenced, a point he reiterates (twice) in his letters to Fitch:

“Your architect would be an incompetent noodle indeed if he let you in for the misery and inconvenience you suggest in your last letter.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 15th January 1900) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 496)

“You are perfectly right in your suppositions but you are not right in fearing that I could so far neglect my duty as to allow such a terrible blunder to be made in the building of the terrace wall. ‘Fear not for I am with thee...’” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 10th March 1901) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 498)

This enhanced duty was the natural by-product of the client's effacement: it prompted a degree of consideration and surrogation that would have otherwise been provided by the client's articulation of his own needs, likes, and dislikes. Without them, Voysey had to make a substantial effort of the imagination to virtualise a stand-in that could both accommodate his principles, and also meet or exceed the expectations of any *reasonable* client. This imagined hybrid client is discussed in specifically surrogated terms in *Ideas in Things*:

“I now invite you all to fancy you are architects, and commissioned to build me a home. Shall I tell you of some charming villa away in Italy, or Kamschatka [*sic*], that I have seen and liked. Shall I dwell on my own taste and so control

you actions and feelings; because I am paying you, must you be my humble servant? No! My dear architects, let me rather marry your spirits to my own, and see what broad principles of thought and feeling there are already, to work in unison – affections common to all men.” (Voysey, 1909: 122)

I use the term “hybrid” deliberately to describe how Voysey’s imagined client existed as collection of characteristics that, together, formed a favourable mirror for Voysey’s intentions. In effect, the hybridity was an extended Voysey, folded into the reception of his buildings by suffusing the client with his own characteristics, an act that understood clients as porous collections of voids where there was space to fold co-operative postures that eagerly sought those material corollaries of nobility and individuality that Voysey sought to provide. Unsurprisingly, Voysey fits his imagined client like a glove: an apposite metaphor given Voysey’s intentions to shape and animate the future inhabitation of the spaces he created. These high expectations were reflected in his description of the client relationship in marital, rather than transactional terms, exorcising any sense that Voysey’s skills could be purchased and, in being so purchased, reined to the client’s whim. The *reasonable* client was expected to exercise self-control and understanding in this respect: to voluntarily efface his own tastes and opinions rather than reinforcing them with cash. By displacing the agency of his actual clients with his ideal virtual “omni”-client, Voysey completed a profoundly broad and deep control of the architectural processes that pervaded the design, the site, contractors, supplies and materials (together making the building), and the client, insulating himself as best he could from the agentic potential of these various elements and their realities: he achieved, or aimed to achieve, a blanket virtuality.

It was also an ambitious virtuality. An interesting episode in the design of *Gordondene* is related in three letters between Voysey and Fitch on the 10th, 11th and 12th October 1899. In the first instance, it is interesting to see that Voysey’s virtuality was briefly punctured by a sense of embarrassment at his demeanour:

“Many thanks for your most reasonable letter. You make me quite ashamed of my own impulsive strong language. I wish to be emphatic, but not rude. I will look to your light.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 12th October 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

It's difficult to say whether Fitch's gentle tone was a deliberate tactic against Voysey's impositions: Brandon-Jones transcribes only one letter from Fitch. But in any event, Fitch had found another way to breach that virtuality. In an earlier letter, Voysey had refuted one of Fitch's queries as to the plot: "If you move your house further to the hedge you increase the height of your walls, so adding to the expense as the building act will require you to have thicker walls." (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 23rd September 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495) but in his letter of the 10th October Voysey contradicted himself in a brusque response to a different query: "I cannot spoil my proportions by cutting off the stable roof. We must manage by moving the stable building 5ft to the east and the house 5ft to the west and 3 or 4 ft. to the south. You won't mind that, will you?" (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 10th October 1899) (Ibid). Fitch, responding, said:

"As regards the movement of the stables you will recollect your statement [23rd September 1899] that to move the house further down hill would enormously increase the cost [...]. You now seem to propose to move the whole house bodily down hill (i.e. 5 feet to the west and 3 or 4 ft. to the south). If you will assure me now that it will not increase the cost of the house I don't mind, but if it will I mind very much when I see that two feet off the length of the gable will obviate the difficulty. Seriously, do you think the difference of that two feet will spoil the proportion of the stable roof? I tried it and did not think it would, but you know best and I don't desire to be in any way unreasonable." (Fitch, in a letter to Voysey: 11th October 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

Although he reiterated his desire to remain reasonable, Fitch seems to have profoundly undermined the ideal of Voysey's virtual design territory, using Voysey's contradiction as an opening through which to reach areas of the design (like proportion and layout) that were supposed to be sacrosanct, and using his monetary command to invoke design decisions. Voysey's response is interesting, and was interpreted by Brandon-Jones as a compromise and evidence of Voysey's reasonable side (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 494).

"Certainly bringing the building very much forward would increase the cost, but if we bring it only 3 feet to the south and 5ft. to the W, I think the extra if any will be very small because the ground does not drop so much in the west corner. Then we can compromise by cutting off a little from the stable roof and

shifting the stable perhaps a trifle.” (Voysey, in a letter to Fitch: 12th October 1899) (Brandon-Jones, 1949: 495)

Although diffident in tone (Voysey is, after all, looking to Fitch’s light) I find it difficult to reconcile this statement with Voysey’s frequent and emphatically territorial rebukes to Fitch, against which this looks isolated and feeble. Moreover, Voysey is already starting to re-extend his control over the situation: whilst he appears to agree to Fitch’s request, that agreeing brings the issue back into his sphere by claiming that his take on Fitch’s changes has a plausibility emergent of his professional status, and Fitch’s observations can only reasonably be met by his particular interpretation of the changes he proposed. I would suggest that Voysey was distinctly uncomfortable at the prospect of losing his sovereignty of the building’s forms through these processes, not least because it appears that to retain virtuality was to retain plausibility, even if common sense suggests that a building will never plausibly do anything if it only ever remains virtual. Retention is the key to understanding what this means, and the important point is that virtuality was not retained *per se*. Rather, the useful effects of virtuality, in terms of what they could offer Voysey, were projected forward beyond the immediate inception of the building and into those points where it would ordinarily have come under the auspices of clients and contractors. I would argue that the efforts I’ve just described, through such practices as the petrification of the network and maintaining an invitationally hostile space for the client to be discomforted in, was less concerned about creating plausibility, and more concerned with trying to retain the plausibilities that Voysey had already created, to stretch them and keep them going until Voysey knew that it was in some sense fixed into the building. As such, I consider that his behaviours both at the site and towards the client can best be described as practices of plausibility, whereas his earlier and far more philosophical ruminations on what and how a building could and ought to do are better described as ontologies of plausibility. Of course, these two types of plausibility are highly interconnected. The hybrid client which Voysey formulated in *Ideas in Things* is one such point of interconnection which neatly produces a client who will assure that Voysey’s hopes are made actual in a way that s/he never is, but whilst the client in *Ideas in Things* is not real, it could be argued that Voysey attempted to map his/her qualities onto people like Fitch. Even when Fitch was able to escape that mapping, Voysey attempted to gently return him to the invitationally hostile space from which he had emerged. In a more obvious way, the workmen at *Broad Leys* were limited to very particular behaviours to ensure that his intentions were solidified into the building,

and the material ingredients of the building were similarly disciplined, curtailing the network which would form *Broad Leys* in a practice of plausibility that stretched the sovereignty that virtuality offered to Voysey through to the processes that would fix the building.

To attach practices of plausibility to ontologies of plausibility makes logical sense insofar that, if the buildings he designed were understood as outcrops of his character, Voysey could not simply let his designs exit his office unattended without exercising some control over what happened to them thereafter: it contradicted his whole idea of how he (and everybody else) existed. Then again, it is interesting to note that these practices of plausibility contradicted, to some degree, the ontologies of plausibility that he created and worked to, most especially those temporal aspects of his ontology that refused the idea of fixity and declaring things as final. This is a useful reminder that Voysey was not always true to his own ideals and could dispense with them when it suited him. In fact, the temporality of Voysey's approach un-fixed the finality of the world and allowed him to alter it, but I suggest my interpretations here show that he was inclined to re-fix his work once he had arrived at a satisfactory form, to make sure that the potential vagaries of the contractors and the potential impositions of the client were subdued as much as possible. To do otherwise would have been to lose the plausibilities he'd gained in the unfixing process that his thoughtfully delegated and fortified existence in the world demanded.



Fig. 3.1: Voysey House (photograph by Steve Cadman).



Fig.3.2: Voysey-designed letterbox.



Fig. 3.3: Winsford Cottage Hospital (rear elevation).



Fig. 3.4: Moor Crag.



Fig. 3.5: Perrycroft.



Fig. 3.6: Perrycroft.



Fig. 3.7: Moor Crag



Fig. 3.8: Voysey-designed fireplace.



Fig. 3.9: Voysey-designed doorlatch.



Fig. 3.10: Littleholme.



Fig. 3.11: Broad Leys interior.

Diagnosing Voysey:

The way a Voysey house is experienced is wide ranging (and a principal purpose of this chapter is to illuminate that range and further illuminate how the extent, direction, and shape of that range happens because of, or in spite of, the architecture) but among this experiential variety is a common biographical theme. To some degree, all of the resident-users I interviewed form a biography of Voysey as part of their overall experience of his buildings: they develop understandings of what Voysey was like as a person, including specific elements of his personality, which they arrive at with the help of various different sources, but primarily from the material-emotional acts of living in or working in a Voysey building and their encounters with the shapes, materials, volumes, and details that he deposited there. This is a key initial point to make clear: residents do not rely any less on understandings they've developed through their experience just because they also, in some cases, agree with and repeat certain insights of the various scholars and critics who have studied him. It seems that a key element of living in – and enjoying – a Voysey building is to extend the scope of their experience beyond the immediate material existence of the building to include their own version of Voysey.

In my interviews I wanted to explore why they should be so motivated, and what this supra-material expansion offers to resident-users. At a general level, they expand their experiences to include Voysey for the sake of crediting someone for the building, which stems from an understanding that the building is a product of a stratum of motivations which were themselves the product of the particular characteristics, which emerged from Voysey's particular personality. In creating their experience of a Voysey building, resident-users extend their inhabitations in order to locate the reasons for the things they see and experience to a human source that exercised human attributes. In this way their extended inhabited materiality is a partially biographical one, in which a roofline, or a ventilation grate, or a door-latch, does not start and end with its physical manifestation, but is the discernible outcome of Voysey's personality. A door-latch does not merely hold a door closed, but is a latter-day exercise of Voysey's character (as perceived from the point of inhabitation), his hatred of frivolity, and his love of the simple and effective functionality of things. This is the first of a number of extensions which I will discuss in this chapter: such extensions are important in understanding how Voysey's buildings are currently inhabited.

What is also obvious is that this extending does not make space for an “original” Voysey: it is a creation of the resident-user in a diagnostic style, and is therefore tailored to the way they experience the building. There is a different “Voysey”, varying in his potency, for each of the buildings I’ve visited. A common theme in the development of each “Voysey” is the extent to which the building that he designed serves that particular resident-user: if a feature offers something pleasant or useful to them, or ameliorates an annoyance of some kind, there is a sense that Voysey’s caring nature is being extended to them through material offerings, and the appeal of the building is not just their usefulness or beneficence *per se*, but the fact that someone cared enough at the outset to provide them. For example, consider the following exchange:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

And Julian also understands that:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This sort of enjoyment, and the “Voysey” that emerges from it, can be either the result of an offering that creates pleasure and provides something likable, as Daniel and Jane have found with their windows, and it can equally be Voysey’s diligence and restraint in ameliorating or removing potentially annoying features. This diagnosis of care is not, however, universal, and the perceived failure of one of Voysey’s buildings has led to a

number of unflattering diagnoses from Florence and Adam. In the first place, their experience of the rooms he designed has led them to a particularly corporeal diagnosis:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

The height of the windows (and doorframes) in their house are understood to be specifically “for Voysey” and applicable, in this case, to his stature. They are not only annoyed about this because the windows are too low and do not allow for what they think is sufficient natural lighting; they are annoyed because Voysey’s considerations appear to extend no further than him and the height complex they diagnose of him. They do not feel that they benefit from the warmth of his consideration.

Paul: So you’re pretty sure then that he designed this entire house around his own body shape?

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

In this sense, their house is a temporal failure of sorts: the bumptious Voysey they diagnose reflects a number of features which have become annoying but which persist inexorably in the fabric of the building: a palimpsest of a flawed personality which is imposed materially on them. This failure, however, represents the start of another means of inhabiting a Voysey building which draws upon diagnoses of Voysey's personality. It allows current resident-users to surrogate the design process at those points where it is perceived to fail, to imagine what they would do (or, more commonly, avoid) to make it succeed. Perceived failure becomes a means by which resident-users can route themselves into this process. For example:

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[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Reflecting on these biographical features, one inhabitant expanded upon the idea of surrogation to Voysey's engagement with the future occupancy of his buildings. John, as a retired architect, recognises (and diagnoses) in Voysey the sort of thing that he would do: to design for himself.

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Here, it is interesting to note that a number of other resident-users understand that Voysey's design process collapses the distinction between the architect and the inhabitant: it is understood as an attempt to perform a future version of them, to simulate how they might want to live, and design the building to serve that imagined client. In short, they correlate their expansive experience of the building to a similar effort on Voysey's part, one of forward surrogation.

Perhaps this is most true in those instances where resident-users feel benefitted by Voysey's offerings, much as John and Anna do, but it raises the important question of Voysey's stance. To understand himself as a future inhabitant could have one of two broad effects: on the one hand it could suggest that Voysey's work was replete with considerate offerings and the amelioration of annoyances for future users, and his forward surrogation is part of an act of care and an invitation to indulge in pleasing and useful features, as John and Anna have found with the shapes and proportions that surround them:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

The other possibility, of course, is that Voysey did not surrogate the future inhabitant, but attempted to invade and control the possibilities of their future inhabitation in wilful acts of personal imposition: this has been the observation of Florence and Adam, who find the features of their house not invitational, but deliberately constraining. They interpret these features as Voysey's particular indulgences and their interpretation is that he believed that people were, or should, be akin to him and respond to the same material cues. And their diagnosis of Voysey reflects this.

Living with a Voysey Building:

The appeal of these offerings, and the reason they're enjoyed so much, is because they are comprehended in an invitational way: as space for inhabitants to form their own styles of inhabitation and exercise their agency (in whatever form it takes) without being impeded or frustrated. This extending and expanding the options and opportunities of inhabitation (rather than their occluding or constriction) is a recurring understanding in my interviews. As a material-architectonic achievement, these substantial allowances seem to arise primarily from the amelioration of design failures like dust traps, inadequate storage, botched orientation, and other potential pitfalls that would otherwise force the residents to undertake their own ameliorations, either by acting contrary to their preferences to account for them, or by making actual structural alterations to the building to correct them. This might, perhaps, go un-noticed in a number of cases, but certain situations serve to highlight these thoughtful absences which, in turn, purify the architectural environment of potential frustrations, such as:

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[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

And on a similar theme, Julian suggested that:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This absence of problems – the fact that residents are not impeded by them as obstacles or forced to ameliorate them in some way – creates an almost hygienic architectonic that is filtered and cleansed of annoyances and ugliness. A principal understanding of Voysey’s consideration, skill and achievement seems to be based upon inspired absences which are no less important, it seems, than brilliant incursions. When the mediocre and substandard are excised and their absence is noted, an edifying and hygienic remainder is automatically revealed.

The inhabitation of a Voysey building is a complex territory, and that complexity prevents me from splitting “inhabitation” into a list of essential domestic practices such as cooking, eating, sleeping, and so forth, and as such, I’m also prevented from understanding the building as a simple series of spaces to house them. A hallmark of this complexity is the way it extends beyond these standard and expected dwelling practices and ventures into the comprehension of design. Specifically, this extended aspect of dwelling sees inhabitants considering the proficiency of the design in achieving certain ends:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Not all inhabitants extend their dwelling as positively as Barry does: in fact, some inhabitants find proficiency to be consistently lacking. But these different outcomes (some of which I will detail further) are the result of a fundamentally similar process characterised by a critical extending of inhabitation into the building's production and the way it reproduces its functions. Barry does not simply eat and sleep in his house: he consciously dwells in the recursive evidence of its proficiency and quality, being impressed by and enjoying the cleverness of the volumetric weaving Voysey employed (even if the house could, in principle, contain the same specification arranged around a more rudimentary plan). In doing so, he and the other Voysey inhabitants I've interviewed are expeditionary in their dwelling, extending their experiences to include understandings of design and design skill. A Voysey house is not simply inhabited in the terms of an itinerary (four bedrooms, two receptions, and etcetera), but as the thoughtful exercise of intention and proficiency in assembling and executing those contents.

The extension of inhabitation into design varies in its potency: at its most potent it takes the form of surrogacy: this more than just dwelling in and through a recognition of design intention and proficiency (or lack thereof). Surrogacy describes the actual (re-)occupation of the design process and the designer's strata of intentions insofar as they are understood. Jane and Daniel, for instance, have created an experience of their home that is deferent to their understanding of its originality: an understanding they've developed from a research process which is also, fundamentally, part of their inhabitation experience:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Jane and Daniel’s surrogation seems to contain two barely distinct acts of extension – their “abilities” – both closely allied through the process of research⁷⁷. The first of these extending abilities seems to create a profoundly powerful space within their inhabitation for a re-inhabitation of Voysey as a designer: in order to restore their house, they are essentially reproducing themselves as the kind of designer he was through the study of his plans and elevations: they even extend a simulation of Voysey’s preferences to “their” choice of furniture and fixings: [Redacted interview material - - - - -
- - - - -]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

The second of these extending abilities is more expressly temporal allowance whereby the house is allowed to default, through the process of restoration (and the surrogation of

⁷⁷ [Redacted interview material].

Voysey's design strategies and policies as a means to achieving it), to an earlier form that is closer to Voysey's original conception. Their restoration is aimed at recuperating Voysey's original shapes, spaces, and materials, along with the sensations and impressions that they will provide, rather than a recuperation of Victorian-Edwardian living: with the exception of their kitchen alterations and the provision of various low-key services⁷⁸, Jane and Daniel have doggedly swathed their house in temporal insulation, eschewing their original architect and his (con)temporality in favour of Voysey's design. This is powerfully expressed in their stated intention to [Redacted interview material], an unusually strong statement of plausibility whereby Jane and Daniel's inhabitation is based around an analytic which understands the house to be vocal, insistent, and irrevocably habitual and wilful such that certain choices are not plausibly available to them. This further suggests that their house, inhabited as such, enhances the plausibility of reproducing the kind of didactic work that Voysey hoped of it, and that their inhabitations are the ongoing result of Voysey's intentions as to how the house ought to be inhabited. By the same token, it is worth keeping sight of the suggestion that Jane and Daniel seem to put research and re-discovery at the fore of their analytic inhabitations, and the "speech" that the house can articulate so powerfully may, in fact, amplify the house to reflect their hopes for what they want it to be: a vibrant research object. If this is the case, then Jane and Daniel's analytical inhabitation doesn't simply [Redacted interview material] because it is powerfully vocal and plausibly narrates Voysey's intentions. Their speaking house may be a necessary understanding that produces the house as a research object, understood as a connectivity to the past and to Voysey as a historical figure which serves their preferred inhabitation which is, I think obviously, laden with analysis. Specifically, theirs is an analysis of the house that serves their continued research-driven inhabitation of it, and it is this that may generate the plausibility of it "speaking" from their hopes for it to speak, through which they can surrogate, for their interest, the processes that brought it about.

I would suggest that all the Voysey inhabitant-users engage in surrogation of some kind whereby their inhabitation extends into Voysey as a designer, and from the evidence of their material surroundings (and the assistance of secondary sources) into Voysey's persona and motivations, though none as profoundly as Jane and Daniel. But even Jane and Daniel have a limit to their surrogation, and like all of my interviewees there is evidence that the

⁷⁸ Jane and Daniel's house was not originally fitted out for electricity, although it has obviously been retrofitted and then re-wired a number of times since then, most recently when Jane and Daniel moved in (1998). They have also installed an oil-fired boiler which provides hot water to a number of (very low profile) radiators.

diagnosed Voyseys they create is limited by an element of plausibility. My interviews suggest that it's quite common and normal to comprehend Voysey's motivations, and even his peculiarities, from the experience of architectonic materialities:

Adam: Yeah I don't know how this fits in, and you probably haven't got a leading question about this-

Paul: [Laughs].

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In this example, Adam (and Florence) fashion an obsessive – perhaps mildly neurotic – Voysey from a material experience. Ignoring, for the moment, how apposite their diagnosis is, it is interesting to note that this is where Florence and Adam's Voysey stops. Even if inhabitants are aware of Voysey's high-minded ethical goals (and in a truncated form, many of them are) they do not extend their diagnoses this far: habits, peculiarities, and pragmatic professionalism generally mark the limits of diagnostic plausibility. Voysey's intricate ontology, his densely woven ethics, and his didactic theories seem too large and complex to be hinted at in material form. In Andrew's case, for example, Voysey is split neatly into two: in order to qualify or credit aspects of his experience he retains a pragmatic Voysey who, he assumes, aimed to produce good work that rendered good service to the occupant...

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The largeness and brightness of Voysey House is an outcome of a diligent and pragmatic Voysey attending to the client's original needs, although that diligence should be normal and expected in any event. But diligence is the maximum extent that Andrew will allow Voysey to credibly achieve in the context of his experience. Thereafter, the plausibility he is willing to offer runs dry...

Paul: Are you familiar with that agenda? Or have you read-

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This act of dismissing Voysey (as [Redacted interview material]) marks the split in Andrew's Voysey and defines the extent that Voysey can be employed in his experience, much like Florence and Adam's split Voysey though, in their case, whilst they understand that Voysey had motivations, these are of little consequence to them in their everyday lives: [Redacted interview material] - - - - -

- -] In fact, Florence and Adam's split Voysey, whilst it allows for a limited degree of plausibility, is somewhat over-ridden by the disservice that their house renders and the sense that it has, in certain ways, imposed on them (see above). This occludes (along with their everyday concerns) whatever that plausibility would have otherwise offered, and in their case the split, whilst it recognises a small corner of plausibility and that Voysey was definitely attempting something, does not allow Voysey's influence to be plausible either before or after that split.

Voysey is similarly, if less summarily, split in the experiences of all my other interviewees. The location and depth of that split obviously depends on what inhabitants believe to be credible or plausible, but in all my other interviews the split in their respective Voyseys occurs at the point where the credible or plausible becomes unlikely, abstract, or silly. However, the fact that there is a point at which Voysey's credibility falters does not undermine or invalidate the credibility of his efforts up to that point, and the existence of a possibly silly or potentially aloof strata of ideals does not spoil the day-to-day usefulness

and skilfulness of the building and its design. Despite being very simple buildings, Voysey was in the habit of detailing his homes with sentimental carvings and metalwork. I found them a little too sickly to be charming when I visited the buildings, but Julian, for example, was able to ameliorate and merge such features into the wider, plainer, and far more practical plausibility of the house, a practical plausibility that he extends to surround features that might otherwise be didactic in their intentions:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Similarly, Barry recognises that the impressive execution of his house must be sourced from [Redacted interview material -----
-----] but at the same time it doesn't actually intrude into the conception of his experience, from which it is split. The living, mystical concepts of Voysey's ontology and ethics, whilst they may have produced the results that Barry now lives in, only needs to echo faintly in his experience. In fact, when I tried to explicate some of Voysey's more theoretical understandings to Barry, though he recognised the plausibility of what I was suggesting, he countered with his own suggestion that such understandings were more germane to Voysey's execution of the building than to Barry's current experience of it:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This combination of recognising, yet choosing to ignore or efface the more idealist and philosophical side of Voysey’s motivations seems to be the principal function of splitting Voysey (although my choice of “split” is probably too definite to describe Julian’s more subtle practical enveloping of what might otherwise be didactically inclined features). Similarly, Anna and John employ a split in the experience of their house which effectively filters Voysey’s didactic ambitions from the objects that surround them and leave them in a more pragmatic state, but not a state devoid of awareness that such ambitions were present in the first instance. In fact, John reflected that that presence, whilst not without consequence, had to be made diminutive otherwise Anna and John’s experience would be: [Redacted interview material - - - - -]He re-confirmed this later in our discussion:

- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]

This returns us to the invitational understandings of living in a Voysey building that some of my interviewees maintain, insofar that one key aspect of the way Voysey’s current plausible existence is split is by understanding those less plausible aspects as invitational, and theirs to choose if and how to indulge in. For instance, Jane and Daniel, recalling the first time they viewed their house, [Redacted interview material- - - - -]

-----]]. Julian’s appreciation of the simplicity he experiences at his house is invitational insofar as he extends an understanding of his choice to his choice of design features that matter to him:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

This is not, then, a simple case of what people “get” and “don’t get”; it is certainly not that the original complexities of the building are entirely beyond their understanding. In fact, aspects of those complexities can be submitted to the reasoning of inhabitants and, much as Anna and John [Redacted interview material], inhabitation can demonstrably have an interrogative capacity which splits off what is implausible about the building and concentrates on the plausible.

The splitting of plausibility in the inhabitation of Voysey’s buildings produces, or is perhaps produced by, the potential for a fragmentary experience of the buildings. This can be instead of, or additional to, the building being understood as an ensemble with a consistent theme. In the former case, Florence and Adam do not really have an overarching “ensemble” into which their experience of their house fits, and it seems that as a result their experience is to like some parts and dislike others, without exactly understanding these as emanating from a wider theme. This may be a result of the fact that, like Andrew at Voysey House, Adam and Florence’s reasons for purchasing their home in the first place were largely pragmatic, and rather less affectionate than might otherwise be expected of my other interviewees: Adam recalls that [Redacted interview material] -----

-----]. Fundamentally, and somewhat in common with Andrew (but with diminished affection), Adam and Florence [Redacted interview material -----
-----]. Whether or not the pragmatic motivation for Florence and Adam's inhabitation is contributory, or whether it is enabled their enquiring dismissal of the ideas behind Voysey's design incursions, Adam is cursory about his likes and dislikes without connecting them together into an overall liking or disliking of a house that *could* be apprehended as a material articulation of ideas, but is instead, and despite them, largely understood as [Redacted interview material]:

- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]

As for the other residents I've interviewed, their part-by-part inhabitation seems to be contained and linked together by the idea that the buildings were, in fact, driven by ideas which it is still plausible to discern in the form and details of the buildings as with, for instance, Barry's appreciation that some sort of [Redacted interview material] is at work, or Julian's understanding that the building overall combines the ergonomic with the aesthetic.

The impression I was left with from my interviews is that the Voysey residents were both capable of *and* often inclined to engage in quite perceptive and inquisitive forms of inhabitations. If I were to make an overall observation on this, it would be that residents understand themselves differently, in ontological terms, to Voysey. Voysey's ontology integrated personalities with materialities and, I would suggest that he believed this would re-shape people much as a piece of wood could be worked. Perhaps unsurprisingly, and perhaps expressed most forcibly by Andrew, and Florence and Adam, the inhabitants I've interviewed do not understand themselves as being connected in this way. They understand

themselves as more bounded, with characteristics that are the result of their own choices. This may be critically important to the idea of architectural plausibility because inhabitants think of their own ideas, choices, and characteristics as having a forceful presence that cannot be easily or plausibly be affected. And it is indicative of the perceptive and inquisitive nature of inhabitation that Julian suggests that we don't actually know whether (for example) some aspects of house design could be relaxing or whether the inhabitant is, in fact, the sort of person who is often stressed. In short, the possibility of a building plausibly having an effect cannot be definitely answered:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Similarly, and commenting on Voysey's reverence of nature and natural logic, Jane notes that:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Whilst this is indicated in all my interviews, it is perhaps best represented in Florence and Adam's experience of their house which, driven by a degree of indifference about the building in general, perceives in Voysey's efforts a degree of unreasonableness which they are conscious of and capable of understanding, but which is dismissed with those same faculties. Florence and Adam, in a way more obvious but, I believe, shared with the other inhabitants I've interviewed, can create an awareness of Voysey's thinking and what he was attempting to achieve, but they are simultaneously aware of their ability to ignore, efface, or

remake it. In fact, that insightful awareness of the potentially incursive nature of the building is the key to generating an inhabitation that can apprehend it.

Material offerings:

The fact that the buildings are prevented from doing things does not mean that there isn't a corpus of things that they can do and that have effects.

The shapes, treatments, and forms that Voysey employed are credited by the inhabitants I've interviewed as able to do something, to create feelings within the bounds of plausibility I described in the preceding section. Daniel and Jane find that the low, wide, horizontal shape of their house has an interesting and pleasing effect, one which she credits to a tessellation between the design intention and the way people look at things...

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

...and this tessellation continues in Daniel's understanding of the scalar potential of this feature in terms of how makes him feel (or, specifically, how it doesn't make him feel).

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

My interpretation of this is that Jane and Daniel (quite at odds with Florence and Adam) understand that the building has been fashioned to be compatible with their bodily terms. The scale of their house doesn't belittle or diminish them. A similar point emerged from my interview with John and Anna, whereby the importance of shape and proportion creates a result which is more amenable to them in terms of their comfort in the way forms are split up and made easier to look at in the process, a "break" that scales the building so that it is not too extensive for them to apprehend.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The excerpts I've presented above demonstrate, I would suggest, that the experience of scale is important for how approachable and usable the building is by allowing it to fall within the inhabitant's scope, and in saying this I detect the possibility of a spatial kind of ownership. Part of this is contained in the impression that the building, as Jane, Daniel, Anna, and John experience it, does not extend away from the inhabitants to indulge in the ostentation of large spaces (in fact, there is a general consensus that these buildings are not ostentatious, discussed below, though Adam and Florence and, to a lesser degree, Andrew, find them to be presumptuous), but I think that a further effect of this might be that the inhabitants can reach, inhabit, and thus be able to effectively apprehend the whole of the building, i.e. it is scaled down to their reach. My argument in this sense adds a dual meaning to scale, by which I refer not just to the size of something, but the potential to physically surmount it (my use of the term here is more often used to describe acts of climbing and ascending). I would consider that this dual meaning of scale is evident, to a degree, in the inhabitation of Voysey's buildings insofar that all its corners and levels can be apprehended from the human scale. This apprehending is visual in the above two examples, but I believe it may also activate an ownership of the inhabitation insofar that those corners and levels are not out of reach: they can be used, or indeed altered, by the inhabitants, producing the impression that the space is definitely theirs, and not, through the creation of the out of reach, an architects' indulgence.

Alternatively, the inhabitation of these scalar aspects of Voysey’s design could plausibly create the sense that the building was designed very much for its inhabitants rather than for the service of some other cache of ideas. This seems to be the case with a number of my interviewees, and if the building is scaled “for” inhabitants as Jane, Daniel, John, and Anna seem to think, then they may seek out or be willing to recognise what else is for them too and recognise it, as Barry does, as the architect’s skill:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

There is also a general, though not universal, favour for the simplicity Voysey employed in the design of his buildings, though this sometimes manifests as the absence of fuss rather than presence of simplicity, as is the case with Florence and Adam’s house:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

And also, in Julian’s experience:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Julian further interprets this as the creation of a puritanical Voysey and, in explaining his experience he produces and vocalises a particular version of Voysey with a particular personality that accounts for the practical and simple materiality he inhabits, thus: [Redacted interview material - - - - -]. Barry, though he does not virtualise a personality for Voysey from the

experience of his house, recognises that the rectilinear simplicity of his house is an expression of an underlying plan:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

What I find interesting about the simplicity that Voysey inhabitants so readily engage with are the complexities that emerge from the experience of simplicity: it is often made to perform complex acts within their inhabitations, as is the case with Julian's puritanical Voysey, and also (as mentioned earlier) Jane and Daniel's furniture "policy" whereby simple fixtures and fittings are used to beneficially reflect the simplicity of their house in general. Simplicity in a Voysey house is variously experienced, from the beneficial absence of [Redacted interview material] to the virtualised presence of a puritanical Voysey, and like Voysey's scalar approach (discussed above), I would also argue that it can represent both the absence of the architect's intentions (i.e. the absence of grand, suggestive ornamentations) and the substantial and biographically identified presence of his characteristics.

In my explanation of the scalar and the simple thus far, I have reflected the way that the inhabitants I've interviewed do not split apart the aesthetic or ergonomic in their experiences. This in turn leads me to reflect upon the erroneous manner in which I presented certain questions to them (this is a useful by-product of the interview methodology I outlined in chapter two whereby interviewees were invited to question my questions). In my interviews I split the aesthetic and ergonomic apart into separate lines of questioning, and I would normally ask what ergonomic and functional features they noted, liked, or disliked before moving on to enquire, in much the same way, about my interviewees experience of the aesthetic elements of their buildings. In their experience, however, there is no such split: in fact, there is a consistent necessity for them to remain interrelated through the idea that necessary components necessarily needed pleasing visual

treatments. For Jane, this idea was almost self-evident, as though it simply didn't make sense *not* to combine both elements in the design of a feature:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

The potential for the Jane's window seats to be good is created by their combination of the ergonomic and aesthetic, and there's a sense that these are required equally – that if the seats had been entirely practical they wouldn't have imparted the same appeal (and it's possible to suppose that if they had only been aesthetically motivated they would not be usable). Perhaps the most obvious example of this combination is in the experience of Julian, already mentioned in the preceding section, and confirmed in his explanation to me of the impressiveness of his building, and how the combination of the aesthetic and the ergonomic is key to that impressiveness:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In my interview with Andrew at Voysey House, our discussion on the aesthetic elements of the building engaged with the ergonomic before I'd even reached that question. Voysey House had formerly been the Sanderson and Sons' wallpaper factory before it was converted into offices. The wallpaper was hand-made and, to enable this process, Andrew suggested that Voysey had designed large strips of glazing to illuminate the employees' workbenches. Whilst the aesthetic effect of such glazing was striking to him, he swiftly connected that visual effect through to the (presumed) functional requirements of producing wallpaper:

Paul: Did any other aesthetic aspect of the interior strike you as-

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In this sense the functional motivation seems important; even if the original function has long since passed (the windows were still, naturally, functional in the building's new incarnation). Perhaps the best way to summarise this point is with Amanda's observation that to split aesthetics from ergonomics seems implausible if a building is to be properly designed (as Winsford⁷⁹ is in her experience) to be enjoyable in its use, although in this instance the understanding of aesthetic and ergonomic manifested as an inside-outside split.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

⁷⁹ Winsford Cottage Hospital is located in Beaworthy, Devon, a small community hospital paid for by a local benefactor in memory of her husband, and completed in 1900. Until 1998 it was run by the NHS, and thereafter has been in use as a community centre including social, health, day care, and education functions operated by The Winsford Trust as "The Winsford Centre". (The Winsford Trust, 2010).

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In closing this section, it's worth noting that whilst the combination of the aesthetic and ergonomic is important, that combination is sometimes understood to have failed in the experiences of my interviewees. This seems to be most evident, I would argue, when the functional (or ergonomic) aspects of the building are subsumed by an overemphasis on aesthetic indulgences on Voysey's part. At Voysey House, for example, the weatherproofing is understood to have been undermined by what Andrew assumes to have been aesthetically wilful acts on Voysey's part, most especially the possibility that he didn't want rainwater downpipes to show on the exterior of the building. In addition, the glazed exterior brickwork (used where alternative and better materials were available) has become porous:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Temporalities:

To close this first chapter, I wish to return to one of the key features of the thesis in terms of the nature of its enquiry, and the methodology I use herein: that is, the disjuncture between the current inhabitations of the buildings I study here, and their original design and completion when their form was still under the auspices of the architect. In line with the methodology I detailed in chapter two, I do not wish to proceed from an assumption that disclaims these buildings from a present origin. Leaving the question of how much these buildings are either of the present or of the past has left me a space which I can now start to fill with how the age of these buildings and the disjuncture between them is understood by, and indeed produced by, cogent acts of inhabitation. The way my interviewees understand time is important. In some cases, the passage of time diminishes the potential for the building to be understood as working because, simply speaking, its contextual origins are very different to current circumstances. The ramifications of this are, in the first place, that the building is not considered to be Voysey's alone and the articulation of his wishes. Both Voysey and his buildings are seen to be susceptible to contextual influences of the time, such that his buildings are not plausibly understood as architectural transcripts of his wilfulness, but a more general reiteration of the norms and expectations of the nineteenth century which Voysey simply reissued. This seems to inform how Florence understands her house; in fact, at times her inhabitation incorporates an almost-defensive stance against the house that may quite substantially contract the plausibility it could have. She argues that [Redacted interview material -----

-----]. Florence finds that certain features of her house don't fit the day-to-day lifestyle and domestic labours that she and Adam might find easier in a more recently built house, one that doesn't solidify key aspects of a now absent past which impinges on their contemporary experiences. Specifically, her house was laid out such that the occupants could dwell at leisure, whilst a servant undertook a substantial portion of the domestic work. This long-absent context informed the structure of a house in a way that is no longer helpful, even if the house is, on the whole, workable.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Florence and Adam are inclined to be more critical of their house than the other inhabitants I've interviewed, which may inform their readiness to find annoyance at the incursion of non-relevant oldness into their home. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Jane and Daniel also find that features of their home seem to be locked into a past which no longer quite works. In this instance, however, it is not the exuberance of having a servant that creates the problem, but the austerity of the late nineteenth century, and the concurrent austerity of Voysey. Despite the fact that the fitted wardrobes in their house were laudably precise and efficient (see excerpt below), that precision and efficiency was relevant to a past time which, now gone, has rendered them somewhat pointless in a time with different expectations:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

The difference, of course, is that in the case of Jane and Daniel they are delighted for their house to be of the past, and no less delighted when their house unashamedly retains these features which are no longer useful, but significant nonetheless in terms of their research-driven inhabitation. In fact, Jane and Daniel's analytical inhabitation of their house manifests a temporal complexity: the fact that the building is (or is understood to be) of the past is key to Jane and Daniel's present and preferred inhabitation. For their house to work in the present in terms of their preferences, it was always going to have to be anchored in the past. That past anchoring, as I described in the previous section, makes their building an efficacious object of research in the present.

Other temporal understandings find that Voysey's work is not meaningfully diminished by the passage of time, nor indeed diminished to a role of reiterating the social and cultural contexts of their inception. Indeed, as Julian suggests, the orientation and proportions of his house are increasingly seen as features of most modern houses: [Redacted interview material] -----

-----]. In this sense, the building is not understood as being dependent on its contexts, and the referencing of its contexts, to work or fail, unless of course the plausibility of Voysey's work is understood to be contained in an ability to pre-empt and reference contexts to follow, in which case a degree of dependency on context remains, albeit one more astute than Florence finds at her house. As it happens, Florence's analysis of the deficient layout of her house relative to her needs is interpreted quite differently by John. In his discussion of the servants wing at his house, he surmises that Voysey must have, in fact, been pitching the design of the house towards a more egalitarian time which stripped away certain more bumptious social norms, a stripping which he finds evident in the design of the house, and which may help him to see his house less as a historic object, and more valid in contemporary times:

- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The influence, or deliberate lack of influence, of the past is therefore important in the way the plausibility of these buildings are shaped, though that should not be taken to mean that the plausibility of the building is more secure when it is credited with acts of pre-empting rather than acts of reiteration, especially in the case of Jane and Daniel whose inhabitation calls upon the past to be present. In a number of less prominent ways, my other interviewees have also found that there is something about living in an old building that makes it special. Whilst Florence is in no doubt as to her annoyance with the temporality of her home, she does appreciate the less intentional patina that her house has incurred over time, though this is despite Voysey. [Redacted interview material - - - - -

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- - - - -
- - - - -].

For Florence, the benefit of time in terms of her inhabitation has less to do with intentions that were feeble to context, or a historic sense that the house is important, and far more to do with the “flavour” of a matured house, one which, perhaps, has had the sharp edges of newness taken off it and replaced with a lived-in patina of dents and divots. This contrasts with Julian’s experience, who recalls the first time he saw his home: [Redacted interview material - - - - -

- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -].

History, as Julian understands it here, is credited with producing an attendant pride in his house and a sense of privilege. I would suggest that both of these are emergent from the idea that in living where he lives, he is caring for and maintaining custody of something that is understood to be important, but this is merely my suggestion and, although these themes are more prominent in the following chapter, in Julian’s case the historical significance of his house is a pleasant,

unconsidered sheen on an altogether pleasant inhabitation. One instance where the historicity of the building is analysed, and where that sheen becomes much more purposive, is at Winsford, where the building is understood to be historic because it pre-echoed an important social change in British society by a number of years, and thus contains in an original kind of form the beneficent and progressive thought that generated it, though as in Florence's case, the building itself is ancillary to the idea (though it is understood to be a worthy housing for it).

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In Andrew's experience, by contrast, it is the building itself that is of historic value insofar that Voysey House, in terms of what it pre-echoes is [Redacted interview material - - - - -

-----].

The complexity of these inhabitations and the plausibilities they produce are varied, both in terms of their extent, and in terms of their relative differences. By way of closing this chapter, I would like to emphasise the astute and analytical nature by which my interviewees produce plausibilities, and peer into the mechanics of how architecture, and the architect, can deliver effect. The architect himself is analysed from the architectural forms that inhabitants experience, which are themselves made more or less plausible by being connected to the motivations and expertise (or lack thereof) of a practitioner. Those same astute inhabitations can confirm, or redact, the plausibility of the building through querying it as an exercise of care and consideration, including the temporal adequacy of its foresight, and how well future inhabitants' needs are pre-empted. Perhaps most interestingly, however, is the possibility that, though the analytical creation of a "split" architect (as I have described it) the plausible and the implausible can be managed in tandem so that less plausible aspects of the building, except where they are genuinely intrusive, do not breach or undermine the continuation of those more plausible aspects.

**The construction of plausibility in
architectural design and inhabitation**

**Electronic Deposit
Volume Two**

Paul Wright

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iii.

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4.

Holden:

Charles Holden (see Box 4a for basic biographical details) is an exceptionally difficult architect to classify. Classifying architects according to the styles they employed is

Box 4a: Charles Henry Holden.

Personal events and associations:

- 12th May 1875: Born, New Lever, Bolton (Lancs.) to Joseph and Ellen Holden *nee* Bolton.
- 1890: Ellen Holden dies.
- 1896: Meets Francis Dodd and Muirhead Bone.
- 1899: Meets and starts co-habiting with Margaret Steadman*.
- 1901: Begins attending Friends' meetings.
- 1915: Meets Frank Pick.
- 1919: Joseph Holden dies.
- 1944: Offered (and turns down) a knighthood.
- 1954: Margaret Holden* dies.
- 1st May 1960: Dies, Welwyn (Herts.) aged 84.

Education:

- 1892-1896: Articled to Everard W. Leeson, Architect (Manchester).
- 1893-1894: Trained at the Manchester Municipal School of Art.
- 1894-1896: Trained at the Manchester Technical School.
- 1900-1903: Attends the Royal Academy Schools.
- 1936: Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Manchester.
- 1946: Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of London.

*Hutton and Crawford (2004) casts doubt over whether Holden and Steadman (*nee* Macdonald) were ever legally married, principally because it is not known whether she ever divorced her first husband. Notwithstanding, she remained with Holden until her death in 1954, and adopted Holden as her surname, so I refer to her throughout as Margaret Holden (in line with Karol, 2008: 46-47).

Sources: Karol, 2007: 479-480; Hutton and Crawford, 2004.

problematic in any event for the neatening and homogenising effect it can have, but both Voysey and Lubetkin can, at least in the first instance, be said to have affinities with the Arts and Crafts movement and Modernism (or Constructivism) respectively. Classifying Holden is more difficult again, because in the course of his career he changed stylistic direction a number of times. Fundamentally, Holden may have been a far more flexible practitioner than Voysey or Lubetkin were, and perhaps this makes sense relative to the context in which he practised. The practise of architecture was enormously changeable during Holden's career, whereas both Voysey and Lubetkin could enjoy more secure contexts of architectural practise (or secure

enclaves within changeable contexts) and benefit from some degree of continuity, even if they did not belong to the artistic or stylistic camps as Arts and Crafts, or Modernism.

When Voysey practised, traditional forms of construction still predominated, as did the apprenticeship system of training architects, alongside certain stylistic movements that existed in an established state. And when Lubetkin practised, the successors to these norms (engineering-derived methods of construction, architectural training schools, and the growing influence of Modernism) were new, but they were also reasonably sure footed. Holden, practising between these times, had to adjust his approach regularly, rejecting old directions and exploring new ones. The plate section in the middle of this chapter attests to this changeability.

Holden's buildings are concentrated in London, where he made a substantial mark. His buildings for the University of London and London Underground are used by millions of people. His London Underground stations were built in two tranches, each stylistically distinct. The second tranche were principally built for the Piccadilly line, with a small number of stations for the Central line. They comprise compact, almost pure masses such as cubes and drums with minimal protrusions or indentations except for long strips of dusky brick separating (generally vertical) expanses of glazing at regular intervals (such as Arnos Grove⁸⁰ (fig. 4.11)). These shapes are often mounted on a single storey pedestal-like entrance block, leaving them slightly elevated and set back. Their style is contained in their shapely massing, not in the inclusion of ornament, unlike the earlier tranche of stations, principally built for the Northern line, with a small number for the District line. These are more monolithic or slab-like in their approach, with few openings except those needed to transit passengers from the street to the platforms (such as Colliers Wood (fig. 4.3)). Senate House⁸¹ (figs. 4.1, 4.2) is different again: it is, in the first instance, enormous – high, wide, and long with hundreds of windows, it dominates the centre of Bloomsbury in a way that some find displeasing. The central tower and side wings have a chunky, solid immensity,

⁸⁰ Completed in 1932, Glancey (2007) enthuses that Arnos Grove is “truly what German art historians would describe as a *gesamtkunstwerk*, a total and entire work of art”. The station is in Arnos Grove, North London, and serves the Piccadilly line. It is part of a group of stations, including Cockfosters, Oakwood, Southgate, Bounds Green and Wood Green, and the staff who work for the group rotate between the different stations, rather than being tasked to a particular station. All of the stations, Excepting Bounds Green, were designed by Holden. Bounds Green was designed by a junior member of Adams, Holden and Pearson.

⁸¹ Completed in 1937, Senate House (Bloomsbury, London) is physically big enough to contain every other building I've studied in this thesis. It was originally conceived as a much larger complex of buildings (for which funding never proved adequate), and at completion was the second tallest building in London. It presently houses the principal administrative offices for University of London, and also houses the School of Advanced Studies, a large library, Birkbeck College's School of Computer Science and Information Systems, and a number of large ceremonial halls and circulation spaces. The building is most famous, and perhaps notorious, as the Ministry of Information, which was housed there during the Second World War, and where George Orwell worked prior to writing *1984*. It is often used as a film set when a monumental, imposing building is required. A longstanding rumour, related to me by an interviewee, is that the Luftwaffe were ordered not to bomb the building so that it could be used as the Third Reich's UK headquarters. The way in which Senate House's experience is story- and rumour-laden is discussed later in this chapter. The complex commission and design for Senate House is discussed at length in Simpson, 2005.

and yet the external finish in Portland stone lends it a softness which, along with its tapering design, give me the impression that it is both immovable, yet yielding. Holden's

Box 4b: Charles Holden, professional timeline:

- 1896: Works in the offices of Jonathan Simpson, Architect (Bolton).
- 1897: Works in the offices of C. R. Ashbee, noted Arts and Crafts architect (London).
- 1899: Joins the office of H. Percy Adams Architect (London).
- 1902-1906: Completes his first independent design: (successful) competition entry for Bristol Central Library.
- 1906: Becomes A.R.I.B.A.
- 1907: Adams makes Holden a partner in practice.
- 1913: Awarded the R.I.B.A Godwin Medal.
- 1915-1917: Joins the London Ambulance Column.
- 1918-1928: Promoted to Major with the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC).
- 1919-1920: Official end of military service, appointed fourth principal architect IWGC.
- 1921: Elected F.R.I.B.A
- 1923: Starts work for the London Underground.
- 1924-1929: First tranche of Underground stations, including 55 Broadway.
- 1930: Death of H. Percy Adams, Holden becomes senior partner.
- 1936: Awarded R.I.B.A Gold Medal.
- 1930-1939: Second tranche of Underground stations.
- 1931-1937: Starts work as sole architect for the University of London's Bloomsbury scheme.
- 1942: Elected a Member of the Town Planning Institute.
- 1944-1949: Planning work commences.
- 1944-1945: Canterbury plan (with H. M. Enderby).
- 1945-1947: City of London plan (with W. Holford).
- 1947-1948: South bank plan (unadopted).
- 1949: Tynemouth East End redevelopment plan.
- 1958: Retires from practice.

Sources: Karol, 2007: 479-480; Hutton and Crawford, 2004.

earliest full-scale commission, Bristol Central Library⁸² (figs. 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9). The east facing frontage suggests a Tudor-esque style which is dark, handsome and undulating, with a long, low profile, whereas the west facing frontage (not shown) has a more Scottish baronial aesthetic, and is both lighter and more vertically inclined. The interior begins with a gloomy grotto-like entrance space, eventually leading to a large classically featured reading room, brightly lit with skylights. The example of Bristol Central Library may serve to reinforce my point in the previous paragraph. In the following sections I outline why Holden changed direction, and employed flexibility, as he did.

Auto/biographical details of Holden are scant, barely more substantial than those on Voysey.

The only autobiographical recollections of any length are buried deep within his archives and comprise fourteen small scraps of paper (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2])⁸³. In the context

⁸² Located off College Green in the centre of Bristol and completed by Holden in 1906, having won the competition for the commission shortly after he joined the practise of Percy Adams (see Karol and Allibone, 1988: 13). It is best described as an eclectic building, combining a number of different styles. It is still Bristol's principal library.

⁸³ Holden used a lot of scrap paper, and wrote a lot of his introspective material on the back of torn-up circular letters, junk mail, memoranda, complimentary calendars, and so forth. I found this to be both charming and of great interest for the contextual morsels they provided. These particular autobiographical notes are written on the back of committee reports, letters, and minutes from (or concerning) various Reconstruction Committees, the War Executive Committee,

of Holden's enormous archive they seem infinitesimally small; nonetheless, they are the only documents that detail his life prior to, or peripheral to, his architectural practice, and they offer some key insights into understanding how he approached and inhabited the field of architecture, and what he believed was plausible in and of the buildings he designed.

Holden pivots his recollections around his adolescence and early adulthood: essentially, the 1890s and early 1900s after he left school, bouncing between various jobs. He worked for his father, a draper, and briefly worked on the railways before being apprenticed to a chemical works in St. Helens: he confesses that "It was not the work he would have chosen, but it was not without interest for him and the knowledge gained there often proved useful to him in later life" (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/iii]: 3). The contrast with Voysey, whose practice was then blossoming, is acute. Whereas Voysey was raised in a spiritual context of theological ideas and ideals (one where he remained affluent despite Reverend Voysey's deprivation), Holden's childhood and adolescence was firmly seated in the materialities of industry and commerce in England's industrial north (Ibid: [iv] 4) and tinged with his mother's death (when Holden was fifteen) and his father's bankruptcy shortly thereafter (Ibid: [i] 1). In Holden's early working life there is a conspicuous absence of aesthetic or artistic motivations in favour of (or perhaps symptomatic of) a deep immersion in the technicalities of materials, processes, and their manufacture. Perhaps this immersion made the absence of the artistic and aesthetic more stark because, at some point during this (eventually truncated) apprenticeship he developed an urge to draw, and joined a sketching class at the YMCA, recalling that:

"To draw was his great interest – it didn't matter what, but just to draw."
(Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/iv]: 4)

I use the term "urge" deliberately (reflecting Holden's own term, "insatiable", in the following quote). My impression is that Holden did not understand drawing as the necessary acts required to produce drawn images, but as the haptic satisfaction of motions and strokes, the weight of force or the delicacy of lightness, the execution of lines, curves, shades and shapes of his making, traced through his fingers, hands, and arms. Drawing was

the Uthwatt Report, and the "Sub-committee on Prefabrication and Standardisation" (from which I've derived the datum for this document: the circular is dated 30th September 1943), all torn or scissor-cut to slightly less than A5 in size. It is also interesting to note the degree to which Holden involved himself in post-war reconstruction and planning at both technical and policy levels, a subject I will return to later in this chapter.

his bodily achievement of intent, the emerging haptic creation and combined inhabitation of a two-dimensional environment of forms and textures. The subject, or indeed the results (and any aesthetic or representational qualities thereof) seem ancillary to the bodily application of his wishes, via a pencil, to a page and into two dimensional forms of shape and shade. This very pure and introspective inhabitation was undermined somewhat by the Mechanical Engineering classes which he later joined (these being the only other classes where he found any substantial opportunity to draw (Ibid: [iv] 4)). These classes prohibited absolute introspection by imposing a necessary design outcome, but in doing so they allowed Holden to glimpse design for the first time: an expeditionary leading edge to his otherwise private world (Ibid) which was then intentionally extended towards an outside world of people's needs, of functions performed, and of the third dimension. Armed with some technical ability, Holden started to edge towards an architectural career:

“Subsequently, Charles went into his [brother in law's] office to help, with no knowledge of building, but only an insatiable desire to draw – to draw anything.” (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/v]: 5)

Holden's sister Emma had married D.F. Green, a surveyor, in 1885, and he employed Holden as a clerk to draw up layout plans for speculative housing developments. At this stage it's evident that Holden still retained drawing as his own haptic indulgence (even functional drawing with defined purposes and outcomes). Nonetheless, he must have shown some promise, as Green felt inclined to approach a noted ecclesiastical architect⁸⁴ to provide training for Holden, and although this architect proved unwilling, he was able to secure Holden a four-year apprenticeship with Edward Leeson⁸⁵ of Manchester, starting in 1892. During his articles, Holden retained, albeit in diminished form, his appetite for drawing, and re-immersed himself in materialities: not chemical engineering, but construction. Over four years he attended evening classes in construction, masonry, carpentry and joinery, alongside his ongoing drawing classes (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/vi]: 5). This exploratory approach offered Holden a very broad architectural concept from the outset, one which dispenses with the introspection of his drawn world (to an extent) but retains its haptic engagement. That is, Holden evidently did not wish to

⁸⁴ Although Holden doesn't specify which architect Green first approached on his behalf, it is likely to have been G. F. Bodley, who was the only noted ecclesiastical architect working in the area at that time.

⁸⁵ Little is known of Leeson, and Holden certainly doesn't go to very substantial efforts to recall him: he is very briefly discussed in Karol (2007: 51).

limit himself to the abstract and two-dimensional drafted world of architectural design. His evening classes allowed him to encompass the full scope and materialities of building, which seems to have offered him an alternative vector along which to practice architecture that starts, so to speak, at the conclusion with the constructional and material acts of manifestation and works back towards the inception, i.e. the design. Holden's evening engagements with the haptic, material, and pragmatic acts of building, additional to his architectural training, allowed for a particularly vocal inclusion of constructional methods and materials in Holden's style of practice.

This alternative vector of Holden's emerging architectural practice is a reversal of what might be expected: rather than producing buildings from what could be called an "expectant" approach (where the character of a building is generated in a definitive process of design prior to methods and materials whose job is to obediently form the design), Holden's approach was "emergent". The forms, volumes, and detailing of his architecture emerged from the methods and materials whose possibilities, limitations, and behaviours Holden had experienced, and which were incorporated into his designs. And whilst it goes without saying that any architect has to enable this vector in some way (to account for the possibilities and limitations that methods and materials allow for) it was particularly potent and vocal in Holden's case. In designing buildings he drew on the haptic and pragmatic experiences of his particular training (in fact, after his training at Manchester Technical School, he was employed on their teaching staff for a time – Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/x]: 10). He recalled and, in a way, re-performed the stuff and work of building at the creative stage of design and enabled them with a degree of insistent influence. Whereas other architects without Holden's direct and haptic experience might virtualise meek, even dutiful materials and methods expected to service the architect's intentions (within the bounds of possibility), Holden's engagement was far more dutiful, and his approach to architecture was almost 'parliamentary' in this respect: his design process collected and represented the particular needs and characteristics of the various trades involved in building which, taken together, animated his architectural style from without.

Holden's parliamentary approach did not represent methods and materials alone. During his articles to Leeson, the *Building News* initiated a monthly student design competition, the "Designing Club"⁸⁶ which Holden regularly entered. In doing so, Holden was not

⁸⁶ See Karol, 2007: 57-59 – he submitted entries in 1895, continuing through 1896.

motivated to market himself or propose architectural manifestos. In fact, his motivations were opposed to this: entering under the pseudonym of *The Owl*⁸⁷, his intention was to invoke criticisms from the reviewers; his purpose remained parliamentary in that he allowed for external architectural manifestos to infiltrate and animate his creativity⁸⁸. Holden admitted that at this early stage of his career, “...he knew nothing of design indeed design meant nothing to him” [*sic*] (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/vi-vii]: 6-7)) and sought to gain meaningful knowledge through a public (though anonymous) process of trial and error that the Designing Club afforded. By this stage, Holden’s work had evidently outgrown his early introspection and arrived at a near-antithesis: an outgrowing that sought resolutions by seeking or inviting the opinions or impositions of other architects to recognise and nullify his shortcomings (Ibid: [vii-viii] 7-8). He correlated them into an approach to architectural design that owed more to his journeying into (or invitations to) proxy and context than to his own creativity to render himself obedient to the proficiencies and preferences of each vector in that network. This approach, despite its dutiful self-effacement, seemed to work for him, arousing in him a passion for design that “...meant something to him deep + real + fundamental” [*sic*] (Ibid: [viii] 8).

Up until this point, Holden’s journey into architecture had been that of a practitioner, and he was without doubt competent, technically proficient, and able to understand and engage with the *zeitgeist* of contemporary architecture: Karol recalls that he was awarded first place in the Designing Club competition five times (Karol and Allibone, 1988: 8) despite some caustic feedback from his earlier submissions (Holden c.1943, [Ahp/10/2viii]: 8). But the practitioners’ approach came to have limited appeal for him. Ironically, it was his obliging journeys into the field of architecture that brought his perceived limitations into relief:

⁸⁷ Holden explains that “...he took the nom-de-plume of “The Owl” not because of superior wisdom but because he was at that time very much a night bird, working often on the competition until 3 or 4 o’ clock in the morning.” (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/x-ix]: 10-11) Even as he approached and passed retirement age, Margaret Holden recalled “...he worked during long days expanding themselves after midnight, a quiet motionless figure, bending over great sheets of paper spread out on the top of the piano” (Holden, M. and Tarling, E., c.1946-1985 [Ahp/10/8]).

⁸⁸ The design norms that Holden connected through via the Designing Club were, broadly speaking, of a neoclassical persuasion. Neoclassical buildings emphasise classic forms, and can therefore be expected to be symmetrical and include columns, often supporting a portico (an open-sided porch placed centrally in the facade and extending, in some cases, to the full height of the frontage), emblatures (a horizontal band-like superstructure that rests on top of columns) cornices (the overhang or “crown” at the top of the building, over the emblature) and various other forms that were, ostensibly, inspired by or transcribed from classical Greek architecture. Some of the most famous streetscapes in the UK, such as Regent Street in London, are of neoclassical design, as are key buildings such as Buckingham Palace (although not the Houses of Parliament, which are Gothic in their inception).

“Seeing the work of the leading architects the brilliant men of the day, Charles felt himself to be suddenly deficient in creative ability – these brilliant strokes seemed to flow so freely from the pencils of the great men of the day.” (Holden c.1943, [Ahp/10/2/xii]: 12). That

Box 4c: Laws for creations:

LAWS for creations.

For strong artists and leaders, for fresh broods of teachers and perfect literats* for America.

For noble savans* and coming musicians.

All must have reference to the ensemble of the world, and the compact truth of the world.

There shall be no subject too pronounced – all works shall illustrate the divine law of indirections.

What do you suppose creation is?

What do you suppose will satisfy the soul, except to walk free and own no superior?

What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hundred ways,

but that man or woman is as good as God?

And that there is no God more divine than Yourself?

And that that is what the oldest and the newest myths finally mean?

And that you or any one must approach creation through such laws?

Whitman, 1882 (1973): 386-387.

*In both cases Whitman refers to knowledgeable and well-read people (i.e. those who are “literate” or “savant”).

deficiency was a recognition of how uncertain and faltering his own “pen” was, as he understood it, something that courting the Designing Club did not help him with. Such help came from a different and more poetic source. During his articles Holden was introduced to the writings of Walt Whitman (1819-1892) who had the most profound influence on him. It was Holden’s understanding of one of Whitman’s poems, *Laws for creations*, that helped him readmit himself to the practice which he had almost abandoned to dutiful obligation. A close friend and

architect, J. W. Wallace⁸⁹, introduced him to *Laws for creations* and entreated (almost berated) him not to abandon a competition entry he’d been increasingly vexed by. (*Laws for creations*, from Whitman’s ongoing anthology *Leaves of Grass* (Whitman, 1882 (1855-1892)⁹⁰) is fully transcribed in Box 4c). Holden recalled:

“Charles was heartened by the lecture but mystified by the poem – but in quietness and seclusion he studied it again and again until it took on a meaning deep and searching and imperative. He could not fail.” (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/xiii]: 13)

⁸⁹ Holden recalls that he had been eager to meet Wallace – an architect based in Bolton – because he had personally known Whitman: Wallace and Holden remained lifelong friends until Wallace’s death in 1926 (Karol, 2008:480 and Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/xi]: 10), although it was the artist Muirhead Bone who introduced Holden to the works of Whitman whilst he and Holden were studying at the Manchester Municipal School of Art.

⁹⁰ In all cases I refer to the 1882 edition of *Leaves of Grass* as this was the last edition in which the text was substantially changed (the 1892 “deathbed” edition contained new appendices only), although as a point of interest, *Laws for creations* remained the same in every edition.

The impossibility of failing, for Holden as for Whitman, emerged from the profound possibilities that integrity and honesty to the self offered. Holden's parliamentary architecture, (as I have described it) had, up to this point, explicitly "owned superiors" and, so defined, had looked to them in concert to generate architecture on his behalf: a mimesis which, despite its obvious diligence, devolved his creativity to a homogenisation of external norms and standards, haptically or socially harvested, which he'd assembled into an architectural "box of tricks" (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/xiv]: 14; c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/iv-v]: 4-5). *Laws for creations* rendered his functionalism and compliance in sharp relief, but offered in the same moment the possibility for satisfaction. Instead of trying to attain or contain other standards and norms he could seek, reveal, and aim to achieve his own:

"He knew his design would not win but it was his confession of faith, his confession of his [illegible] of imagination even – but it was his own, bald bleak frontages but naked and unashamed." (Holden, c.1943 [Ahp/10/2/xiv]: 14)

At this key point in Holden's emerging practice, a degree of faith replaces failure; or put another way, generative creativity replaces (to a degree) parliamentary creativity. The constraining and diminishing of his nature and judgement in favour of delegation and reverential mimesis was a failing that became as obvious to Holden as it had been to Whitman. It was both a personal failure of over-reliance, and a wider failure of creativity and original thought in preference to ingrained doctrine. Furthermore, the logic of defining these others as above oneself (i.e. as "superior" or "divine" in Whitman's terminology) exacerbated that failing as they would always be slightly aloof, and one could only fail to meet their standards. As he expected, Holden's competition entry did not win (although it received a commendation (Ibid)), but he had, for the first time, neither eschewed nor displaced himself in favour of mimetic attainment and perceived expectation. By availing himself of the "divine law of indirections" (Whitman, 1882 (1973): 386-387.), he rediscovered his own volition and the possibility of scope, as opposed to submissions to the sovereignty of unconsidered norms.

Rediscovery of volition – reduction as creation:

Holden's early architectural practice was a fraught journey between different possibilities and proficiencies. But moreover, it's evident that the theme of his journeying was the degree to which he either involved himself, or effaced himself, in various different ways. At this latter extreme, Holden was constantly searching for anyone or anything (except himself) to do his architecture for him. Yet, underlying Holden's varying involvement was his very haptic presence: even at the point where he was most effaced, a key element of that surrender was his experience of the materialisation of buildings, and using this practical understanding of constructional methods and materials to provide obvious cues and solutions. On the other hand, a near-absolute haptic indulgence defined Holden's most introspective moments in which lines, shapes, and shades emerged through drawn performances. One way or another, Holden's practice of architecture always contains and attains some degree of bodily involvement as an element of its production, regardless of how un-involved Holden aimed to be.

As such, it's also important to note that his rediscovery of volition was an act of re-balancing, rather than a revolutionary change in his approach. What changed was the interplay of servitudes and the idea that his role was composed of key acts of servitude. Some degree of duty and being dutiful (as distinct from servile) remained and he always understood architecture as a multiply populated undertaking which required, out of necessity, multiple delegations and the representation of others. The rediscovery of his volition was used not to indulge himself, but rather to produce his own understanding of his duty. Post-Whitman, Holden understood that both structure and material were amenable to his creativity as resources to be utilised rather than limitations that, sufficiently understood and revered, would answer for his creative anaemia with a singular or limited choice of logical outcome(s). This newly discovered creative amenity did not alter the fact that structure and materials (and the constructional methods that shaped them) were constraining insofar as their technical limitations curtailed any fanciful creativity: he still retained a practitioner's respect, but in a different form which I discuss shortly. Moreover, Holden was alerted to the fact that to base architecture on a nomenclature of formulas and prescribed manifestos of form, proportion, and other physical and/or aesthetic attributes was stifling, and in eschewing them he began to create a new architectural territory for himself.

This start of terraforming his territory led Holden towards a particular declaration of honest architectural faith: “You see” he wrote, “I took myself very seriously in those days...”

“...I felt that somewhere behind the facade there was to be found an architecture as real and as purposeful as life itself and I sought to bring it forth and put it upon the map of our daily life.

It was an ambitious programme and far beyond my capacity – but youth is ever audacious.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/1/iii-iv]: 2-3)

Part of this highly involved architecture directly in the “map of our daily life” was based around a concept of honesty which relied equally on a definition of dishonesty, and for Holden, architectural dishonesty was that that failed to achieve the “purposeful” and “real” or (at best) engaged with the purposeful and real from behind some facade-like contrivance. Underlying these two definitions is a hierarchy of function and aesthetics which needed to be maintained in order to attain architectural honesty:

“[A]n architect can say, as I have heard it said, ‘I don’t mind how a thing is done so long as it looks all right’. There can be no real vitality in any building on these lines. It does matter how a thing is done and it matters a great deal.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/1/vi]: vi)

Holden re-issued this point on a number of different occasions, and in a contemporaneous document titled *AA talk*⁹¹ he clarified the nature of what was being “done”...

“...so long as it looks all right. Who would trust you to design an aeroplane [illegible]. It matters a great deal how it is done. Remember you are designing a piece of machinery for your client which must function perfectly in all its parts.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/xi]: 11)

Architectural honesty was a function of efficacy, both in the way the building performed the purposeful work required of it and, preceding this, the architect’s understanding and

⁹¹ “AA” refers to the Architectural Association, and this particular document (handwritten on twelve pages) is drafted in such a way that suggests it was to be spoken, but I have not been able to find out if it was ever delivered.

prioritisation of those purposes and how they could best be performed. For Holden, this was the kernel of architectural brilliance and therefore merited the bulk of an architect's time, skill, and consideration. To dwell on other aspects at the expense of purpose dulled the potential emergence of that brilliance, and to look to these other aspects to take the place of (or ameliorate the inadequate or incompetent provision for) purpose outright occluded it in a visual appeal to forgiveness or subterfuge (in either event, dishonest). Of these other aspects, Holden recognised the aesthetic as architecture's favourite evasion (Ibid) and further recognised that many of architecture's design manifestos (or "formulae") awarded primacy to aesthetic expressions, which he warned against in *AA talk*:

"If I can offer you any advice it would be to make 'fitness for everyone' your slogan – if you are tempted to sacrifice human purpose to the cause of Art I say 'don't'." (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/xi]: 11)

Holden's hierarchical ethic found expression as "sanity", which does not immediately correlate with "fitness for everyone": fitness suggests service and duty to human occupants, whereas sanity represents that corner of Holden's practice – slavishly dutiful prior to Whitman's *lams* – that accounts for structures and materials.

"Structural sanity and functional sanity must go hand in hand in the use of old or new materials, for mere novelty is not enough and it is the right use of any material old or new which really matters." (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/2/iii]: 3)

Structures and their materials did not merely take precedence over the aesthetic in Holden's nomenclature; the aesthetic was actually bound to them and obliged to a sort of fidelity which meant that aesthetic treatments could be equally amenable to architectural honesty as to dishonesty:

"Functionalism today is the outcome of the [illegible⁹²] of steel and concrete construction as a means to architectural expression in its own right + not as something to be clothed and hidden away in the guise of something that it is not. (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/1/vi-vii]: vi-vii)

⁹² But possibly "acceptance".

That is to say: architectural aesthetics were dutiful, and they had to pay due respect to the primary structural and material realities that kept the building upright and watertight, and these in turn had to form the functional and purposeful spaces of use. These were Holden's three "sane" realities of a building – function, structure, and material – and the aesthetic treatment could not extend or diverge so far from the structural and material reality of a building so as to veil it with facades.

Of these three sane realities of building, "function" was paramount and critical to "fitness", as was Holden's apprehension towards anything that might jeopardise the functional efficacy of a design and his wish to excise it from the creative process:

"I began to ask myself what architecture meant not in terms of order, [illegible], or proportion, not in terms of actual embodiments, but in terms of human needs + of human service in providing for those needs." (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/iii]: 3)

To shift the subject matter away from manifestos and formulations of (literally) matter marks a substantial departure from the excesses of his practitioner's approach. At the same time, basing architecture on a suite of solutions and ideas that provide service to human needs retains a fundamental feature of his parliamentary approach, allowing his (potential) assertions to be displaced by a designed representation of other assertions whose interests can be broadly incorporated under the term "inhabitation". From this logic, Holden began a process of reduction, critically excising those approaches that sought only to produce shapely attributes or aesthetic treatments (his "box of tricks"), and retaining those that rendered service to the inhabitants and inhabitations to follow:

"In my small way I began to analyse the architectural forms which served as the basis of our training [illegible] I can assure you that I found my archt' box of tricks very nearly empty when I had completed my enquiries – and I had very little to put back in it." (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/iv-v]: 4-5)

For Holden, a large part of what functionalism entailed was this reduction of architectural practice through the exclusion of "sentimentality" (as opposed to purpose (Ibid [vii]: 7)).

By way of a strangely logical paradox, this reduction was also an expansion: it opened a space for the retention and enhancement of the service an architect could architecturally deliver to people. And in order to broaden this space, he maintained the diminution of the aesthetic, denying it an overt role in the formation of “beauty”:

“If you ask me what is my idea of beauty I cannot tell you – I see it always as something closely related to the service of body + mind and the expression of a balanced harmony + happiness.” (Ibid [viii]: 8).

Holden’s notion of “fitness for everyone” (Ibid [xi]: 11) and the ideal of architectural service was bound in an exclusionary notion that there would be more room and opportunity for service in architecture once sentimental approaches had been excised. There would, additionally, be more room for creativity if an architect had the confidence to excise those more insistent architectural precedents that Holden himself had once sought so eagerly. It is easy to interpret this combination as a negative approach, one of finding faults to blame and eliminating them to arrive at a purified, but much diminished architectural practice. I would suggest that this is at least partially true, and there is an implicit assumption in Holden’s work that good architecture is achieved not so much through the addition of good things, but in the identification of the faulty, inadequate, or pointless and, so judged, their elimination.

“When in doubt, leave it out’ this rather crude statement [illegible] be taken as mere defeatism. It is a recognition of something wrong about the design and a decision to get down to it and find the right direction.

This is a case of ‘clearing the decks for action’.” (Holden, c.1908 [Ahp/26/1/6/i]: 1)

Holden’s understanding of architectural deficiencies is often described in quantitative terms and argues that the many deficiencies of architecture stem from a common source of profusion; indeed, Holden never seems to engage with the possibility that a building might fail because of a *scarcity* of features. He maintained this point throughout his architectural practice and the evidence of it is clear not only from his archived notes, but also in the austerity of some of his buildings, and in his personality which he recalled with a rare insight into his childhood:

“As a child I remember playing on a raft of loose planks. I removed one plank after another to see how few planks would keep me afloat. When I removed one plank too many I began to sink and got a ducking for my too [illegible] adventuring. My engagement with architecture was rather like that – I left out one accepted convention after another + found that I could still keep my archt’ craft afloat. The only difference is that I do not appear to have reached the limit of elimination for I haven’t sunk yet.” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/1/9/i]: i)

The more planks he removed, the more “simple truths” could be asserted, both those of constructional plausibility, and especially those of purpose (that is to say; to house inhabitants and enable their chosen inhabitation). Holden “...found that it opened the door to a new world with endless vistas of delight. There was no hesitation, no turning back after that.” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/1/11]) It is these vistas, endless because of the obstacles Holden removed to original thought, that represent the space he created to practice in.

Holden’s dual and potentially contradictory wish was, it seems, to assert himself and assert the wishes of others at the same time. Holden looked to his clients to both achieve and resolve this. In the first instance, to give one’s full attention to the clients and the way they might inhabit a building drew an architect’s attention away from fashionable precedent and facadism and towards the architectural provision of solutions. He wrote, on the reverse of a *British Aluminium* complimentary calendar for 1936,

“Our critics don’t matter, but what does matter – and matters a great deal – is that we should be straight with ourselves, that we should look at our problems fairly and squarely and not deceive ourselves.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp26/1/4/iii]: 3)

And the basis of that provision was the client:

“Our duty as architects is first + foremost to render service to our clients + the community – that style is not a true objective but something wh. emerges in

doing a job as well as you know how + with pride and pleasure in the doing of it.” (Ibid: [iv] 4)

As such, how a design emerged, and how usefully it emerged, depended on what the architect paid attention to. Holden paid very close attention to his clients and in this key way his practice of architecture retained a dutiful shape that emerged from and conformed to the inhabitation that was to follow, and which Holden pre-empted. At first glance, this reverses the flux of intention, reception and effect: it was not Holden’s explicit aim to create effects in and with the buildings he designed. The client and their proposed inhabitation provoked and effected the design of the building and induced forms. This sounds like a creeping abandonment of his newly rediscovered volition in favour of other inducements, but this was not the case. He had no more intention of producing a facsimile of a client’s wishes than he had of diminishing himself to criticism. Rather than doing what he was asked or told, he crafted his own solutions to his clients’ needs as he understood them. Whilst he evidently did not believe that he had the option to produce an indulgent architecture bereft of solutions, the characteristics and volumetric arrangement of those solutions were Holden’s own, and the result of his own (if prompted) volition. By condensing the reception of his work closely around the clients and allowing his work to be a reception of their needs, Holden achieved a self honesty after Whitman’s example alongside a simultaneously selfless honesty of provision and service.

In the transition from this highly devolved, highly parliamentary approach to the Whitmanesque rediscovery of volition, certain features are worth noting and summarising. In the first place, Holden always retained a practitioner’s edge to his work, a result of his “insatiable” appetite for drawing, and also his training which emphasised the methods and techniques of construction. This may explain, at least in part, why he should have proceeded to formulate a parliamentary approach which represented other disciplines and trades involved with building paying more attention to them than either Voysey or Lubetkin did, perhaps especially Voysey who, as discussed in the previous chapter, implicated himself into the behaviours and abilities of the contractors who worked to construct his buildings. Holden, on the other hand always seemed to recognise their abilities and their key role in actualising the buildings he was designing, and there may be a degree of plausibility in this, quite different to that which Voysey (and to a lesser degree Lubetkin) sought to articulate. This may represent plausibility in co-operation, a

recognition – substantially overemphasised initially but retained nonetheless after his awakening to Whitman – that the architect’s role was not definitive in the creation of buildings and that, in the act of designing buildings he had to make a space for that which he couldn’t define, and which he had to delegate to other professionals. As such, Holden’s understanding of plausibility was defined in one sense by the implausibility of the idea that he was fundamentally the building’s maestro: his practice of architecture was plausible because it was collagist, and it arranged practices together in the act of designing, each respectfully treated and each credited with the final outcome (as I will explain shortly).

Holden’s rediscovery of his volition was not, and could not plausibly be therefore, an abandonment of the parliamentary, but it was an abandonment of dishonesty or “owning superiors” and using these superiors to accumulate a box of tricks which in order to recover his honesty and self confidence, he proceeded to employ. This employing may also contain a germinating kind of plausibility, which, in his risk averse and self effacing phase prior to Whitman’s influence, he otherwise filled with deference to and reflection of treatments and features he had sourced from, and tested against the opinions of, other architects (via the Designing Club). The plausibility that emerged from emptying his practice of architecture of superiors was a relatively free space in which to produce architecture insofar that his volition was not obliged to the preferences of the wider architectural field, so allowing him to exercise what he thought best for the clients who employed him, and the service of their needs, along with a degree of fidelity to the essential truth of what a building was, rather than the obligation to other’s tastes and opinions that he had previously practiced.

The collagist approach to the design of buildings, and the inclusion of the other practitioners who provided his work with plausibility, is suggested by the substantial degree of respect for these other practitioners, and he was careful to praise them and the need for a close relationship with them:

“An archt’ is more than a designer, he is also an [illegible] of the works of others and it is his duty to bring harmony in each + every one of these services.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/ix]: 9)

And he further encouraged...

“...a free imagination in those who work for you. Look on your work always as a joint effort + do not be afraid of giving credit where credit is due and let us always remember with proper humility that the skilled craftsman knows more about his own particular craft than you or I can ever know and that we owe some of our greatest triumphs to their skill and willing co-operation” (Ibid: [ix-x] 9-10)

Holden always remained close to the building process and the contractors who worked to create buildings, in part because he always retained a practitioner’s edge to his practice, but also in more strategic terms because he needed them to realise his intentions in built form. The outcome of this was a more extended understanding of architectural design which went beyond the production of plans and elevations and included the careful arrangement of practitioners to receive that design in a kind of proxy (and virtual) materiality. An architect, therefore, was duty bound not only to design the building but to write the opening lines of its ongoing narrative, and to place characters there with roles that had scope to develop. Part of Holden’s job was to create jobs for these practitioners, and create around each practitioner an envelope in which some degree of self-determination was afforded them. For Holden, a key part of architecture was to produce such conditions for the designed building to happen in.

In a letter to Edward Carter, who was at that point the R.I.B.A’s librarian and archivist, Holden revealed one means by which he wove these jobs into the opening chapters of a building’s life (Holden, 1942 [Ahp/26/6/1]). His proposition was a progress chart for the construction process which had the appearance of a histogram laid over an image of the finished building. The vertical axis denoted the degree of completion, and the horizontal axis was split into units of time. Each trade had a line, ascending from left to right, at various different points along the graph that denoted when they should arrive on site, whereabouts on the building (represented floor by floor in cross section) they were working on, and what their deadline was to complete the work. So presented, Holden’s intention was clearly to control the timing and location of each trade on site so that, for instance, as the first floor was finished, the masons’ and bricklayers’ lines would move to the next storey, and the plumbers’ and glaziers’ lines would begin in the storey the masons and bricklayers had just vacated. The same efficiencies he hoped for in his buildings were

thus imposed on the site, and whether or not he ever used this diagram, the temporal discipline is clearly stated and intended to give those opening chapters a specific momentum and a logical emergence (Holden, 1942 [Ahp/26/6/1/ii]: ii).

Holden's inhabitant :

The previous section outlined the emergence of a Holden's conception of architecture as the efficable equipping of the building for the inhabitant's benefit. The heart of this process – the most basic and enduring facet of architectural equipping – was “the plan in service and the planes + masses arising out of that plan” (Holden, 1936 [Ahp/26/3/1/v]: 4). This was the primary point at which the building rendered its service and made certain inhabitations possible. It was also the genesis of the design as it conformed to the client's chosen inhabitations, and the other elements of the building either helped to contain the plan, or were themselves produced by it. It was where Holden started his design:

“I cannot even begin to think of the aesthetic side of the problem until I have arrived at a plan which is so simple + straightforward that its smooth working in daily occupation is assured!” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/1/5/iii]: iii)

Smoothness and smooth working were the principal offerings to inhabitants via the correctly designed plan. Whatever business the client had to do, it was the architect's business to design a space that allowed it to happen without impediment, and preferably with a certain materially produced encouragement:

“It is right and proper that any person, be he engineer or architect, who designs for any specific purpose, should wish in the first place that his plan should have the highest possible efficiency for the purpose it has to fulfil; in the second place it must be constructed to fulfil its purpose with reasonable economy...” (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1/ii]: 2)

These proposals produced particular plans for particular kinds of inhabitant and inhabitation, and the key to both was the logical separation and re-ordering of tasks. Holden's inhabitant, as he imagined them, had a purpose to achieve, which required of

him/her a series of actions, i.e. tasks. A building's plan was intended to help effect the inhabitant's plan in this way.

Holden's devotion to his clients was extensive in some directions, and truncated in others, which in turn depended on his understanding of his clients and their needs. One such extent, which also forms a minor extension into the future inhabitation of his buildings, was to insulate the clients from potential risks, and in this case, Holden discussed risk in non-specific (nautical) terms:

“Altho' we may fear shipwreck for ourselves, we don't want our clients to be involved in the wreck of any ship, especially when it is their ship we are navigating. I myself have sailed some of these unchartered seas.” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/1/15])

This policy of risk avoidance was given a formative role in the design: more accurately, it was formative in what was absent from the design, negating certain adventurous or creative possibilities that might risk failure, and leaving what was, in principle, a fundamentally conservative and sober remainder. The constraints were Holden's, but they were for the client's sake and imagined from their perspective. Whether Holden was entirely dedicated to the client, fulfilling their needs and ameliorating their susceptibilities (such as to non-specific risk), or whether the client he virtualised was contrived to helpfully support his philosophy (in which flippancy was displaced by common sense) is in many respects a moot point. The client, however they were formed, was central to Holden's philosophy. His understanding of his client's needs was vital to the duty Holden saw himself fulfilling, an approach which Holden defended for its satisfying completeness (using a bodily metaphor):

“Depressing common-sense! What do they want? A life of sensationalism a poor life – all on the surface.

All nerves and no flesh + blood” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/1/21])

Sensationalism was futile and deflected architecture from its particular and serious purpose, and the particular and serious inhabitations it was based around (i.e. “living”):

“I must confess I prefer the [illegible] comedy of living to the flippant gaiety of changing fashion, which passes for comedy but really means an effort to escape from a full + purposeful life” (Holden, c.1933 [Ahp/26/1/22])

These statements of intent contain more than emphases on pragmatism and fullness. They also reflect Holden’s assumptions about his clients and their future inhabitation, and in particular, that they would define their inhabitations around intentionally productive acts, strung together by aims, tasks, and accomplishments. There was little room in Holden’s conceptions for leisurely, unproductive dwelling (and perhaps especially those facile acts of keeping up appearances): he designed his buildings as effective places where useful results were generated by purposeful applications of effort. As such, the functionality of Holden’s architecture was, in part, based on this assumption of functional, purpose-focussed humans in, or about to be in, occupation. This was a notion that architecture should usefully serve people’s fundamental (and diligent) usefulness by assuring amenable conditions for it:

“Architecture not an extravagance but an economy:

Good architecture means:-

good health

light

air

conditions in which to work and to concentrate on work with unfrayed nerves

+ in peace and quiet

sanitation

ventilation

Bad means the lack of these.” (Holden, c.1933 [Ahp/26/1/24])

This is one of a number of lists Holden produced as to what buildings should achieve for the particular kind of client he imagined. In a contemporaneous but somewhat shorter “list” he suggested that buildings should achieve comfort, convenience, and “economy of movement” for their inhabitants (Holden, c.1933 [Ahp/26/2/1/ii]: ii). In either case, the features of a building were combined to provide amenable conditions in which people could undertake work, understood as pragmatic tasks aligned towards a purpose, and the building was an amplifier for the inhabitants’ productive characteristics, providing an environment to maintain them in and, in some cases, rendering the building a tool for

effecting productive work directly (such as “economy of movement”). Unlike Voysey, Holden did not expect buildings to invoke particular forms of thought, but he did believe buildings could enhance and amplify the purposeful usefulness that he assumed was at the core of people’s lives.

Clearly then Holden understood inhabitants and inhabitation through their material partnerships: what people were able to do depended on what materialities they partnered with and what those materialities offered, and as such his concept of human agency did not allow for people to generate actions and produce results from themselves alone, nor from merely being *in situ* in ontological or biological terms (i.e. the impossibility of not being somewhere and able to respire). Materialities like architecture completed the possibilities of being human through being partnered with, not simply from being occupied.

For Holden, this deep functional implication for architecture is laden with plausibility, in fact plausibility is, logically speaking, inexorable. If people are fundamentally purposeful and they need to co-opt materialities in the form of tools which they cannot be without to achieve that purpose, then architecture can be understood as a tool. This understanding of architecture as a tool, as Holden did, automatically achieves a purposeful plausibility insofar as it is always implied in the everyday lives or at least the understanding of everyday life and the everyday productive activities that Holden maintained. Because of this, the functional aspects of architecture formed the keynote of architectural beauty for Holden, or at least beauty which grew as functionality became more perfect. Beauty could not be applied to something as a surface treatment. It had depth, it was deeply embedded in the purpose of that which was to be designed and became beautiful in the degree to which it enabled that purpose, which Holden explained in corporeal terms:

“I finally came to the conclusion that beauty is as intimately related to function in architecture as it is in the human body and that it is possible to achieve a high degree of beauty with as little resort to decorative embellishment”
(Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/2/ii]: 2)

And, in more explicit terms:

“Is there anything in the world more beautiful than the healthy human body? And yet is there anything which so completely and perfectly fulfils the demand for fitness for purpose with the most perfect economy [illegible] most perfect harmony? There is not more infallible guide to an architect that to keep before him always the lesson of the perfect human body.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/1/3/xii]: 12; see also c.1936 [Ahp/26/3/1/vi]: 5)

“Harmony” and “economy” were key to achieving this functional beauty: harmony suggested that no component should diminish the effect of another, and economy suggested that the whole of that effect should be directed to fulfilling the overall purpose. This was a highly efficient and simultaneously very dependent understanding that saw beauty emerging principally from between things, that is to say, from the way components were arranged around one another and intended to engage with each another. Beauty in architecture, as with bodies, was found not in the beautiful execution of components or forms in a bounded sense, but by fitting together beautifully and achieving perfect diligence to the whole. Holden’s design philosophy gained much of its momentum from this metaphorically corporeal de-aestheticisation of beauty, inspired by the body’s beautiful in-betweens. A beauty formed of beautifully fitting together out of neatness.

This understanding of beauty-in-fitness is further revealed in a short handwritten document in which Holden discussed his membership of the Design and Industries Association (DIA⁹³):

“I am a member for one thing + for one thing only – for its slogan ‘Fitness for Purpose’.

A society with that for its slogan, no matter what vicissitudes it may pass through, no matter to what extent it may have become obsessed with the passion for paradox + publicity – a society which holds fast to that slogan will never stray far from the true path.” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/8/1/i]: i)

⁹³ The Design and Industries Association was formed in 1915 to promote the principle of good design in the production of goods for use and consumption by individuals, and latterly to promote good industrial design in general. It continues to exist and, unlike MARS (see chapter five) has a formal structure as a registered charity. (Design and Industries Association, 2010)

At the same time, however, he recognised that his concept of beauty as purposeful fitness in action sounded perhaps a little dry and staid, potentially lacking in fun and flair:

“There are those who say that fitness for purpose is not enough – may be not, but let us try it + believe me we have a life’s work before us to bring our life and our work up to even that simple standard. I have been trying it for 40 years + I haven’t yet come to the end of its aesthetic possibilities, and what is more we shall find that we have embarked upon a great + glorious adventure in the pursuit of beauty which is real, intimate, + satisfying.” (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/8/1/ii])

In saying “let us try it”, Holden’s response was to essentially see what happened, evading a point which he couldn’t quite respond to except to say that *he* had found it enough and that *he* found it had produced a solid and satisfying beauty. This slightly uncertain defensiveness hints at the possibility that the DIA’s slogan and his belief in it was not so much a guarantee of beauty as it was a prop to support his rarefied understanding of beautiful functionality. By his own admission, Holden had found decorative and ornamental architecture difficult, and he did not consider that his skills were adequate to achieve it (Holden, 1954 [Ahp/26/7/2/ii]: 1). The plain form-and-mass based aesthetic he preferred was something he arrived at as a result of addressing this perceived deficiency, and it was part of the self re-discovery which condensed around his understanding of Whitman’s *Laws*:

“In the process I discovered the significance of form as distinct from the tricks of architectural ornament. The building would take on a character of its own often requiring little in the way of embellishment and finally confirmed the value of my slogan, ‘when in doubt, leave it out’” (Holden, 1954 [Ahp/26/7/2/ii]: 1)

This statement confirms a sense of the indigenous, the sense that Holden had discovered something that belonged to the building rather than the imposed theatre of detailing, and his logic of removal suggested that this indigenous aesthetic, based on the components which actually made the building work, became more apparent for being less subsumed by

“tricks”. In a sense, Holden was letting the building do the work of aesthetic expression itself from the basis of its indigenous character.

The bodily metaphor Holden drew on was useful beyond bodily confines too, extending to a wider and temporal concept of biology and suggesting a logic of improvement to him which may, as an inadvertent effect, have disparaged that which preceded it:

“The architect is not predominantly a purveyor of aesthetics. Yet his work is essentially creative. The planning of rooms to fulfil a defined purpose is creative and, as one usually endeavours to improve on past experiences, the process may be said to be biological.” (Holden, c.1933 [Ahp/26/2/1/i]: i)

Holden’s temporal understanding had a high resolution, in that he saw creative opportunities recurring regularly at small scales, but in profusion, without particularly obliging him to respect precedent or preceding approaches to architectural design. This temporal ontology, defined by its composition of small but numerous opportunities, offered the continuing possibility of evolution, a dynamic which Holden sought to inhabit for the design possibilities it offered:

“I know I shall not shock your susceptibilities when I say that I believe that all effort is biological + therefore creative + by the same token all effort to improve the fitness of design is a piece of what I like to call the daily renewal of creation” (Holden, c.1933 [Ahp/26/2/1/v-vii]: v-vii)

This renewing temporality, laden with a high resolution of opportunity, received florid treatment in *Architecture is the Mother of the Arts* (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/4/1] fully transcribed in Box 4d), where architecture is temporally idealised as both matriarchal and youthful: it was architecture’s recurring state of youth that invoked recurring opportunity, a metaphor which Holden used to represent a sense of exploration and discovery (though one more considered than the merely teenage, hence the dual metaphor of youth and matronly matriarchy, the latter invoking a degree of wisdom). The space that this renewing made available allowed for creative inhabitation and the (controlled) possibility of growth: this included deficient possibilities such as “grandiloquence”, and Holden reiterated that architecture was at its most graceful and meaningful when deployed in humble and honest

service. This temporal idealism took advantage of both the dynamism that generated opportunities, and the enduring “ancient wardrobe” of basic architectural truths.

Box 4d: Architecture is the Mother of the Arts

“I refuse to call it the Mistress Art for there is something sinister in that title which is altogether unworthy of that hoary and respectable matron but who (notwithstanding her age and respectability) is perpetually renewing her youth.

The mother of the arts is not the “also ran” that might be inferred from that home of rest, the Architecture Room.

This dear lady of my heart is a very elusive person: she shows herself in the most unexpected places. Often she finds more of the grace o’ life in a back elevation than in the most grandiloquent facades.

She tolerates magnificence because she must perforce wear the garments we provide for her; she wears with a certain flippant gaiety our playful and facile variants upon her ancient wardrobe, well knowing that these will pass into oblivion - - she knows!

But she hungers for the grace o’ life and she has a lot of young and enthusiastic workers blindly labouring on her behalf. She looks on their efforts with interest and amusement - - and, I may say, just a little apprehension.

Will these efforts bring the grace o’ life any nearer? Who knows? But from whatever quarter it comes, life will be the richer and more significant and more beautiful for it.”

(Holden, undated [Ahp/26/4/1] transcribed in full.)

The concept of architecture and its purpose that Holden created was, in some ways, alarmingly frank and honest. In insisting that architecture was duty bound to self constraint and the service of human need, Holden engaged with architecture at its most fundamental and unpretentious level: that of necessary shelter. Neither Voysey nor Lubetkin sought to pare architecture down to such basics: both believed that it had fundamentally wider

contributions to everyday life than providing dryness and warmth through the enclosure of space. In truth, so did Holden, but he still chose to remind himself and others that: “I have always found it useful to think of archt as serving one of the three primary needs of life – food, clothing + shelter” ((Holden, 1954 [Ahp/26/7/1]), and also (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/9/1/i]: i) in which he compared the architect’s position to that of a farmer or a baker, that is to say, central to life’s continuation). Holden was, quite unlike Voysey or Lubetkin, comfortable with the nakedness of this reduction and the salient reminder it offered him as to his scope:

“In my early days I asked myself what was architecture? As I saw it it served one of the three primary needs of man food, clothing and shelter and that the architect was a purveyor of service and the provision of that service took on the dignity of a dedicated service not in any inflated idealistic sense but of conscientious service ranking equally with the services of food and clothing neither more nor less. That may have seemed a plebeian approach but it kept

me from overwhelming pride or “swelled head” and, I hope, from artistic snobbery.” (Holden, 1954 [Ahp/26/7/2/i]: 1)

Holden found it important to keep himself from being “overwhelmed”, and the idea of service at this most basic level allowed him to maintain a nomenclature in which the indulgences of artistic snobbery were subsumed by the heightened appreciation of *critical* need from which architecture, as a solution, owed its origins, and from which it could harvest a degree of “sanity”:

“I always feel that it is this undercurrent of service to the needs of man which keeps architecture sane. That it is today touched with the prevailing tendency to experiment with new forms in a manner comparable to the many different “isms” in painting and sculpture is true enough, but there is also the basic human need to save it from becoming simply an intellectual adventure into unrelated abstract form...” (Holden, c.1942 [Ahp/26/5/1/i-ii]: i-ii)

Urgent necessity separated architecture from the other arts, and it was also a means of protection from them. These indulgences did not make a building any less effective as a simple shelter, but being reminded of architecture’s urgent necessity in human survival and possibility forced Holden (and, he hoped, other architects) to hope for the perfectibility and potential brilliance of architecture to house people and their abilities, to serve them only, rather than serve a given idea (including ideas of what they were like or, moreover, ought to be like).

As with Voysey, Holden believed that the possibilities for architectural effect were provided by the client and their capacity to understand and co-operate with his approach and beliefs, but unlike Voysey, Holden put the client at the heart of his work, generating an architecture from their needs and habits (albeit a pared-down understanding of their needs). He did not seek to foist an ethic on his clients as Voysey had hoped to. However, some effort was required from the client: it was not the architect’s job alone to bridge this gap, and if the client saw the architect as a “charlatan” or “middleman”, or simply an extra expense to be incurred, then this lack of appreciation would be evident in the outcome (Holden, 1942 [Ahp/26/5/1/ii]: ii; undated [Ahp/26/5/2/iii]: iii). Confidence, on the other hand, would be repaid:

“To enjoy the confidence of your client is happiness indeed, and the finest of architecture is not too good a monument to him.” (Holden, c.1936 [Ahp/26/3/1/ix]: 7)

This ethos lay somewhere between professional service and friendship, and Holden found this necessary in order to intimate himself with his clients and their needs, and from that intimacy, to produce an architecture of service. It was not, Holden argued, the architect’s role to submit to the client alone: some degree of submission, by way of confidence, was needed from the client.

This is an important point to make because it is potentially very easy, given Holden’s onus on service, to lose sight of the fact that his architecture was not merely a submission to the inhabitant and their needs, especially bearing in mind the tool-like plausibility which, I argue, motivated much of Holden’s approach to architectural design and how design was inevitably implicated in everyday lives. As an essential tool, architecture assisted inhabitants with their tasks through smoothness and the absence of impediment which, executed correctly, was an achievement of a certain kind of working beauty (or beautifully working) which beguiled Holden much as the human body beguiled him as a metaphysical exemplar of it. Regardless of whether Holden’s understanding of beauty was a symptom of his (perceived) lack of visual flair (or, indeed, the possibility that he used a professional understanding of functional beauty as a prop for an ethical preference for the non-aesthetic), the upshot was the continual strengthening of his idea of plausibility of crafting an architecture whose tool-like implication in everyday life approached the perfectibility of the (beautiful) body – the more body-like he understood his work to be, the more beautiful he believed it to be.

As the keystone of architectural plausibility, the indispensable nature of architecture that Holden arrived at was also suffused with duty: something so indispensable and critical to people’s wellbeing could not be treated lightly and, as such, architecture’s profound plausibility in people’s lives made certain indulgences and options implausible of it: it had to stay sane, and it had to achieve this sanity by avoiding risks that were not necessary, or the snobbery of idealism. As such, the plausibility that architecture had, as an essential tool

of the everyday lives of beings that could not be without tools, closed down other more artistic plausibility as far as Holden was concerned.

An interesting example of this is provided in Holden's account of a research trip he made to the United States. In 1913 whilst he was involved in the design for Kings College for Women, Holden was awarded a travel scholarship of £65 to visit the United States and study how American universities planned and built their science and household science departments, (Karol, 1997: 196-197) and his account of this tour outlines one interesting (and charming) facet of the thinking I have just outlined. More importantly, perhaps, than this is a later tour of Northern Europe Holden undertook with Frank Pick⁹⁴ in 1930 which marks the start of a change in Holden's understandings of plausibilities that I have just outlined here.

The redevelopment of Holden's approach:

Holden's first research tour of the United States undertaken in 1913 (Holden, 1913 [Ahp/26/10/1] with an accompanying sketchbook [Ahp/26/11]) substantially precedes Holden's work for the University of London and takes campus architecture as its subject. This contrasts with the purpose of the later Northern Europe tour of 1930 which explored the different ways of aesthetically treating emerging structural technologies. Both tours combine descriptive accounts and judgements as to what is worthy and what is not. As such, both tours are expeditionary in terms of practice in that they seek to go elsewhere, record practices and ideas, and return with particularly useful and credible ones that could then be utilised in Holden's future designs. Holden had no qualms about collecting, cataloguing, and then importing other ideas from other places into his work. In doing so he sought to identify corollaries of his own approach, and found comfort in finding buildings whose design had emerged from the ethic of service and sensible articulation of function that he himself employed.

In the report of his 1913 tour of North American universities, Holden's perspective closely matched his preferred practice. He expressed a preference for stylistically quiet buildings

⁹⁴ Frank Pick (1878-1941) was the managing director of the London Underground (in its varying guises) from 1928 until 1940, overseeing a period of substantial expansion. Pick oversaw a design driven transformation of the network which included, in addition to employing Holden as principal architect, the commissioning of new typefaces including the standard London Underground typeface, *Johnston*, and a generally design-centred approach to the growing network.

that conformed to the wider schemes of which they were part (Holden, 1913 [Ahp/26/10/1/iv, vi]: 4, 6) and which avoided traditional pastiche (Ibid: [vii] 7). In this instance, style was treated as something ancillary to the primary content of architecture. A discreet element of revivalism was allowable (Ibid), but whatever aesthetic approach was used, it could not be employed as the basis on which to derive the functional heart of the design. What Holden really sought from the 1913 tour were examples of how to provide service by architectural means, which explains why he dwells on interior plans, fixtures, and fittings, and how they work to enable the inhabitant's chosen inhabitations. One particular inhabitation that Holden found charmingly useful was an ingenious way of managing the consumption of food at Cornell's Ithaca campus, and he relayed in great detail the act of collecting a tray, a napkin and some cutlery, and then...

“...you come to the food, you make your selection from a bewildering array (but easier to select from than a menu) and pass on to a desk where you receive a check representing the price of your meal. Thus equipped, you find an empty table and sit down to your meal. When you have finished you carry your tray, plates, knives, forks &c. to a hatch where it is received and passed on to be washed.

As you pass out you hand your check to the cashier and pay the amount. And so all these hundreds of students are served every day simply and cheaply, without bustle, cheek by jowl with the professors and higher officials, serving themselves, and carrying away their own dirty dishes.” (Holden, 1913 [Ahp/26/10/1/xv]: 15)

The now commonplace refectory, experienced here as something new and interesting, is a useful microcosm of Holden's architectural ideal, given away by his use of the term “equipped”. Holden's ideal was to understand what sort of inhabitation his client wanted and needed, and to use architectural design to equip that inhabitation with an environment of carefully crafted spatialities and materialities that helped this inhabitation to happen. Architecture, understood as the equipping of inhabitation, also reformulated those inhabitations. But this equipping was fundamentally understood by Holden as an act of service to the chosen inhabitation, rather than to invoke a new form of inhabitation and a parallel “refurbishment” of the inhabitant's thinking, as did Voysey. Holden simply wished

to enable and express the chosen inhabitation as fully as possible by removing impediments and generating efficiencies.

In contrast, the 1931 tour of Northern Europe (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]) was critically located both spatially, but perhaps especially, temporally. Changes were evident in 1930 that had not been nearly as insistent in 1913, and contemporary architecture was coalescing around new structural technologies. Technology had always been implicated in architecture insofar as buildings could have technologies installed in them, but buildings in this sense contained technologies rather than representing technological exercises in themselves: in fact, the report of their tour opened with the premise that no new structural technologies of significance had been developed since the middle ages (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 1). The critical timing of the 1930 tour hinged on the emergence of two new structural technologies (described shortly) which were shaping architecture both literally, because they could produce much larger and differently shaped buildings, and metaphorically, as their quickening adoption required new skills and approaches of architects after an extended period of relative continuity. Technological engagements could no longer be avoided.

However, the 1930 tour and the 1931 report on it were specifically concerned with “contemporary” architecture, and had a bipartite configuration that included the continuation of “contemporary architecture of a traditional character” (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 14-16) alongside the emergence of the new (Ibid: 6-14). Whilst admitting to the complexities of the time, this configuration belies a degree of uncertainty which reflects Holden’s temporal ontology, and remains evident here despite the dual authorship. No matter how new or tangential something was, it was always emergent from what had gone previously (Ibid: 15). The possibility of something being entirely new worried Holden (and possibly Pick). Whilst producing transcripts of past forms was of no special interest or concern to him, to efface the traditional was to simultaneously abandon its repository of experience, as he later suggested:

“...you may or may not be helped by tradition – you may indeed be hindered by tradition, even as you may be hindered by a set formula: but at least tradition provides you with an encyclopaedia of well tried techniques, or methods of construction, of qualities of techniques [...] and of aesthetic forms expressing

these qualities, which, even if this encyclopaedia does not offer you a solution of your particular problem, it does show you how the pioneers of the past faced up to their own new problems and how they adjusted their techniques to the needs of their new problems.” (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1/ix-x]: 9-10)

What is clear from this is that how tradition worked was very much dependent on the practitioner’s perspective. A formulaic perspective would simply transcribe traditional features into current architecture, but an encyclopaedic apprehension of tradition offered, if not solutions, then exemplars of the original non-formulaic thought that might generate one. To ignore tradition and start from zero was to wilfully ignore a legacy of brilliance and rob future inhabitants of its beneficence. New architecture could never really be “new” in purely ontological terms, but Holden’s point was that it should never attempt to be “new” in practical terms either. Contemporary architecture had to express continuity.

Traditionally, architects had to design buildings around quite rudimentary lintel-and-post structural principles in which horizontal elements like roofs and beams discharged their mass through regular vertical members such as pillars, or angled props such as buttresses. If this discharge of a building’s mass was not properly managed, either the horizontal member would accumulate too much mass at its least supported point, or the vertical member would be overburdened by the masses that were routed through it. The two new structural technologies Holden wished to see in action were vastly more capable and efficient in terms of withstanding, transmitting and discharging mass. The reinforced concrete monocoque (Holden referred to it as *ferro-concrete*) was the more recent and revolutionary of the two: the earlier technique of steel girder framed buildings had precedents in the structural ironwork of large architecture-cum-engineering projects like the Forth Bridge, Crystal Palace, and St. Pancras station. Between them, these two methods were displacing the less efficient lintel-and-post techniques and, as such, they heralded changes for architecture. On one hand, these changes were understood to be generative insofar that the new structural techniques both required and allowed opportunity for different architectural treatments (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 3). On the other hand, the architectural options these new structural technologies offered required a double relegation within the then-current architectural vocabulary. Both technologies relegated the need for regular vertical elements, so things like columns and archways... “changed their character, and where they continue their existence they do so as a

decorative, not a structural feature.” (Ibid: 1) Moreover, so relegated, they no longer made sense in the context of the new structural technologies and he continued... “the presumption is, nevertheless, against them. Because they have become useless structurally, they tend to become meaningless even as ornament” (Ibid). This opening statement set the tone for the document which aimed to define something quite new for Holden: it sought to derive an aesthetic and decorative policy which would somehow express and emphasise the truth of the building, including the truth of its structural formation.

The rehabilitation of the aesthetic:

This is something of a departure from Holden’s 1913 travelogue, and his practice more generally, insofar as the aesthetic became more prominent in his thinking. Although both travelogues emphasise the need to generate external appearances from the logic of the planned internal spaces, the 1930 travelogue admitted to the fact that this aesthetic generation could not be left to resolve itself or merely “kept simple” (which was Holden’s expressed preference in 1913). The aesthetic had to be managed. It’s unclear who was responsible for this rehabilitation of the aesthetic: given Holden’s previous inclination to relegate and subordinate aesthetic considerations, it would be easy to suggest that Pick germinated the argument, but there’s no definite attribution in the 1931 travelogue or in the wider manuscript collection. Definite origins notwithstanding, Holden’s rehabilitated aesthetic continued in his written notes thereafter and, arguably, redefined his architectural output too.

The rehabilitation of the aesthetic began from the troubling definition of *functionalism* which, when taken too literally, could reduce architecture to engineering, producing surfaces and volumes from a purely efficient logic without recourse to artistry, but from which beauty would somehow emerge of its own accord (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 4). Between them, Holden and Pick reconsidered, and ultimately rejected the auto-beautiful, granting beauty with some independence from functional efficiency whilst retaining a logic of functional *relevance*, the same logic on which columns and archways had been rejected previously (Ibid: 1). Their new definition of functionalism was...

“...a very different definition from the other. It does not assume that where there is efficiency there is also necessarily beauty, but rather that beauty can be

best obtained by the design of a building being based on the expression of its functions.” (Ibid: 5)

This refiguring had potentially significant ramifications for Holden’s practice. Aesthetics and the possibility of beauty could no longer be left to resolve themselves, such expressions had to be designed for. Moreover, the building was no longer the purely functional creation he had previously assumed: it was obliged to contain additional elements which were not implicated in the provision of functional spaces for public service. This was a substantial departure for Holden, and he dealt with it by defining strict conditions for aesthetic relevance. Attempts at aesthetic beauty, though non-functional in themselves, were conditional on expressing the functional motives of a given building (Ibid). The mild irony of this was that architectural functionalism, pared back to its purpose and rendered nakedly honest, was too functional, naked, and honest to express the diligent benevolence of its motives. Logically speaking such a stark approach should have stated its purpose with total clarity, yet it required a haze of aesthetic interjections that lightly occluded its functional motive with expressions that serenaded the functionalities they occluded. Irony notwithstanding, these were the only aesthetic possibilities in architecture that Holden/Pick considered “permissible”.

“...under this definition certain decorative features will be permitted which, though not strictly functional in what we have called the “pure” sense, repeat the motif of some definite function of the building. But this raises the question [...] of what are the functions proper or relevant to a building, the functions which, in other words, it is permissible to express.” (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 5)

Aesthetic expressions of architectural beauty had to enunciate and draw out the functional truth of the building in the exercise of its service. The possibility of beauty was a function of this immediate relevance, an immediacy which barred aesthetic treatments from the indulgences of symbolism or iconography and forcibly aligned them in parallel with what Holden/Pick considered to be the primary purpose of architecture.

The functional truth of these new buildings was, in the first instance, horizontality. Whereas Voysey had aimed to generate particular affections and behaviours with the

horizontal orientation, the 1930 travelogue simply observed that steel framed or concrete monocoque buildings tended to lend themselves to low and flat-roofed designs because they dispensed with the many vertical supports that previous constructional methods had required, so rendering the horizontals more evident (Holden, Pick, and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 3, 6). Whilst the old and new methods were fundamentally different, the way they were addressed remained fundamentally the same insofar that the exterior treatment should diligently reflect the constructional basis. At no point in this or any archived document were the new constructional methods understood to open up elevations for creative purposes. The numerous and closely spaced supporting members that traditional constructional methods required had an insistent effect on style which was absent in the far less intrusive steel frame or concrete monocoque whose structural components, far more slender and far less frequent, left large tracts of frontage free from structural intrusion or the obligation of support (Ibid). Pick and Holden conspicuously ignored these new opportunities and continued to express structures that no longer imposed themselves.

On one hand, this could be criticised as the most banal, derivative, and potentially easiest outcome to have chosen, but it could also be lauded for its restraint and its fully honest expression of the building and the materialities that made it happen. Such aesthetic treatments were almost diagrammatic, like textbook illustrations or beguiling cross sectional drawings that slice through otherwise mysterious objects to reveal their workings: as an aesthetic it was absolutely dedicated to architecture and its self-expression. Holden would have likely answered the criticism of banality with his own criticism that “liberty is never far removed from licence. With the freedom to create forms possessing a new beauty, there goes also the temptation to be merely bizarre.” (Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 3)

In the 1931 travelogue, new German architecture came in for such criticism when measured against the benchmark of Holden’s temporality. It sought an absolute newness that was not really possible to Holden’s way of thinking, and as a result, it had mistakenly entered into an “iconoclastic” architecture that aimed to efface its traditional genesis (Ibid, 16). In this light, it could be argued that Holden’s aesthetic policy was also one obvious way of carrying some traditional principles over to the new architectural approaches. Understood thus, tradition was not sobering *per se* (for instance, Pick/Holden were clear that Germany’s new iconoclasm had emerged from a tradition of “hybris” [sic] (Ibid):

tradition was a cue to engage with and account for precedent and experience without literally transcribing past forms. It was a temporal policy rather than a basis for style, and its consideration in design meant that architecture would not attain the sort of escape velocity that was evidently aimed for in Germany. Architecture had to be rooted, and although it didn't have to be *traditionally* rooted, tradition was an adequate reminder of rootedness. Holden/Pick hoped for a more Dutch model of new architecture:

“There is much modern work being done [in Holland] which, while it has been influenced primarily by the new architecture, does not seem, at least in the best examples, to have cut right away from the older styles in the way that German architecture has done. For Dutch work, though it has rid itself almost entirely of traditional ornament, retains most of the elements of traditional design.”
(Holden, Pick and Edwards, 1931 [Ahp/26/13]: 14-15)

The braking effect of temporality further suggests that Pick and Holden were concerned that, without limiting principles and constrained possibilities, architects would be unprincipled and unconstrained. This assumed lack of self control and the concurrent need for a constrained field of practice may explain the emphasis on tradition and the vernacular. As an archive of policies rather than a catalogue of design options, tradition naturally suggested (even presupposed) aesthetics that reflected the structural means of enclosing the functional plan, as had been the case in the best architecture of the past, and also reflected in Holden's appreciation of the Greek temple form. Architectural aesthetics were not the place for other ideals and manifestos to be visually or ergonomically exercised. Architectural aesthetics were creative expressions of architectural functionalities.

There is here a dawning recognition (perhaps provoked by Pick, but retained by Holden) that if buildings cannot be pared back to the functionally expedient alone, then inhabitation cannot be pared back to the sole exercise of useful and productive behaviours either. A building had to be more than useful, because its inhabitants' scope for behaviour and engagement extends beyond the useful to include the meaningful. As such, whilst functional expedience remains at the heart of his architectural concept, the content and breadth of that concept, and his parallel concept of inhabitation, seems to broaden from the singularly functional. This new concern with aesthetic expression displaced Holden's previous policy. Although that policy decried facadism insofar as it sought to restrict

architecture's potential functionality within a preconceived aesthetic girdle, it simultaneously allowed a different form of facadism in that, once the design had reached an adequate level of functionality and service, any treatment could be applied to the exterior. In a 1939 letter to Pick (one of a series which I discuss below) Holden defended Gilbert-Scott's use of a gothic aesthetic for his proposed memorial to King George V at Westminster Abbey:

“Shall we say that gothic is wrong? If so, what is the alternative? For if we would be destructive we must also be constructive. There is nothing inherently wrong in Gothic, it is very flexible and it can be as modern as you like”
(Holden, 1939 [Ahp/29/8/4/ii]: 2)

Styles themselves were innocent: the potential for fault lay in their being implied, rather than applied. Facadism was a perfectly plausible outcome of aesthetic relegation precisely because it was, in an ideal world, separate from those elements of the building that actually rendered service. In the case of Gilbert Scott's (unbuilt) memorial, its function was wrapped around its aesthetic, and it matched the aesthetic of its setting. Holden's first major work, Bristol Central Library (see figs. 4.6, 7, 8, and 9), had entirely different facades to suit the different panoramas it faced onto, whilst the internal structure continued its work regardless. In the report of the 1930 tour of Northern Europe and in Holden's writings thereafter, the aesthetic treatment was brought in from the periphery to perform a crucial supra-functional role. Its repatriation did not mean that the functional mattered less: what changed was that the aesthetic had to connect into why the functional mattered.

Aesthetics and function

This repatriation of the aesthetic is best explained in *Aesthetic Aspects of Civil Engineering Design* (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1]), which despite its title offers a distinctly architectural and aesthetic perspective that represents the development of those thoughts he started, or was induced to start, in 1930. *Aesthetic Aspects* was also critically timed on the cusp of the massive post-war reconstruction efforts, and critically directed at a group of professionals who would be implicated in it. It shares in common with Holden's other writings a sense that the inhabitant and their inhabitations are fundamentally (although not only) endeavour-driven beings who undertake tasks for the purposes of producing a result or

getting something done. Buildings, in serving the processes of inhabitation, had to serve whatever inhabitants were working towards (Ibid: [ii] 2), but this fundamental was joined by the additional fundamentals he'd started to address in 1930. By 1944, Holden had combined these in the idea of *significant form*, which defined the golden standard for expressive functional architecture. The best architectural forms were those that were direct and purposeful, but whose purpose was imaginatively drawn out of an otherwise diminutive state so that it received the attention it merited:

“I do not think I can do better than end this lecture by my definition of ‘significant form’:- Form which is purposeful in all its parts arising from the play of the imagination on hard facts rather than free and uncontrolled fantasy” (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1/xvi]: 17)

A slightly different temporality was utilised in *Aesthetic Aspects* to explain how such aesthetic treatments were arrived at, and how those treatments connected intimately to the functional processes of the object being designed (in this example he used a car, and then a kitchen). This temporality repeated Holden's hopes for accumulations of worthwhile techniques, along with the evolutionary passage of time and its cumulative momentum as one generation succeeded the next and inherited the proceeds. Both cars and kitchens, understood as machines, were designed in the first instance to function as simply and directly as possible. Subsequent generations of that machine were improved in terms of efficacy and efficiency, and it was the consciousness of, and especially the pride in, that improvement on earlier versions that fuelled a worthy aesthetic treatment:

“[H]e now wants it to look as fine and good as it is in operation. That is the beginning of Art – that is how good architecture was and is evolved, and that is how beautiful engineering structures were, and will be, and some are today evolved.” (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1/iii-iv]: 3-4)

Confusingly, the “beginning of art” was specified twice. The first mention (above) explains how the motivation for a worthy aesthetic treatment is generated, and specifies that aesthetics is essentially an outcrop of functionality, produced by the witnessing of functional efficacy and the desire that such witnessing inspires to aesthetically serenade it. Holden was very clear that the aesthetic couldn't simply arrive out of a general nonspecific

desire among people and practitioners to have things attractive and tidy. It had a definite source and emerged through a meritorious logic insofar as such aesthetic treatments only made sense applied to that which were evidently good (i.e. evolved and improved), and the act of serenading that merit required those treatments to make visual sense and extend their expressions around the original shapes and lines. This represents a development from the 1930 Northern Europe travelogue. In that instance, the aesthetics had to re-present the functionalities over which they were applied.

The second “beginning of art” was the beauty inherent in *order*:

“We are not sufficiently aware that order is perhaps the most important component of beauty [...], the condition in which every part or unit is in its right place, tidiness, normal or healthy or efficient state” (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1/v]: 5)

This key to beauty was relationally defined. Rather than the individual articulations of individual elements, beauty emerged from between and around individual elements in terms of how they were placed and sequenced. Treated individually, the constituent elements were of little consequence. Their consequence emerged from the way they were influencing and influenced by what they were adjacent to, i.e. what their proximity achieved, rather than what they achieved *per se*. Holden’s approach was compositional and relied on each form in the composition to work as a proxy and modify its neighbouring forms to generate a flowing aesthetic. It is most evident in Holden’s second tranche of Underground stations, in which large central halls, which might be stark and obtrusive taken alone, are allowed to ebb away through wings and canopies placed adjacent, and which are themselves able to crescendo into the large central mass (similar massing is evident at 55 Broadway and Senate House). Holden himself found beautiful order evident in the clean and well organised domestic kitchen, which generated pleasure for both its creator and the visitor:

“That is the beginning of art, and the housewife is the artist because she has been able to convey to the visitor some of her own pleasure and pride in her kitchen.” (Holden, 1944 [Ahp/26/18/1/v]: 5)

Working beautifully and looking beautiful were intimately related and realised through pride. It wasn't just a case that they ought to be made so (as suggested in the 1930 travelogue of Northern Europe): this was naturally the case. Whilst this may sound like a return to his pre-1930 policy of allowing the aesthetic to simply emerge, the distinction should be drawn between being motivated to produce a good aesthetic reflection on one's functional achievement, and actually achieving it. The motivation was naturally emergent from functional achievements, but that motivation had to be converted into a working expression and would not happen on its own. And it was important that it did happen:

“Our pride and pleasure in our work must have visual expression if we would reach our destination, for without that pride and that pleasure in getting the last ounce of delight out of the work we cannot expect to get far – because the will to adventure and achievement is not there.” (Holden, 1944: [Ahp/26/18/1/xiii]: 13)

Aesthetics represented a crucial visual conveyance of pride and an important confirmation of achievement. It was equally as necessary to impart its benefits to practitioners as to inhabitants and users, it helped to create a consciousness of their achievement and the motivation for achievements to follow.

Holden's implication in the future of his buildings orbits around the possibility that inhabitation, rather than being the property of the inhabitant and their choices, is in fact substantially contained in the building, but always on their behalf and representing, even amplifying, their intentions. In this respect he was unlike Voysey. Holden's buildings were not conceived as attempts to impose whole new and ethically superior forms of inhabitation (and the deletion of existing, inferior ones), and unlike Voysey, whose architectural currency was of the hints and hopes that colours, shapes and proportions could materialise, Holden's architectural currency was expressly pragmatic and, he assumed, to be encountered pragmatically. (Iconographic or symbolic messaging was, initially, of no concern, and later, of only secondary concern and of a very specific and functionally proximate vocabulary.) More specifically, Holden's architectural currency was bound into the systems of availability he created whereby certain key materialities and technologies were installed in certain arrangements and in a particular order so that they were available to be encountered and used by people to execute a series of tasks.

This is perhaps most evident in his second tranche of London Underground stations in which passengers were exposed to materialities and technologies which liberated resources for them in a particular order and along a particular route. In Holden's buildings, inhabitation, understood as tasks, naturally coalesced (or were corralled) around the materialities he provided to serve them. Holden was implicated in the future experiences of his buildings by making alternative inhabitations awkward, and his simple ideal of a building working smoothly in daily occupation (Holden, undated [Ahp/26/1/5/iii]) could be readily interpreted as using the building to *smooth out* daily occupations by organising, equipping, and streamlining inhabitation. However, that logic and its material expressions was only ever intended to serve the chosen inhabitation of his clients with more efficient possibilities for the inhabitations they wanted, rather than enforce alternative inhabitations he might have hoped to evoke in their place. In his understanding, efficiency was a re-issuing of already existing inhabitations, and provided, at most, a refreshed, rather than a fresh, inhabitation. And despite later changes in his understanding of the inhabitant, he still considered that people were – at least as far as it was the business of architects – fundamentally purposeful and task oriented beings who could work better if impediments were removed from their environments, and replaced with helpful and highly considered materialities. His architecture was pitched at this conception, and he never aimed to alter people's beliefs or the way they thought.

This is not to suggest that such streamlining and re-organising is less of an incursion into the future inhabitation of the building, though that possibility remains. Holden never aspired to the sort of didactic ambition that defined Voysey's output wherein suggestive forms aimed to demonstrate noble possibilities, but in adding efficiencies (and removing inefficiencies) to the inhabitations of his buildings, he essentially gave them the dwelling equivalent of a current which gently grabbed and pulled people along. His efficient materialities appealed to people's own efficiencies more than any other aspect and, even when engaging with their aesthetic sensibilities, aimed to coax them into such behaviour. The fact that efficiency was an alteration that retained the *theme* of the original inhabitation does not, therefore, mean that the original inhabitation continued as before, only more efficiently.



Fig. 4.1: Senate House.



Fig. 4.2: Senate House.



Fig. 4.3: Colliers Wood Station



Fig. 4.4: Turnpike Lane Station.



Fig. 4.5: Rayners Lane Station



Fig. 4.6: Bristol Central Library.



Fig. 4.7: Bristol Central Library, foyer (photograph by Steve Cadman).



Figure 4.8: Bristol Central Library, staircase (photograph by Steve Cadman).



Fig. 4.9: Bristol Central Library, reading room (photograph by Steve Cadman).



Fig. 4.10: Southgate Station.



Fig. 4.11: Arnos Grove Station.



Fig. 4.12: Chiswick Park Station.

Expertise and inhabitation:

Peter (at Senate House) and Alexander (at Bristol Central Library) have both developed expertise of their respective buildings, and both factor that expertise into the way they inhabit them. That expertise has produced two, possibly even three fundamentally different inhabitations. Peter's inhabitation is distinctly bilateral, with two qualitatively different and distinct types of experience that occur parallel to and concurrently with one another. One of these apprehends the building in terms of how it functions and what it accommodates, whereas the other comprehends the building as an intentionally produced thing with a history and a motivation, as he explains:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

My understanding of Peter's [Redacted interview material] is that there is an inhabitation that sounds functional, even banal, and full of tea, bookshelves and those other things in his day-to-day business that the building can functionally accommodate, alongside which is a quite different inhabitation for which his knowledge and professionally ingrained curiosity forms a foundation, and which produces a far more commodious Senate House. This inhabitation creates a space behind the forms and features of the building which could plausibly be understood as "depth". By "depth" I mean the virtualising of a particular kind of potential which looks behind or beyond the functionally apparent, and I use the term to reflect the capacity to contain more than somewhere to put your tea or shelve your books. And perhaps, in Peter's case, depth further represents the sedimentation he seeks to find in the building and his experience of it, that is to say, more and deeper levels of insight as to how Senate House came to exist as it does. "Depth" articulates the potential for authorship

and allows Peter to plausibly understand Senate House as resultant, and to track its emergence such that its forms and features as he experiences them in the present can plausibly be seen as a material articulation of what Holden was trying to achieve and interpret which, he explains, is the purpose of such an inhabitation: [Redacted interview material - - - - -]

Such an enquiring inhabitation requires expertise: it cannot emerge from the building alone, but is (at least in part) activated by the inhabitation that Peter brings with him and produces between inquisitive habit and critical faculties. It also reveals, he suggests, a different and more complex Senate House to him which requires working at depth to eke out, and which many other users do not occupy, he explains: [Redacted interview material - - - - -]

At the centre of Peter's inhabitation of Senate House is a recovering and re-enacting of Holden's ideas and the work they were supposed to do, fostered not only by Peter's inquisitive style of inhabitation, [Redacted interview material - - - - -] ⁹⁵. Peter's enquiring approach to inhabitation is not solely for his particular interest: his personal understanding of Senate House (as resultant from Holden's intentions) has also been aimed at [Redacted interview material - - - - -]

⁹⁵ This refurbishment took place in the 1990's and was limited to the interiors of one (albeit large) section. Richard's role was, broadly speaking, within project management, though he was not the actual project manager

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material - - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -]. This correlates with, and is also stimulated by, Peter's enquiring
inhabitation of Senate House, solidifying his belief that the building he experiences is a
discernable result of Holden's intentions. [Redacted interview material - - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -] his conception that the building's effect is
not self sustaining, but needs to be sustained by people who, like him, are willing to
"understand it quite carefully".

This is an expanding and penetrating kind of inhabitation insofar as it expands (and
complicates) what Senate House could potentially be beyond (i.e. deeper than) the
functional inhabitation of tea and bookshelves that he maintains in parallel to it.
Alexander's inhabitation of Bristol Central Library also puts expertise to work, but not in
the same way or, arguably, to the same degree of "depth". This is not to say that Bristol
Central Library achieves what it achieves by accident in Alexander's experience: the quality
of its experience is (at least partially) the result of the experience Holden made possible,
and the forms and features it iterates are material strategies that were intended to solidify
the possibilities for such inhabitations which have "worked". One such functioning
materiality is the "processional" route that funnels library patrons from the main entrance
to the main reading room, exposing them en route to a series of contrasting environments,
almost as though there's a little experiential journey built into the fabric of the library,
which Alexander explains thus:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

As to the processional route as an example of the building working, and doing work on the inhabitants, Alexander is clear that such working is not really geared to producing a specific effect. The experiences that the building produces have, he suggests, an effectiveness that works at a diffuse (perhaps affectual) level, one that impresses and is “marvellous” rather than articulating a particular impression, which is the idea I (mistakenly) tried to open out in the following exchange:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

In understanding that they’ve “worked” Alexander doesn’t especially need or want to inhabit the full scope of the building that Peter seeks: he does not need to explicitly open

up a depth behind these working forms and features and understand what they resulted from. I interpret his experience of the building as, quite simply, a cache of experiences apprehended for their face value qualities. Put another way, Alexander inhabits the library at the level he believes it should be: as a finished experiential product, to be apprehended in its finished state and experienced for the experiences it offers as a finished thing, without interrogating its origins or dissecting that experience. The library is “marvellous” at the point of encounter, and this quality was designed to work at the point of its encountering without any particular need to add depth to that point and locate, in that depth, a structure of intentionality.

In Alexander’s terms, it seems that the inhabitation coalesces at the point of experience and is contained in the building, whereas Peter’s inhabitation seems to do the opposite; not coalescing, but expanding and deepening with the aim of reconciling what is apparent with what was intended. Certainly, on probing the possibility of intention in Alexander’s experience, my line of questioning was truncated with a particular and revealing note of caution, specifically that as something to be experienced for its experiences the library could not reliably elucidate Holden or be used to build an image of Holden’s aims, ideas, and material strategies: In Alexander’s experience the building is not plausibly suggestive of or resultant from Holden’s aims and does not provide a secure way to know him except, as the following passage suggests, to speculate to some degree.

Paul: And do you reckon that was Holden’s intention or was that something that just kind of-

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The intention I was (mistakenly) attempting to track in the above quote followed our discussions on one particular way that Bristol Central Library worked in terms of his

experience, namely that: [Redacted interview material -----
-----]. However, the existence of such character in Alexander’s experience is not only the result of friendly, tactile features being knowingly juxtaposed against classical magnificence – I will return to this combination shortly. Before such experiences can happen, there is the possibility that the building needs to be contextually set-up to be experienced in such a way: to be put into a position where such experiences are plausible.

Positioning plausible experiences, stories and effects:

The building’s ability to do the sort of work that makes it likable, and likely to gather affection in the course of its inhabitation, has some basis in comparison and, perhaps more accurately, contrast as a material and aesthetic strategy (although the term “strategy” may unduly characterise the building and the way it is understood as a working attempt to do something, which reflects only part of my interviewees’ experiences or understandings at best). In both Alexander’s case at Bristol Central Library and Samuel’s case at Arnos Grove, there is a recognition that the buildings are contrasting and tangential to what might be expected or taken to be normal. Samuel’s experience of and affection for Arnos Grove seems to be made possible, in part, because it is different to what he would normally expect or commonly experience, and he explains here that the building’s uniqueness is, in a way, the start of him liking it:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

This passage leads me to identify an inhabitation that creates or allows a field of plausibility around some of Holden’s buildings as they are experienced, without necessarily realising

actual things happening within that plausible field. For Samuel, his affection is partially produced by Arnos Grove making itself noticeable insofar as it stands out from everyday experience, and Alexander at Bristol Central Library appears to note a similar possibility in his (and other peoples’) experiences. Part of what the library does and how it works is through being “special” and how different the library would have been (and still is) for people using it in comparison to what they accustomed to.

In the following quote, Alexander suggests that the special-ness of buildings like Bristol Central Library was produced, or at least started to be produced, in an architectural act of contrast achieved by deploying a palatial kind of grandeur.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In both quotes above it’s important to note that it is not only contrast at work: the drum at Arnos Grove is easy on Samuel’s eyes, and the library’s interior has palatial tones for Alexander, and these factors (which I discuss shortly) do not simply arise out of contrast. My interest in contrast, in terms of the building being thought of as working, is not that contrast is understood as a specific act, but works as a general condition for the emergence of acts in their experiences, a positioning or posturing of the building in such a way that such acts might become more likely or plausible facets of their experience. Being tangential and contrasting may position the building forward of (or highlight it against a background of) relative normalcy, and there is a possibility that, in quantitative terms, both Samuel and

Alexander pay more attention to their respective buildings because they are prominent and different. In short, I would consider that in experiencing Holden’s buildings as different, their inhabitations are potentially more attentive and, therefore, inclined to notice and consider things.

In terms of Alexander’s inhabitation, the library works through being appealing, and at least one facet of its appeal could be in the contrasted positioning I’ve just described: being special requires it to be different to and better than the ordinary, and this simple design strategy on Holden’s part represents the start of making the building work, that is to say, setting up the conditions for it to be liked by being noticeably different and noticeably more generous in terms of the palatial surrounds that were offered to its patrons. The material achievement of this is bound up in a dual kind of character that I repeat here from the preceding discussion: [Redacted interview material -----
-----]. Alexander expanded on this by describing a combination of material elements, each working differently, and all combined to create what I interpret as a material-aesthetic politics of access in which large and grandiose elements are couched in “warm” or “domestic” elements that allow magnificence to be made more accessible and experienced from a more comfortable and, perhaps, familiar vantage.

- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]

For Alexander, this seems to be a key way in which Bristol Central Library is understood to work; through this special materiality that makes it possible to comfortably inhabit a space which, to be special, is also replete with classical bombast. The mistake I made in trying to clarify this in terms of intention (Paul: “And do you reckon that was Holden’s intention”...), was to suggest that this particular experience had been installed by Holden with any deeper motive than that of creating a special place, and Alexander’s inhabitation

believes my attempts to understand the library as an active palimpsest of Holden (e.g. as a deliberate exercise of his persona, or an attempt to enforce a particular inhabitation). In fact, although the friendly magnificence of the library is definitely an outcome that Holden planned and designed for, Alexander does not inhabit it as such or believe that Holden sought to route anything else into that outcome. It is an enjoyable, special place to be without burrowing into one's agency, articulating or imposing a manifesto of any description.

Peter, on the other hand, finds that certain macro scale material and aesthetic features of Senate House open up an indelible field of possibility which enable such scenarios and powerfully suggest the exercise of intention, or more accurately, a non-specific intentional posture:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The fact that the design is “consistent” suggests planning, control, and the steadily insistent articulation of an idea or suite of ideas. This may be because consistency entails the absence of abrupt changes in the design, and the repeated sameness further suggests an absence of either indulgence or reckoning, which creates in Peter's inhabitation a likely sense of a plan or policy being adhered to and, especially, of things being thought through, and the consistent application of thought (it did not occur to him that the exercise of consistency could equally be interpreted as the wilful absence of thought). This, along with Peter's enquiring style of resultant inhabitation, evinces the capacity for intention. It suggests that at the causal root of the building's history there was someone being thoughtful, and the building transcribes that in a number of ways – in this case through the material articulation of consistency. In this respect his inhabitation is unlike Alexander's at Bristol Central Library whose experience of intentional forms cannot be reasonably treated as transcribing Holden's intentions, habits, persona or philosophy.

Leonard's experience of Senate House is, on the face of it, broadly similar to Alexander's experience of Bristol Central Library, but whilst Leonard may not engage in inquisitive acts

of inhabitation at Senate House, I would suggest that such an inhabitation isn't beyond him. In our discussion of Holden and his experience of Senate House it emerged that Leonard was familiar with Holden's work for London Underground⁹⁷, however, this was a very different and more incisive familiarity than he believed he occupied Senate House with. Leonard's understanding of Holden's station designs is that they were replete with features that directed and channelled people to the right place, an understanding that allowed for the plausibility of deliberate architectural devices, and the concurrent impression of an architect using architectural forms to do something to the inhabitants of those spaces. Such possibilities, however, were largely absent in his experience of Senate House, as he related to me with some degree of surprise...

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

⁹⁷ Leonard's familiarity was with the historical and technical aspects of London Underground and not with the architecture *per se*, but in reading some of the more historical accounts he had also read about Holden and had formed an understanding (and granted a degree of plausibility) to the purposeful nature of his station architecture.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This quote suggests that Leonard can provide an analytical and insightful kind of inhabitation: one capable of ascertaining the architectural will of a building for its ongoing inhabitation and additionally capable of ascertaining how certain devices might solidify these intentions into interactions (like uplighters). The fact that he finds no such equivalent communicability at Senate House could have a number of reasons, perhaps most prominently, and in the manner of a building event (see Jacobs 2006, and also Adey 2006⁹⁸), Senate House has not been “narrated” by key literatures which Leonard, as a personal interest, is motivated to read about London Underground. Another potential reason is that Leonard’s experience of Holden’s stations, augmented though it may be by the “event” of key literatures, is able to recognise without being “taught” the idea that it is articulating something, whereas Leonard cannot quite surmount the fragmentary nature of Senate House’s design in his experience and tap into Holden’s overarching “vision”, as he explains:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

We can better understand Leonard’s absence of, yet ability for, inquiring inhabitation by contextualising his insights in the wider context of his experience of Senate House, a building which he likes, but not because he thinks it is particularly attractive in visual terms, or in the way the current owners and its predecessors have treated it:

⁹⁸ Adey does not use the term “building events” in his *Airports and air-mindedness* article (Adey 2006), but I would suggest that his argument (that what Liverpool Airport could do as a building was framed by attendant discourses about what was hoped of it and what spectacles could be witnessed from its viewing balconies) is compatible with Jacob’s ideas of *building events* as those discourses that aim to narrate how architecture should be apprehended and understood in a way that the architecture itself does not fully vocalise. (Jacobs 2006).

[Redacted interview material]
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[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

In Leonard’s terms, the appeal of Senate House is not in its appearance, but in an acquired sense of its eccentricities: “acquire” being one potentially key term insofar that the appeal of Senate House has to be eked out from an apparent lack of charm, and “eccentric” being a second key term insofar that some of that appeal, perhaps the larger part, is contained in the building’s behaviour. On this facet of the building Leonard was substantially less “lost”, and his experience of Senate House is full of Senate House’s eccentric behaviours (even if he hasn’t experienced them in person):

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Leonard's inhabitation among such eccentricities creates a prominence for Senate House in that, by being unusual and having "eccentricities" it is also (potentially) more noticeable in a quirky kind of way, even if, in the case of Holden's panel heaters, it's a quirky kind of failing. There is a possibility that these eccentricities are attractive in themselves, but I would also suggest that a substantial part, perhaps the larger part of the attractiveness of these eccentricities is through the stories that are attached to them, such as the local substation wilting under the pressure of Holden's panel heaters. A profusion of these stories (and myths) in Leonard's experience seems to have produced a friendly kind of familiarity with Senate House, even if the source of those stories have little to do with the building and Holden's intentions for it. Some of the stories that, taken together, seem to form Leonard's familiarity are formed by the building performing in a way errant to its original design intentions (as is the case with the panel heaters), or else performing in stories that are genuinely fictional, stories where Senate House is there, but its details and features do not speak for themselves. They are vocalised as part of the story.

My understanding of Leonard's experience is one defined to an extent by stories and myths which draw on, but then extend away from, certain aspects of the building. Put another (somewhat metaphorical) way, the building is to these stories what soil is to plants: a growth medium that matters, but which is given far less attention than that which emerges from it. One such myth, for example, is that the Nazis had selected Senate House as their post-occupation headquarters in Britain. This story, one of a number that define Leonard's experience, includes Senate House and a particular aspect of its physical appearance, but quickly thereafter deflects away from the building and towards, in this case, crystallography and the prediction of bombing patterns:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

This story, which is as much a story about how the original story is partially untrue, utilises the (arguably) stocky build of Senate House as a starting point that seems to quickly recede in Leonard’s experience. The possibility that Senate House’s materiality is understood as being story-worthy would potentially necessitate a certain quietness of the building, though not outright silence of course: that stocky build is an important starting point for the story Leonard recounts in the above excerpt. My interpretation of the position of Senate House as an “eccentric friend” in Leonard’s experience centres on this sense that the building is a diligent starting point for stories which, to varying extents, proceed to arc away from it. If Leonard’s inhabitation is, thus, “story-worthy”, his experience of Senate House may be one of starting the points that the building provides through aspects like stockiness, or eccentric heating, after which the building remains quiet and unobtrusive in a way that lets these stories unfold without continuing narration. In fact, outside the scope of Senate House’s story-worthiness, Leonard understands the building as [Redacted interview material] -----

-----]

Stories and myths seem to be central (though not exclusive) to the way Leonard experiences Senate House, and it may be this emphasis on stories that displaces the potentially enquiring inhabitation he seems to use to engage with Holden’s London Underground stations. There is the possibility that his fragmentary and eccentric impression of Senate House may make it good, fertile “soil” for stories, but it may also constrict the plausibility Leonard might otherwise have for the building’s own narratives in favour of the production and dissemination of other narratives, and indeed, there is a tradition of such production and dissemination as Leonard explains:

[Redacted interview material]
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[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

This interest seems to be focused on the other things that are and have been going on at Senate House, and the building is so suffused with these that it no longer becomes plausible for the building to work as either a biography of Holden, or as an attempt by Holden to effect certain ideas and inhabitations, a point emphasised by the fact that many of these stories arc away from ideas of what the building shouldn't have been doing: from apparently banal aspects such as failed panel heaters, to the semi-fictional (or entirely fictional) involvement of Senate House in Nazism and Orwellian ministries.

Making impressions:

Leonard's experience excepted, a general observation of my interviewees and their understandings and inhabitations of their respective buildings is their impression that making impressions is what Holden designed (or should have designed) the buildings to do even if, as in Peter's case, a substantial process of recovery is needed to re-attain that impression, or as in Alexander's case, whereby the impression need not be specific or pressed into service to make definite effects happen. However it is articulated, there is

something important about being impressive; it may not exactly constitute the doing of something, but it might set up, open out a space for, and enable the potential for those architectures to plausibly do something. So understood, being impressive might be similar to the exercise of contrast insofar as, according to my interviewees, contrast doesn't so much do something, as put the building into a position where having an effect is more plausible.

This is especially evident in Sydney's account of Morden⁹⁹ precisely because of how unimpressive the building is. Given the opportunity to compare it with buildings that he does find significant, Morden is left somewhat adrift in a cityscape full of what sounds like material theatre, or at least the wilful architectural exercise of panache, as he explains:

Sydney: I mean, like 55 Broadway¹⁰⁰.

Paul: Right.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

⁹⁹ Completed in 1926 (before the inauguration of London Transport) for the City and South London Railway, Morden is the southern terminus of the Northern Line, located in Merton, London, it is part of a group of stations including South Wimbledon, Colliers Wood, Tooting Broadway, Tooting Beck, Balham, and Clapham South, all designed by Holden. The staff who work for the group rotate between the different stations, rather than being tasked to a particular station.

¹⁰⁰ 55 Broadway is the headquarters for Transport for London, and was designed by Charles Holden.

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Morden emerges from this passage, or rather doesn't emerge, as a shadow or what a building could and ought to be, and whilst comparisons with Holden's 55 Broadway, Peter Leonards' Lloyds Building, or Caesar Pelli's One Canada Square may sound unlikely, those buildings all evidence an intent ("[Redacted interview material]") and an execution that achieves that to an extent, but Morden does not appear to engage with this key criterion of his inhabitation. It seems that being impressive is the principal condition that Sydney would require for any building to appear significant to him or engage his interest, and its absence entails that it cannot be thought of as working for Sydney in the same sense that it works (or at least has the potential to work) for Samuel or Alexander. Morden does not strive to stand out or engage with his idea of "impressive", insofar that buildings cannot really get away with being diminutive: they need to have a certain momentum in their design and execution in order to access his favour or be recognised by him as significant, or even noticeable. Though they are not Sydney's own descriptions, I think it is reasonable to suggest that this momentum is a combination of panache and, perhaps, a degree of bombast, and a building has to carry and project these qualities to make an impression on him. In other words, to make an impression, a building must do what Morden does not do, and be impressive.

This idea of buildings making an impression also makes sense to Samuel, but only in a potential form that remains largely unrealised. Unlike Sydney at Morden, Samuel's station had the capacity to make an impression, and it is plausible to suppose that it had been designed to do so, but whilst the architecture has that capacity, it never resolves that capacity into an actual impression in his experience. In the following quote, responding to my seeking of specifics, Samuel offered only the possibility of something potentially happening:

Paul: Do you look at something and say, yeah, I can see what he was trying to do there, what Holden was trying to do?

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This potential-laden vagueness was the culmination of a discussion in which I tried to sketch out what Samuel's experience was like and what plausibility existed there as to architectural intent and its realisation. So Samuel's response here is, at least partially, his reflection on that plausibility as part of our discussion. At earlier points in the discussion, the potential for architectural affect or effect was substantially more diminished. As to mood, for example: [Redacted interview material -----

-----]. There is a further interesting example of plausibility being granted to an idea without that plausibility actually solidifying into something he had experienced, or something that was likely to be experienced:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In this case, the idea of designing a building with the human body as an inspiration is plausible enough, but is somewhat locked into the architect's own territory and is not something that would plausibly cross over into the inhabitation of Arnos Grove, or indeed, Morden.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

I have little doubt that Sydney is correct on this point: Holden’s use of the human body as a metaphor for efficiency in architecture was solely for his own consumption or to explain to others his beliefs and hopes. There’s no evidence to suggest that he thought inhabitants should “get” this metaphor, although it is more reasonable to suggest that he thought they might knowingly experience the benefits that his metaphor realised when translated into a plan. My purpose in mentioning it in my interviews was, in fact, as a means to ascertain what is plausible in the experience of architecture and what capacity inhabitation has to “get”, or at least think it’s possible to “get” a building as part of their experience.)

Samuel is similarly vague as to what particular impressions these were. There is, for example, something interesting in Holden’s use of brick... [Redacted interview material - - - - -]. There is also [Redacted interview material - - - - -]. This reflects the absence of particular intents or portents at work within Samuel’s experience at Arnos Grove, but at the same time it still suggests a recognition that the building contains a more diffuse and general posturing towards doing something. In his experience, (making an) “impression” is a state which orientates the building in the general direction that suggests the exercise of will, or else gives it general momentum away from the otherwise unremarkable. And in Samuel’s case, at least part of this is comparative and stems from his recognition that Arnos Grove is unique, and that uniqueness is a necessarily functional start of making an impression or, more accurately, opening up the possibility of doing so and realising that such possibility exists without necessarily actualising it.

It is, of course, plausible to argue that Samuel states as much because I was sitting in front of him, entreating him to consider a possibility which he didn’t feel inclined to dismiss, and that he never saw such possibilities, realised or otherwise, in the fabric of Arnos Grove. This is a possibility I explore in the next section: in fact, I believe this mechanism is quite plausible and that Samuel’s experience has been engineered to some extent in an extra-architectural way. However, whilst I might concede that I am not unlike the culprit, I am sure I wasn’t the culprit *per se*. The plausibility of Arnos Grove in Samuel’s experience has been incubated by an extra-architectural narrating of the building long before my arrival,

perhaps especially by the special aura that the idea of “heritage” precipitates around the building. This is not to say, however, that my interviewee’s experiences are entirely or even predominantly couched in attendant discourses. In fact, the temporal state of Morden has specifically and insistently material consequences for Sydney and his experience.

Temporalities:

All of my Holden interviewees understand their respective buildings as being, in some form or other, locked into the time in which they were produced. This is not to say that the passage of time hasn’t been significant for the fabric of these buildings in terms of necessary alterations: none of them are original or in the process of being restored to an exactly original state. But despite their ongoing reproduction, key aspects of their contemporary experience are defined by the past actively intruding into the present in a way quite different from descriptions like “antecedent” or “precursor” might suggest. These terms inherently suggest a sedimented reality in which the present rests upon and mostly supplants an accreted foundation of largely quietened pasts, whereas at Morden Sydney has found that the past is far less whispered and asserts itself in a way that cannot be gently made opaque by incremental alterations. Morden, Sydney explains, is too small, and it’s too small because it was built with a fixed temporality, big enough for its present (1926), but not for the future it failed to grow into:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

I interpret an important temporal distinction in this passage. Sydney is not exactly suggesting that Morden is a building from a former time working (roughly) to present expectations. Rather, he seems to suggest that Morden reiterates its original time-frame through the material aspect of its size. Sydney's experience and inhabitation of Morden is generally inflected by the idea (and bodily experience) of it being locked in its original time frame. This extends to his opinion of Holden, and whilst Sydney has never really considered Holden's motivations (see below), his experience of a station that isn't large enough leads him to suggest that Holden practiced a conforming or referencing kind of architecture which transcribed in architectural form the norms and expectations of the time:

Paul: First of all, have you ever really thought about it [Holden's motivations]?

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The temporal limitation of Morden stems, in this instance, from the temporal limitation of Holden's architecture, especially compared with the newer stations on the network which (literally) allow space for the passage of time. I get the sense that Holden could and should have been more temporally proactive for Sydney, rather than simply subscribing to the needs of the time and assuming a future broadly similar to the original situation.

In this case, the oldness of the building generates an intrusive temporality, clinging to and reasserting its own time. In most other cases the temporal experience of Holden's work has a more beneficial, even soothing effect that can deflect criticism away from the fact that certain elements of the building do not perform well. At Arnos Grove, Samuel recalled: [Redacted interview material - - - - -]. However, the application of heritage has ameliorated this.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

This is a very different temporal dynamic, and one which, in my interpretation, is far more delegated than Sydney's. The intrusive temporality that Sydney deals with is very much produced by the building, whereas the narrative temporality that Samuel experiences is extra-architectural, that is to say that it is proximate to, rather than inherent in, the building, sharing some aspects of a *building event* (Jacobs, 2006: 14-21). The rehabilitating effect of heritage is not the work of the building. [Redacted interview material - - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -] beneficially subtiles his experience of the building, but what those subtiles actually narrate in terms of facts or insights is less important than the atmosphere they evoke and the enhanced sense of connection they offer to his experience.

That atmosphere is constituted, in part, by the realisation that Arnos Grove receives quite a lot of attention, interest, and affection, such that Samuel inhabits both the building and a cultural broth of recognition. The affect of this is one of plausibility: the existence of this culture of interest around the building suggests that it matters in some way, and if others find it interesting and significant, then the possibility of the building's interesting-ness and significance is manifested for Samuel, who hasn't found such significance *per se*, so much as concluded that there must be significance somewhere to explain this interest. Through such means, Arnos Grove is allowed to matter more and attain a value (one that is, at least initially, separate from the building in material terms), even if that interesting significance is left in a fluid state and never actually solidified into stories, characters, contexts or motivations. This is not so much confirmed knowledge, as the sense that there is knowledge awaiting that could be uncovered. In fact, in the following quote, the work of making an impression sounds as though it has transferred to him, but remains general and fluid and is constituted by a general raising of appreciation:

Paul: How important do you think this knowledge is to the way you understand the building, er, and the way, er-, to your opinion of the building? Do you think it changed the way you think about it because of what you knew?

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The temporality of Sydney's experience is, therefore, one of assertive near-original oldness, whereas the oldness Samuel experiences at Arnos Grove is, I argue, subtitled by narrative and recognition which softens that oldness and populates it with either actual significance, or more commonly, the potential for more significance. Samuel's office may still be old, but that oldness attains more potential than temporally intrusive material awkwardness. In more immediately material terms, and regardless of how much Samuel and his staff actually know about Arnos Grove or its sister stations, the heritage status of the buildings entails that their maintenance is rather more special than the immediate tasks of keeping the buildings clean, safe, and in one piece, even if that means enduring a degree of inconvenience, as he explains:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In this quote, I detect the possibility that enduring those constraints and inconveniences is a key element of how they maintain the building: their capacity to undertake the tasks they need to in spaces that aren't always aligned to those tasks allows those spaces to be maintained in their not-always-useful forms. Maintaining the building means maintaining certain postures on their part (squeezing into and out of spaces, going round the houses, and so forth) that keep them from needing to embark on major alterations to the building, but which also feels special for maintaining, in the same acts, the status of having heritage.

Heritage is also important Leonard's experience, but in his case the question of heritage is juxtaposed between defending the building against certain alterations and arguing in favour of others. In an example of the former, Leonard recalls a stand-off between his departmental staff and a contractor over what may appear, at first, to be a relatively minor feature.

Paul: Do you ever find that a bit annoying? The number of things you can't do that would make sense and that wouldn't particularly detract-

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

As “[Redacted interview material]¹⁰¹”, Leonard and his colleagues are arguably engaging in a process of sovereignty over the status of the building and certain key original features, and it is plausible to suggest that in defending certain aspects of its originality they are retaining

¹⁰¹ [Redacted interview material]

Senate House in a way that retains Holden’s original design features and, therein, enhances (though by no means ensures) the possibility of his continuing influence.

In contrast, however, Leonard sometimes finds himself in a position where he has to argue for somewhat larger alterations which have to be negotiated into existence with the local authority (Camden), an often arduous process where different conceptions of what and where the past should be are exchanged. In the following example, for instance, the university wished to refurbish a lecture theatre and add additional seating where it had once been removed, which met with some degree of reticence with the local authority as the new seating was positioned differently to the seating plan at the time that Senate House was listed. But it was obvious to Leonard and his colleagues that their proposals were, in fact, a reinstatement of the original seating positions and a return of sorts to Holden’s original design. [Redacted interview material

-----] ¹⁰²

In other cases, alterations have been necessary for Leonard and his colleagues to continue using the building which are entirely new to the building, neither transcribing nor interpreting what was there originally, and which are equally as difficult to argue the case for:

- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]
- [Redacted interview material]

¹⁰² [Redacted interview material -----

-----]

surrogations of Holden's intentions and practices. In fact, as a historian, Peter recognises that the contemporary reception of old things can lead to the sense that there's something "exceptional" about the old, a kind of historical para-quality that may have been applied to Senate House (and Holden) and, indeed, Peter may not be unaware that he might have been involved in the application of this quality, a possibility I was careful to cover in our discussion:

Paul: Was-, was it-, is it-, is it a deliberate evoking of emotion that Holden designed into it-

Peter: Ah. Well [laughs].

Paul: -or, and it's a very different question: is it you?

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

Although Peter's experience is predicated on the correct understanding of the building, he is also aware that he may be producing a narrative that ennobles Senate House on the basis of its historical status, a similar kind of special heritage feeling that Samuel reported at Arnos Grove, an effect that is not exactly of the architecture. There is a possibility, which Peter admits to, that it may be produced by him. In fact, it may complement Peter's attempts to regenerate Holden's presence insofar as that historical veneer may place Holden's original ideas and devices in a more favourable light in Peter's experience. The building did not have the advantage of that veneer when it was new. In fact, the possibility of Senate House working to reiterate Holden's intentions and ideas when it was new was potentially limited by the building's poor reception on its completion and the fact that the client was particularly astute and demanding (Simpson, 1996), contexts which may have since been ameliorated by the building's heritage. If Peter is susceptible to the veneer of heritage (or, indeed, involved in its re-application), then it may be that Holden's original ideas and devices find more support in Peter's current context than they otherwise would have in the context of the reception of Senate House at the point of its completion. This is an interesting way to view the disjuncture between the architect and the current resident in

legacy buildings like Senate House. Depending on the inhabitation, that disjuncture may amplify, rather than diminish, the effect of the architect's original intentions.

The absence of functionality:

I want to close this chapter by reflecting on the temporal incursions that Sydney and Samuel deal with (and the functional problems that those incursions are credited with producing) against the absence of the functional in Alexander's experience of Bristol Central Library: Alexander is unusual among my Holden interviewees for his willingness to dismiss the functional and exclude functional expediency from his inhabitation of (and affection for) the library. As the following quote suggests, it was almost strange of me to ask, and moreover, perfectly plausible that the quality of the experience at the library doesn't so much outweigh as displace the more procedural and functional benefits that are often absent there:

Paul: What functional aspects of this building do you find appealing? Or, alternatively, which ones do you find annoying?

Alexander: Functional...?

Paul: Yeah, functional, as in-, things working as they're supposed to work. Ergonomic, perhaps.

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The way Alexander dismisses the functionally expedient, not only from his particular inhabitation but as a characteristic of all inhabitations, suggests that functional expediency, if it was present, would provide a feebler, more staid, possibly less theatrical and certainly less “wonderful” kind of enjoyment as compared to the indulgences that Holden actually deployed, which as Alexander explains, are important insofar as they are functionless in pragmatic terms, but whilst they cannot be usefully used, they are potent in the provision of “delight”:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

What strikes me about Alexander’s experience is that this doesn’t sound like a case of ameliorating functional weaknesses with some charming architectural treatments. Nor is it a whimsical transaction of the functional in favour of the indulgent on Holden’s part. During our exchange, it became apparent to me that in Alexander’s experience, an architecture designed to impart delightful experiences draws upon a far more potent and weighty beneficence than functional expediency would otherwise provide. Convenience, reliability, and efficacy are thus dismissed to make room for a suite of materially articulated elements that suggest alternatives like humour, grandeur, interest, anticipation, and excitement, and other provisions that are fundamentally more laden with the potential for delight. It is also apparent that such provisions might require the removal or suppression of sensibly functional elements whose logic might curtail that delight, and indeed, there is the

slight suggestion that for the delightful to work, the sensible and “civic” needs to be effaced to a degree as part of that process, and quirks allowed to take their place...

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In short, Alexander’s analytical inhabitation of the library dismisses the very things that Holden believed would define the inhabitant and, by extension, the building. Alexander not only eschews the functional: he maintains a logic that such a dismissal is necessary to open up the full prospects of a joyful experience. This is not the joy of witnessing the holistic, body-like perfectibility of the building as Holden sought, but the joy of what sounds like a rambling mischievousness which, in Alexander’s analysis, may necessarily displace the functionally expedient. Alexander’s inhabitation hinges on this analytically derived plausibility.

The experiences of my interviewees in Holden’s buildings, and the astute components of those experiences, are as varied and interesting as those of my Voyesy inhabitants, but exhibit some key differences and emphases. The role of the unresolved is certainly noteworthy: the act of holding certain aspects of the building in a potential format, rather than being actualised, creates a particular kind of plausibility that does not need the completion of being actualised to work. Also worthy of note are the conditions of plausibility, which receive greater emphasis in this chapter, whereby buildings have to act in a certain way in order to attract the attention of those more astute elements of inhabitation. Furthermore, Alexander’s articulation of joyful plausibility at Bristol Central Library suggests that the process of “splitting” that I described in the previous chapter has a more pronounced corollary, the ability to fully redact part of the experience of a building in order to emphasise another part – in this case a redaction of the functional in favour of the joyful.

5.

Lubetkin:

Box 5a: Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin

Personal events and associations:

- 28th Dec 1901: Born: Tiflis, Georgia, to Roman Lubetkin and Fenya Menin. (Unconfirmed)
c.1903: Alternative date and place of birth, Warsaw, Poland). (Unconfirmed)
c.1916: Moves to Moscow for schooling.
1922: Accompanies Exhibition of Russian Art to Berlin, where he remains.
1925: Moves to Paris
1931: Moves to the United Kingdom (London)
1939: Naturalised as a British citizen.
Marries Margaret Louise Church
Moves (with Margaret) to Upper Kilcote Farm, Gloucestershire.
c.1942: Death of parents. (Unconfirmed)
1969: Moves to Bristol.
1978: Margaret Lubetkin dies.
23rd Oct 1990: Dies,

Education*:

- 1916: Stroganoff Art School (Moscow).
c.1917-1922: SVOMAS Free Art Studio (St. Petersburg and Moscow)
VkhUTEMAS Advanced State Workshops of Art and Industrial Art (Moscow)
1922: Technische Hochschule (Technical University) (Charlottenburg)
Höhere Fachschule für Textil und Bekleidungsindustrie (Textile School)
1923-1925: Warsaw Polytechnic (Diploma in Architecture)
1925: L'ecole Speciale d'Architecture (Paris)
Institut d' Urbanisme (Paris)
Ecole Superieure de Beton Arme (Paris)
Ecole des Beaux Arts (Paris)

*Note: the only certificate I have actually viewed is that issued by Warsaw Polytechnic, for Lubetkin's diploma in architecture (1925).

(Source: Allan, 2007)

In the final section of chapter two, I discussed the “belonging” of the three architects I studied and outlined my reasons for eschewing such classifications in my empirical chapters. In this, the final empirical chapter, I begin by outlining Berthold Lubetkin’s own particular misgivings about modernism and the problem of belonging to something called “modern”, and indeed, the problems of certain types of belonging in general to the ongoing plausibility of effective architecture.

Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin (for whom basic biographical details are provided in Box 5a) brought to his practice of architecture a reasoned certainty in the existence of fundamental and universal truths, and a similarly

reasoned certainty of the possibility of using architectural form to help people access and understand it. He could plausibly be called a modern architect but, as I have suggested above, such classifying efforts serve to neaten and homogenise the full potential scope of

architects and architecture (and posed problems for Lubetkin, too). There were a number of ways in which Lubetkin deviated from his contemporaries that might be lost if he were simply labelled “a modernist”. He recoiled, for example, from functionalism, berating one

Box 5b: Berthold Romanovich Lubetkin

Professional timeline and key commissions:

- 1925: Studies in the atelier of Auguste Perret.
- 1925-1931: Makes exploratory trips to London seeking potential work.
- 1931: First completion, in partnership with Jean Ginsberg – apartment block, Avenue de Versailles (Paris).
- 1931: Offered first commission in the UK.
- 1932: Co-founds Tecton with six members of the Architectural Association.
- 1932-1954: Period of significant commissions.
- 1933: Gorilla House, London Zoo.
- 1934: Penguin Pool, London Zoo.
- 1935: Highpoint One. (London)
- 1937: Dudley Zoo (West Midlands)
- 1938: Highpoint Two. (London)
- 1938: Finsbury Health Centre. (London)
- 1948: Tecton disbands.
- c. 1937-1950: Spa Green Estate (London)*
- c. 1937-1952: Priory Green Estate (London)*
- c. 1937-1954: Bevan Court Estate (London)*
- c.1954: Begins to retire from practise.
- 1982: Awarded R.I.B.A Gold Medal.

(Source: Allan, 2002)

of his most important contemporaries, Le Corbusier¹⁰⁴, for adhering to a brute architecture of measurable, surface-level facts, and ignoring the more fundamental underlying bases of reality that required far more substantial (and abstract) analyses to eke out. His architecture was designed for a future society that would rationally seek out these fundamentals, and he worked in a context where such advances were deemed both plausible and desirable, against a backdrop of scientific and social advances and the (assumed or hoped for)

enlightened redaction of myth, superstition, and irrationality in general. Lubetkin shared this desire, whilst being astute enough to recognise that such approaches could easily go awry and lead to, for example, the functional approaches he invariably derided.

The buildings that emerged were, in some cases, extraordinary – and suitably futuristic. They exhibit swooping sculptural features, and took advantage of the most advanced engineering available to instil them with the bare minimum of apparent support. Lubetkin’s zoo architecture (on which see Gruffudd, 2000) best exhibits these qualities, perhaps because they were Lubetkin’s most theatrical commissions (insofar that the animals were

¹⁰⁴ Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (1887-1965) was a pioneer, and probably the most noted practitioner, of modern architecture. His pseudonym, *Le Corbusier*, means “the raven” or “raven-like”. Many of the buildings he produced have been considered “prototypes” for many similar buildings around the world, especially high-rise apartment buildings. He also developed ambitious town planning proposals, and before settling on architecture had engaged in painting, sculpting, and furniture design. He published a number of books and pamphlets detailing his approaches and philosophies, and he is credited with substantial influence, especially in the adoption of function as a principal maxim in architectural design. For a full discussion, see Frampton, 1992: 149-161.

staged for an audience), with minimal consideration required for the ergonomic or functionally expedient. The enclosures at the three zoos he worked on (being London, Whipsnade, and Dudley (figs. 5.5, 5.6, 5.7)) are curvilinear and ethereal: ethereal because they have none of the monumental solidity that it appears they should need to stay upright (which is a credit to their engineering), and because they eschew the standard architectural nomenclature of walls and ceilings. A number of these buildings are formed primarily out of their circulation spaces and supports (fig. 5.7) and are open both above and to each side, giving them a semi-transparent quality. For those buildings that were for human inhabitation, rather than entertainment, Lubetkin opted to produce rhythmic variations working in from the outline of a fairly simple shape. In his later housing schemes, such as Priory Green (fig. 5.4) a simple oblong outline shape was layered with indentations and protrusions, and in his earlier schemes such as Highpoint¹⁰⁵ (figs. 5.1, 5.2) a similar kind of shape was worked out from to create a similar rhythmic undulation (in this instance, with the use of balconies). In all of these buildings, the geometric prevailed, and was accentuated by the surface treatment – whereas Voysey used roughcast, tiles and timbers, and Holden used stone and brick, Lubetkin opted for the finish that would accentuate the shapes as much as possible – flat, white, and smoothly finished render. In the sections that follow, I explain why Lubetkin arrived at the geometric as a fundamentally important element in creating effective architecture for a particular purpose.

Belonging:

Lubetkin's complex modernism found an outlet in response to a letter from Wells Coates in the winter of 1932-1933. Coates' original letter was circulated to a select few "modern" architects practising in Britain at that time, proposing the formation of MARS (Modern Architecture Re[S]earch group¹⁰⁶) and inviting the recipients to become members. Lubetkin's reply was a fiery political analysis which diagnosed in Coates' proposal an

¹⁰⁵ Lubetkin (with Tecton) produced two apartment blocks on the same site in North Hill, London: Highpoint I, completed in 1935, and Highpoint II, completed in 1938. Lubetkin's own penthouse was located at the top of Highpoint II, and in total the scheme provided 72 flats. See Allan (2002: 84-105) for further details and illustrations.

¹⁰⁶ MARS was established in 1933 by a group of prominent architects, all identifying themselves as modern, as the British arm of the Congrès internationaux d'architecture modern (CIAM), and sharing its objective to promote and spread the principles of the modern movement. It was not the first such attempt to form such a group in the UK, but it was the most prominent and the longest-lived, finally disbanding in 1957. It is difficult to arrive at a description for MARS – it never attained a formal structure that would allow it to be called, for instance, a think tank, although it certainly promoted discussions and produced proposals for large planning projects and building improvement programs in the manner of a think tank. It is perhaps better described as a society, held together by a need for mutual support in a country that was perceived to be hostile to modernism. See Gold, 2000 for further details.

authoritarian and orthodox tone, and he recoiled from the idea that modern architecture might socially coalesce around a merely oppositional practice to the status quo:

“So it would appear that the only criterion of eligibility for membership (apart from personal friendship with one’s cronies) would be the negative one of opposition to currently accepted architectural values, and readiness to break with the familiar. If we have nothing more positive in common, this could lead to an endless, aimless pursuit of originality [...], and originality which produces nothing but its own opposite is just eclectic rubbish. (Lubetkin 1933/1975(a) [Lub19/1/1/i]: 3)

For Lubetkin, if the full energies of modern architecture were to be spitefully directed, they would be without reason in both senses of the term: lacking any reasoning except of the limited kind required to work out an opposite position, and having no greater purpose than the merely reactionary. Lubetkin was also attuned to the irony of Coates’ proposition which, in the acts of reacting and opposing, sought to undermine and displace the status quo only to occupy its place and assume its guise. In aiming to oppose the current authoritarian orthodoxy, MARS was placed on a trajectory that would produce the same kind of authoritarian orthodoxy with the same exercise of control:

“To put it bluntly, the aim you appear to want to set out for it [MARS] would be to secure the acceptance of modern ideas in architecture by an effort to dislodge the entrenched mandarins in the professional institutions, and thus gain controlling positions within them.” (Lubetkin, 1933/1975(a) [Lub/19/1/1/i]: 3)

Lubetkin’s modernity and architectural practices firmly eschewed the political hazards he detected in the formation of groups that aimed to generate commonality. He believed that the seeds for authoritarianism were couched in such efforts, as had been the case in Soviet Russia where the post-revolution artistic and technical schools (some of which, like the Vkhutemas, Lubetkin had attended) were subsumed by creeping state interventions (see Nash, 1974: 49-52). Lubetkin recognised the same potential in MARS, and had no qualms about comparing the two:

“In the event, on Oct. 12th 1920, a solution was imposed from above, and the avant garde groups were firmly incorporated into the [Soviet] state machine, never to emerge alive [...]. When imagination is displaced by orthodoxy, initiative is stifled, and platitude takes over: authoritative utterances are substituted for critical thought, and blunt mediocrity protrudes through the blanket of officialdom like a sore thumb.” (Lubetkin, 1933/1975(a) [Lub/19/1/1/ii]: 4)

MARS (which Lubetkin later referred to as a “club” (Lubetkin, 1933/1975(b) [Lub/19/1/2/ii]: ii)), in common with the Soviet Department of Fine Arts, subsumed the exploratory initiative and individual trajectories of practitioners with a central cache of authoritative and orthodox procedures. To some degree, this echoes Voysey’s need for individuality and the ability of individuality to rehabilitate the kind of thought that degenerated when exposed to particular (particularising) forms of sociality.

Ideology:

In his notebooks¹⁰⁷ (which I will refer to regularly throughout this chapter), Lubetkin addressed issues such as the formation of MARS nature under the heading of “ideology”, which he understood as a particular intersection of sociality and thought (much as he seemed to understand MARS). Although he considered ideology from a number of perspectives, they were all linked together by some degree of negativity which approached, or surpassed, his distaste for the mediocre orthodoxy of imposed authority that he detected in Coates’ proposition. Ideology was understood by Lubetkin to be a means of

¹⁰⁷ I will refer to Lubetkin’s notebooks frequently in this chapter: in the first instance, they are relatively underused in the architectural and academic work on Lubetkin such as, for example, Allan (1992) and Gruffudd (2001). They are rough notes and it could be argued that Lubetkin’s opinions and philosophies are better represented in the more final material he produced. And because they are rough notes, I can’t rule out the possibility that they have been avoided because they’re not always very legible or written in continuous prose. However, I found them enormously interesting: there is material in them that is not repeated in those more final documents. It’s here that Lubetkin explores alternatives and visits concepts and ideas that would not be evident in those typescript and loose-leaf documents in R.I.B.A’s collection, and because they are rough notes, they often seem to be lacking the restraint that (perhaps) emerges in the normalising process of writing material for publication or speech. This is not to say that the notebooks record a “purer” Lubetkin or that those more final documents are somehow more opaque, but I do believe they represent important additions and allow a fuller account by reminding us (in a way that the Holden, and especially Voysey manuscripts do not so readily afford) that there is a messier process behind the final veneer. See also my discussion of archive methodology in Chapter Two.

manufacturing certain impressions for the comfortable effect of making people feel ok, safe, and adequate, such as virtue¹⁰⁸:

“The main object of the belief is comfortable assurance of VIRTUE. Sense of VIRTUE remain unimpaired.” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/xvi]: xvi)

Alternatively, but with the same effect in mind, ideology could generate a sense of common membership and create comfort in the knowledge that if everybody else was doing the same thing, it had to be “right and natural”, and further removed the troubling prospect of new and different thinking and the risks contained therein. Thus understood, ideology was a:

“Device for assuring us that we are safely rooted in conformity, safeguarding us from worry of constn. thinking anew.” (Ibid: [xx] xx)

And...

“Adoption of new is prevented by tacit assumption about what is right and natural.” (Ibid: [xx]ii xxii)

Baldly expressed in terms of its constituent processes, Lubetkin could also define ideology in terms that sounded almost innocent: in this interpretation, ideology was not an inherently bad act. It was a seemingly understandable thing for people to indulge in when they found themselves sharing a “common situation”.

“Ideology not a deliberate distortion of reality, but a way in which people who share a common situation give coherence to their hopes and fears, and prepare for social and political action.” (Ibid: [xvii] xvii)

Whilst this invokes what sounds like a benevolent and mutually helpful sociality, it retains the idea of the “deliberate distortion of reality”. It’s critically important to understand that Lubetkin thought at length, and acted upon, a particular understanding of reality which he

¹⁰⁸ The following excerpts are taken from a section of Lub/18/2 (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975) which are grouped under the heading “ideology”. Other commentaries on ideology recur frequently in Lubetkin’s notebooks, but they are not always labelled and presented together as the following excerpts were.

allied to particular epistemological hopes. In fact, this chapter will dwell at length on Lubetkin's epistemology and his belief that it was definitely possible for people to ascertain what reality was (or, if not reality *per se*, then at least the beneficial idea of reality), but equally as possible for correspondences with reality to be obscured by, for example, the communal displacement of that correspondence with fabricated ideologies (and the possibility of thinking one's way toward or about reality, which I explain in the following sections). In contrast to the previous excerpt, Lubetkin also did hold critical opinions of the unreal and fabricated aspect of ideology.

“Ideology or MYTH is a story which aims not at giving pleasure for its own sake but at alleviating perplexities which trouble.¹⁰⁹” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/xxi]: xxi)

Lubetkin seemed to deploy such criticisms directly at MARS, as a device for virtue, for conformity to its idea of what was “right and natural”, and for the myths required to sustain them. Regardless of how true this actually is (and I return to the matter of its “truth” below), Lubetkin's rejection of MARS, if understood as a critical rejection of ideology, may be reflected in the temporality into which his architecture was engaged.

In “declining” Coates' offer, Lubetkin expressed a preference for what I understand to be a fast (i.e. quick) and light (i.e. minimally laden) architectural trajectory. For the student of Lubetkin, understanding this trajectory is the start of unfurling his hopes and intentions for effective architectural forms. He argued that modern architecture had to be pre-emptive, not responsive. Fast architecture ought to have a pathfinder temporality that operated in advance of social changes, rather than a circumstantial temporality that obliged architecture to navigate circuitous contemporary interests. The latter was precisely what he believed would happen if architecture were “incorporated” into organisations such as MARS (Lubetkin, 1933/1975(a) [Lub/19/1/1/i-ii]: 3-4). This pathfinder's temporality could not be achieved if architecture were anchored to an organisation that normalised aims and standards. Architects had to be “allowed to set their own aims, and their own criteria of excellence freely.” (Ibid, [ii] : 4). Pragmatically speaking, designing buildings for a different time served as a temporal mechanism which distanced him from that which might

¹⁰⁹ Lubetkin believed that this was, at least partially, the individual's fault. It could not be blamed entirely upon the corrupting influence of certain contexts, thus: “But no conspiracy: people don't get corrupted by contemplating degenerate art – but rather they do contemplate degenerate art because they are corrupted” (Ibid: xxxi)

incorporate and normalise his aims and practices. Lubetkin always understood his architecture as being “fast”: his buildings were not designed for contemporary inhabitants. They were designed to make sense within a fundamentally different set of expectations and circumstances that were yet to happen, and Lubetkin expected future social and cultural realities to align with his architectural designs, along with new forms of inhabitation. These expectant designs, strategically placed in advance of such social and cultural changes (like architectural goalposts for future times) were conceived not to produce these changes directly, but to support their emergence. They achieved this by making sense in and being legible relative to the new ways of living, thinking, and behaving: creating in advance a more likely backdrop that would fit with, be intelligible to, and serenade modernist ideals.

Lubetkin’s temporality:

This is the start of a complex temporality in Lubetkin’s thinking that re-imagines both the future and the past and imposes important methodological considerations on the use of his archive from the outset. Lubetkin’s 1933 reply to Coates (Lubetkin, 1933/1975(a) [Lub/19/1/1]) is not the original document. The original, as Lubetkin noted, was “probably lost with B. Carter¹¹⁰” (Ibid). Lubetkin produced two versions of this letter around 1975. The first (Lubetkin, 1933/1975(a) [Lub/19/1/1]) supposedly transcribes the original (though I do not know how, given it was “lost” and no handwritten version is archived – in any event, it is marked as “edited”), and a second version (Lubetkin, 1933/c.1975(b) [Lub/19/1/2]) was re-written for publication, possibly in the *Architectural Review*. This second version constitutes a very substantial re-imagining. Lubetkin made himself much more palatable and sociable, exercising a significantly restrained vitriol and the almost total removal of references to Soviet bureaucratic oppression. And then, in a spectacular and contradictory *volte-face* which is absent from the “original” Lubetkin stated that:

“From all this you will conclude, dear Wells, that I do not intend to take an active part in the Group (Club?), though I will, of course, do everything in my power to help and promote and organise it.

Fondly,

¹¹⁰ At that time, Bobby Carter was the librarian and archivist at R.I.B.A. Lubetkin made this annotation in his own hand, but the letter itself is in typescript.

B. Lubetkin.”

(Lubetkin, 1933/c.1975(b) [Lub/19/1/2/ii]: ii)

What is evident from this is that Lubetkin did not treat the past as a finished time which had stopped happening. The temporal understanding he crafted allowed both the future and the past to be available and malleable from his present, and he did not allow either to slip into circumstance. But what is “evident” needs to be cautiously considered given Lubetkin’s malleable temporality. This is true of all three of the archive collections I’ve worked with, but it is most obvious – sometimes to the point of blatant – in Lubetkin’s archive, despite the fact that in other documents from his archive he expressly recognised and criticised this possibility in historical practice. In *Credo* (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/19/3/1] (a usefully compact statement of some of his key beliefs)) he took care to state that he was not trying to immortalise himself in history: in fact, he was aiming to efface himself from the kind of history created by;

“[N]imble specialists, whose task it is to fashion opinion in a way that sustains and justifies the power clique to which they aspire to belong, or the social firmament in which they hope to shine, can collect gossip, manipulate the evidence, erase the past and bury the living.” (Ibid: [i] 1)

It cannot, therefore, be said that Lubetkin’s re-issuing of his past self was an innocent and innocuous case of a wishful old man indulging in nostalgic hindsight. He was clearly aware that history was an epistemologically powerful tool, one which could virtualise a different past that would nonetheless solidify beneficially in the present for those who knew how to exercise it. Certainly, his virtualisation of a friendlier, more gentlemanly Lubetkin in 1933 was intended to actualise in his favour in 1975, and by distancing himself from such efforts in *Credo* he merely reconfirmed such paratemporal habits. (In fact, Lubetkin was involved with MARS from an early stage, though he was never a very diligent member and eventually resigned his membership.)

The temporal momentum of Lubetkin’s architectural practice (always abreast of current circumstances) was an ontologically functional aspect of his design that shifted his work from a position when/where it could be unduly influenced by current circumstance, to a virtual field of newness in which he had the space to generate new theoretical approaches.

These acts of dilating the future with circumstance-free opportunities had significance for Lubetkin not only in terms of the oppressive socialities he wished to eschew, but for that he wished to express. So liberated, he hoped to express a universal architectural theory which itself expressed a universal, singular and coherent logic underlying reality as a whole. In the first instance, he believed that this was our normal state. In a draft of a speech he wrote for the Architectural Association he stated quite confidently that: “Man assumes the existence of a coherent universe, and looks for one underlying substratum.” (Lubetkin, c.1964 [Lub/19/4/2/]: 6). But it was this coherence, above all else, that was at risk of becoming opaque in contemporary society, and Lubetkin hoped for – and took a calculated risk on – pitching his work into a future where such universal coherence had been rediscovered. This adds an additional – and important – aspect in understanding his work and how it was implied in a future inhabitation: the architectural forms he created were designed to be sensible to and synchronised with a particular way of (currently effaced) thinking, to appeal to that which we didn’t yet know (or had forgotten) was appealing, namely the particular comfort of knowing that all things took shape from a cache of common mechanisms.

Lubetkin’s rationality:

The fact that such reasoning had been effaced at all was, he argued, a result of eighteenth century enlightenment whereby phenomena were investigated in isolation, rather than being understood as expressions of and emergence from a universal logic of order and purpose (Lubetkin, c.1964 [Lub/19/4/2/]: 6-7). The result, Lubetkin argued, was a loss of confidence in universal thinking and a concurrent habitual belief that, with no universal force to gel everything together, our immediate perceptions became the stuff of existence, so producing:

“A wild, unbridled subjectivism and irrationalism [that] tends to tear to pieces the fabric of society, spells boredom and decadence, makes whims and opinions their own proof.” (Lubetkin, c.1964 [Lub/19/4/2]: 7)

This fictional ontology in which nothing existed independently of perception was further disparaged in his speech for the acceptance of the RIBA 1982 Gold Medal (Lubetkin, 1982 [Lub/19/9/1]). “By analogy with physics”, he argued...

“...reality is treated as a compound of unrelated events. Since the individual particles fly in unpredictable directions, it is inferred that reality as such is unpredictable.” (Ibid: [iv] iv).

With the vanguard and old guard of British architecture assembled before him, Lubetkin spelled out very clearly the consequences, as he saw them, of abandoning rationality...

“We have been warned by Voltaire that people who tolerate absurdities will sooner or later commit atrocities.” (Ibid: [vi] vi)

Lubetkin, on the other hand, was convinced that all things, including his architectural things, should be referencing things. He believed that all things developed from a common logical mechanism, and that those things should express that lineage. Because of this and, equally, because of the inherent dangers of denying that correspondence, Lubetkin aimed to produce in architectural terms a clear referring-to the universal, to iterate and demonstrate it as a way of reminding people what it was and why it was important. This was not just because people were habitually eschewing reason and analysis in favour of “unbridled subjectivism”. It was because, by ignoring the common basis of all things, people also abandoned their ability to exert control and order on things, and were instead stranded in a politics of chance.

One of Lubetkin’s principal hopes, then, was to make a particular (i.e. causal, origin-emergent, universal) idea of rationality palpable in material form. One plausible means of such palpability was in architectural acts of intentional, planned precision, or as the case maybe, the avoiding of the considered, unplanned, or random. If any part of a building had been evidently unplanned or inadequately thought through, then that rational articulation of control would be eroded by way of a silly or fruitless result. For architecture to reflect and evoke rationality, every corner and feature had to evince and exercise control over the silly and fruitless by being, as Lubetkin described in conversation with Brett, deliberate. Even the empty space between a doorframe and an adjacent wall had to be intentionally and precisely planned to deliberately do or achieve something, thus:

“I would say that the first step is for an architect to have a reason for everything he does. You know as well as I do how much of a building just happens. Take this little room we are in. The door is about fifteen inches from the end of the wall. Why? Too much for the architrace and not enough to accommodate a bit of furniture. Did the architect draw that wall in elevation and see where the door looked best in it? Of course not. His T-square probably found itself in that position whilst he was on the 1/8 scale plans and (the plans being late anyway) the door is in that meaningless position for ever. The first thing is to be deliberate. (Lubetkin, in Brett and Lubetkin, c.1945 [Lub/20/1/1/iv-v]: 4-5)

Being deliberate, and being precise, seems to work in two ways here: first, by a demonstration of wilfulness that potentially fosters an effective “mood”, such that an occupant, surrounded by such a concentration of sense making and deliberateness would realise, if not the actual articulation being attempted, then at least the attempt to do or mean something. The second way is bound up in notions of service and speaks to that kind of rationality that pares away the useless and thoughtless and deploys, in its place, a precise, efficient and smooth working architecture that people (and furniture) neatly slot into, but in that very neatness is the potential for invisibility. Whereas the random and unplanned brought themselves to prominence by requiring inhabitants to work around or against them, the neat, efficient, precise architecture Lubetkin hoped for and, as I will show shortly, aimed to produce, was less arresting for being less obstructive and too meekly servile, a point noted by Brett: “I think it is just possible that by being too deliberate one might pare away those pointless, generous, glorious spaces that made life in Vitruvian days so exhilarating.” (Brett, in Brett and Lubetkin, c.1945 [Lub/20/1/1/vi]: 6)

By turning to some of the rough notes Lubetkin produced on “composition” a similarly problematic potential (or lack of potential) seems to emerge. Those notes also clarify that architecture’s job was to draw upon a volumetric, material, and aesthetic vocabulary to express the relations and connections that unified all the seemingly disconnected and messy things in the world, thus:

“An attempt to understand and give account of order, relation, uniformity, that underlies the bewildering diversity of nature; a striving to represent record a

system of views that contains all human experience within the ultimate structure, logos of all things.” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/i]: i)

And,

“An endeavour to record in terms of geometry a system of views upon logos...”

(Ibid: [ii] ii)

And,

“It is a projection of man’s yearning for order in a disorderly world” (Ibid)

What interests me in these statements, especially in terms of “uniformity, that underlies the bewildering diversity of nature” and “yearning for order in a disorderly world”, is that Lubetkin’s expressions ran against the grain of what was apparently real, i.e. messy complexity. In trying to express what reality really was, it could only appear to be different from, or even the antithesis to, what reality actually looked (and seemed to work) like. By trying to express the uniform origins of a reality that seemed, he noted, bewildering, diverse, and disorderly (or, more accurately, trying to prevent the apparent messiness of everything being interpreted as an arbitrary basis to reality). Whilst such expressions may have had the impact that was (potentially) lacking in the “too deliberate”, there is the problem that those expressions may have seemed logically adrift given what reality was normally taken to be, that the same sense-making approach would not make sense if the reality of the world was generally understood to be of disparate origin. Insofar as looking sensible might not make sense, Lubetkin’s architectural hopes have the potential for a conspicuous sort of invisibility: conspicuous by being so different, but with a message that logically stands apart from what normally makes sense, or is expected.

Alternatively, by revisiting his suggestion that composition “is a projection of man’s yearning for order in a disorderly world”, (Lubetkin, 1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/ii]: ii) it is plausible to suggest, in Lubetkin’s belief that the related and connected logic he sought to espouse in architectural terms was not adrift in a context that could not comprehend it, but attractive and comprehensible to a “yearning” to impose order where disorder had been identified. In this possibility, though his architecture stands apart from the disconnected and messy, it stands beside, supports and is supported by, an inclination to understand such messiness as a façade obscuring a true reality and reassert more rational connected, and controlling traits in their place. Thus:

“A framework of relations upon which man projects his sense of order, harmony, relation upon confusion and obscurity. [Illegible] as a sign of sovereignty. Rising it from contingency into realm of necessity” (Lubetkin, 1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/iv]: iv)

This reasserts the sort of model human behaviour in terms of analytical ability that Lubetkin believed emerged in (and was inherent in) people through their use of language and the understanding of things and their relations that acts of description fostered. Understood thus, instead of struggling against an illusionary façade of messiness, his architecture reflected already existing hopes among people for what reality was or should be, and this tentatively confirms my earlier point that a key element of Lubetkin’s architecture was contained in an assumed motive power provided by the inhabitant-user’s understanding and analytical abilities to “get” his work. But this possibility can only ever be “tentative” given that, in the same notes on composition from which the preceding quote is taken Lubetkin also suggests that:

“In concrete sensuous form the prevailing notions. Reflecting the malaise of our time, inability of seeing things as a whole.” (Lubetkin, 1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/v]: v)

In Lubetkin’s understanding, what becomes concretised and materialised (or “composed”) is not securely bound to either yearning for the rational or desiring to dwell among disjointed façades. This reopens the territory of the user-inhabitant in Lubetkin’s understanding, and as my following argument shows, his reasoned faith in the centrality of reasoning in human experience and behaviour was not consistent, and what the user/inhabitant was capable of (and the attendant degree to which they could help his thesis to emerge) varied in plausibility. Whilst his work remained true to the aim of serenading the rationality of “the ultimate structure, logos of all things” (Ibid: [i] i), there is a sense that he was never quite sure how capable people were of grasping that possibility, or what lengths he would need to go to in design terms to achieve it without knowing what resources the users/inhabitants could provide to the dynamics. I think that the key problem here, in wanting or hoping that people were analytically endowed, is that he could not account for the existence of so much art and architecture that failed to express as much.

Knowledge and language:

Lubetkin also aimed to criticise and expose the inadequacies of any art, architecture, politics, or philosophy that provided the wrong sort of nourishment, and he described himself as an “idiot”, one who remains negative despite the “jollifications” of the ancient Greek city state (Lubetkin, c.1964 [19/4/2/i]: 1). (He then countered himself by suggesting that exposing inadequacy was not an especially negative act (Ibid: [i-ii] 1-2)). In his Gold Medal speech of 1982 he deployed this criticism against postmodern art and architecture, the way it eschewed the rational and found comfort in the ignorance of what it assumed was a meaningless time (Lubetkin, 1982 [Lub/19/9/1/v]: v), and the way it bemoaned or denied the possibility of clarity and universal purpose:

“When a man cannot find an ascertainable and verifiable truth, he is forced to accept the truth of his own intuition and remain forever imprisoned in the circle of his egocentric subjectivity, determined by tyranny of chance.” (Ibid: [vii] vii)

These were the “muddy waters” which he had foreseen in his letter to Monica Felton over almost thirty-five years earlier¹¹¹ (Lubetkin, 1947 [Lub/19/1/9/ii]: 2), where he explained that...

“...the dislike of theory is a kind of theory itself, which reflects man’s unwillingness to control events, and thus it implies the acceptance of things as they are, and bolsters up the status quo ante bloody bellum.” (Ibid)

Importantly, as far as Lubetkin was concerned, to glimpse the universal, constitutive, and causal beyond the immediately apparent also constituted the exercise of control and created opportunities for control. The alternative was a mental hiatus which left events to develop without attempts to control them because of a shared belief in a social reality driven by chance where such attempts were pointless. Glimpsing the universal/causal were not simply exercises in the general improvement of philosophical quality: to have a theory that

¹¹¹ However, I should point out that the Felton letter, like the Coates letter, seems to have been re-written for inclusion in the Architectural Review, and no handwritten original is archived.

extended beyond the immediately apparent suggested causal thinking in place of circuitous subjectivities, and to know how something emerged and how it related to other things opened up its inner workings, or revealed it to be the inner working of something far larger. This raises the interesting question as to how such knowledge worked: whether it steered people away from, or reminded them of alternatives to, the arbitrary and subjective, or whether knowledge actually allowed ontological reality to be epistemologically colonised (in which case knowledge did not so much suggest as constitute it to some degree).

Of these two mechanisms, I suggest that the second, more constitutive one seems to have held sway with Lubetkin: “man is a professional maker of circumstances”, he wrote in *Credo*: “His work is not just a reflection of current events and prevailing moods, but an active force, moulding reality to his will, within necessity.” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/19/3/1/ii]: 2) This moulding was conditioned by knowledge which had a particular abstracting power that worked beyond the evident. To generate knowledge was to breach the immediately evident/sensuous boundaries of an object or concept and enter an unseen world of forces, links, and emergences that engaged with how that thing was (and had been) produced. This enlargement from the evident to the abstract constituted a substantial reorganising of the thing in question, which in itself was an imposition of control. Moreover, by being sufficiently insightful to broaden the conception of something towards a universal and systemic understanding, reality was made predictable. The ability of things to surprise was undermined when their inner workings and outer connections were known.

It seems as if, in Lubetkin’s understanding, knowledge is the temporality of control, allowing the agency of temporality to be transacted from an ontologically closed reality to an empowered epistemological inhabitation, where the reality is no less real, but its agency is no longer secreted away beyond the possibility of knowledge. Temporally speaking, reality becomes expected through the application of knowledge, so its ability to surprise and impose is diminished, transacted against faculties to expect and predict which can only be generated by treating encountered things as more than the immediately evident, and turning to those invisible forces and connections that made them evident. Knowledge did not, as such, allow for control to happen: it was, in fact, a very substantial part of what control was.

The ability to control was dependent on the wider state of knowledge to some extent, and Lubetkin believed that art and architecture reflected the degree of control a society felt able to assert at a given time, suggesting in *Credo* that “the artist consciously or unconsciously reacts to the conditions of his time. He reflects current concepts of order, structure, cause and effect, or the inter-relation of the general and the specific.” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/19/3/1/ii]: 2) This returns us to the logic of his temporality. If there was a general sense that control and order were being successfully exercised, then reality was seen as reliable and legible, and art was seen not as a sensory pleasure but as a reasoned statement of cause, effect, and broad understanding (Ibid: [ii-iii] 2-3). If, however, there was a general mood that indulged in chance and chaos: “Artistic composition, instead of being a statement engaging with orderly precision, becomes a gruesome kitsch, a rag-bag of ready-made trend-swept tricks and a hotch-potch of marketing ideas.” (Ibid: [iii] 3) The temporality of this is contained in the sense that architecture could be an archaeology of its time, so Lubetkin chose to virtualise a different time altogether to design from, with a different social fabric and bespoke circumstances.

As knowledge was a key element of control, so language was a key element of knowledge. Lubetkin argued that it was through language that people normalised the process of seeing beyond the immediately apparent to engage with a more exploratory and more formative reality of universals. It therefore followed that, if deprived of language, “man” was also deprived of knowledge “mainly because”, Lubetkin explained¹¹², “having no words, he lacks the very instrument of articulated thought, a method of defining, co-ordinating, generalising, and apprehending his environment.” (Lubetkin, 1958 [Lub/19/2/1/ii]: 2) For Lubetkin, language was not merely the communication of knowledge; it was actually constitutive of knowledge in the process of making phenomena communicable. The initial perception of the phenomena in question had to be expanded into an account of that phenomena in order to be communicated, in other words: it had to be translated from encounter to account. Language offered this expansion from simple encounter to engaged account. Temporally speaking, language made phenomena (or accounts thereof) available after their encounter, expanding their timeframe through a powerful disassociating function that evoked phenomena without them being present and engineered an abstract recursivity

¹¹² This three-page typescript document is marked “draft” and is dated (in pen) “18 Oct 58”. I cannot find any record of it having been published in this (untitled) form, though certain insights Lubetkin outlined here were reused in later speeches and lectures, and those insights themselves may have originated in one of his notebooks referred to below (Lubetkin, undated notebook [Lub/18/1/lxxxj]: lxxxj)

for things. Importantly, this suggested that normal human reality lied (to some degree) in fields that were abstract and, furthermore, analytically ploughed to enable such recollecting:

“The disassociation of the word from the object, its abstracting power, is at the root of human intelligence, a pre-condition of existence of any forms of conceptual thought – from elementary reasoning processes to the formulation of complex categories, theories, and methods of investigation” (Lubetkin, 1958 [Lub/19/2/1/ii]: 2)

The analytical work of language that made this possible can be further understood in scalar terms. In this instance language was understood to be supra- or inter-phenomenal (perhaps even parasensual) for its necessary ability to create an account of a phenomenon both larger and more knowledge-laden than a perception of its existence that otherwise started and ended at its apparent boundary (Ibid: [i] 1). This “abstracting power” with which language recalled phenomena in spite of their absence did not (or could not) recall them as they presented to the senses directly, it couldn’t transcribe them in their immediately encountered forms. To recall something without it being there, it had to be recalled through its properties and relationships, i.e. through that which caused it to take the form it did and what position it occupied, rather than trying to recall it as the form *per se*. This marked a substantial increase in the scope of experience: rather than accepting a phenomena as it was encountered, language (understood as a mode of behaviour) queried the origins of phenomena, compared them with similar and possibly related phenomena, pinned down their attributes, and perhaps most importantly, sought in those (particular) phenomena the operation of larger, more fundamental and underlying (general) phenomena, thus:

“In relating them [phenomena] together, he relies on a complex network of acquired influences, which enable him to compare and discern common properties of related objects, and thus to recognise the general in the particular, discarding what is accidental, incidental, and out of context.” (Lubetkin, 1958 [Lub/19/2/1/i]: 1)

In short, to recall a non-present phenomena required everyday behaviours that orbited around certain acts of analysis entwined with acts of abstraction. The use of language both

opened up an abstract (and temporally potent) space in people's experiences and provided trajectories through it by providing the impetus for and frameworks of analysis. Moreover, to analyse in the abstract was not special or scholarly in any way. Crucially for Lubetkin and his understandings of architecture, this was how people normally behaved: their everyday use of everyday language meant that analytical and conceptual thought could be reliably expected of them, almost in the manner of unconsidered consideration. The human use of words, he argued, apprehended far more than the words themselves, and whilst the following excerpt seems limited to "great minds" it succinctly outlines his expectations of language:

"It is a fine characteristic of great minds¹¹³ that they love the truth that is in the words rather than the words themselves." (Lubetkin, c. pre-1969
[Lub/18/1/lxxxii]: lxxxii)

Lubetkin's inhabitants:

People's lives, and the architectural inhabitations as part of their lives, were suffused with abstract possibilities fulfilled by perceptive analyses which emanated, almost idly, from their everyday use of language wherein people looked beyond the perceptually obvious to glimpse the logical and theoretical. It is, I argue, crucial to understand this point because the ability, or possibility, of Lubetkin's architecture to reference or demonstrate a coherent universal logic, courted this everyday and normal analytical inhabitation. As such, his referencing architecture did not seek to invoke or enable such analytical thought: language already did that work. His architecture assumed this ability of the inhabitants. No extra or special effort was required of Lubetkin to discharge analytical content toward non-analytical people. His linguistic understanding of everyday life indicated that analytical ability was already and inherently present, and not a new habit he had to invoke.

In defining and theoretically justifying the analytical possibilities of inhabitation, and in his concurrent hope that this regular and normal ability would liberate the thesis he hoped to articulate in his architecture, Lubetkin deliberately and clearly circumscribed the body,

¹¹³ I believe that this was a general observation as Lubetkin was not specifying anyone in particular when he was discussing "great minds", but rather, the concept of having a "great mind".

arguing that artistic¹¹⁴ endeavours has to extend beyond the body (much as analytical endeavours had to extend beyond the immediately apparent aspects of phenomena) except insofar as they provided informational basics. Analysis, loosely defined in the following quote as “understanding, evaluation, and meaning”, needed to displace, or if not displace then very substantially augment (or “transmute”) the impressions of the senses and one’s bodily existence, as Lubetkin argued in *Credo*:

“By rejecting reason as a guide to human enterprise, art denies the universal norms, attacks systematic thought, and plunges headlong into hedonistic formalism, confining the mind in a closed circle of biological sense impressions.

Now I have nothing against sense impressions as a source of information about reality, but a great deal against the assumption that the earth is flat and stationary, although it appears so to my senses.

It is only in the light of our whole social experience, slowly developed, along with man himself and his civilisation, that direct sense impressions can be transmuted into recognition.” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/19/3/1/iv]: 4)

As far as Lubetkin was concerned, to close reasoning tightly around sense impressions was, in the same moment, an act of hedonistic self-imprisonment in and among the restricted knowledges (and, therefore, restricted control) that sense data evoked. Such an imprisoning was twice false, in the first instance because it denied the full scope of reality that people inhabited, i.e. it created a fictional bubble of mostly corporeal unreality that effaced the wider reality of phenomena; their relations, and (perhaps especially) their emergence from an underlying logic. In the second and closely related instance, it generated an implausibly hedonistic human behaviour that disengaged people from that which came normally and regularly to them at the behest of language; that enquiring trajectory through the experiential wherein “perception must be shot through with inference” (Ibid). This returns us to his central criticism of art (under which term he included architecture) because, he observed, that it effaced not only the ontological reality of emergence-from-universals, but additionally eschewed a social reality of enquiring trajectories which could plausibly

¹¹⁴ Lubetkin used the terms “art” (or “artistic” in this case) and “architecture” interchangeably, often slipping between the two in the same document, as can be seen below and in a number of the excerpts of his manuscripts that I use elsewhere in this chapter.

correspond with that ontological reality. The fictional bubble that art/architecture occupied reflected and supported a similar kind of practice in society, and thus, argued Lubetkin:

“Whether we realise it or not, this is the CONTENT of today’s architecture, and the part its brutal inhumanity plays in our social practice” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/19/3/1/vi]: 6)

Perhaps more important, I would suggest, is Lubetkin’s faith in the wider communicability that results from the displacement of the intuitive and sculptural with the precise and engineered. It is precisely because of precision that lay people or critics could critically understand the building prior to being built (i.e. from its plans and elevations) rather than having to wait for the finished article and the (no longer) inevitable changes that set design and realisation apart. Moreover, to engage with the building at its design stage allowed the full nature of the building to be perceived, not only from inception to completion, but in its philosophy as well as of its plans, which was far better, Lubetkin argued, than “a subjective wander around a finished building” (Ibid: [iii] 3).

Such was Lubetkin’s expectations of the precise and rigid relationship between his ideas and the completed building. But I would further argue that this represents a powerful indication of his reasoned hope for the analytical and enquiring inhabitation that he believed people would bring to buildings (and which he could draw upon to liberate his ideas), one more productively intelligent than a “suggestive wander”, and one that was sufficiently astute for Lubetkin to suggest the opening out of what might otherwise be considered professional architectural territory (Voysey, for instance, would certainly have eschewed it). But despite his faith in the analytical inhabitant (outlined above), Lubetkin hoped to impose a structure of limited possibilities in the way that buildings were apprehended. The intelligence of inhabitants did not absolve them from a profoundly didactic effort to have their potential for understanding disciplined, directed, and corrected; “What is wanted”, proposed Lubetkin, “is an aesthetic code of practice.” (Brett and Lubetkin, c.1945 [Lub/20/1/1/iv]: 4) Brett, replying with a pithy kind of caution that belied a degree of sympathy for the idea said: “A new Vitruvius¹¹⁵. A tall order.” (Ibid) Lubetkin’s response to this idea did not specify what – if any – appreciations should be

¹¹⁵ Vitruvius is explained in greater depth in footnote 39 (Chapter 2)

enabled or quashed as such, but he did specify that without such a code of practice people would be unlikely to arrive at any kind of appreciation at all:

“At the moment, yes. If we could just be aware of our lack of it that would be something. When old Vitruvius was liquidated I don’t suppose the tyrannicides realised for a second that they would have to find a successor; i.e. that if you abolish law, human beings don’t behave by instinct. They just moon about doing nothing in particular.” (Ibid)

In Lubetkin’s terms, clearly defined here, people’s analytical ability couldn’t be allowed to wander. And it could be argued that in seeking a “new Vitruvius” Lubetkin (and Brett) aimed to create a benevolent and empowering field of inhabitation into which their work could be received, a framework that would “tyrannise” other and alternative receptions. This discussion was, of course, aside from architecture in its physical form. Lubetkin and Brett proposed this as a separate discourse, not unlike a narration, running alongside architectural forms and defining how they could be addressed, although their discussion did not expand upon how a “new Vitruvius” could be enforced, sustained, or disseminated.

At this point it’s increasingly evident that Lubetkin’s ideas about the occupation of buildings and the capacity of occupants take on a contradictory character. On the one hand there is his statement of faith in the ability of people’s analytical faculties: sufficient faith to be included as part of the motive power that would animate his intentions (his “thesis”) at the point of their experience. On the other hand, and apparently contradicting this faith, is the didactic imposition I’ve just outlined. In the first instance this suggests that people require, if not instruction, then at least some sense that there is a framework from which they can construct their actions, else they would “moon about doing nothing in particular”, which seems to belie their in-built ability to analyse and apprehend the logical structure to and connectedness of things.

Exerting control over the architectural process:

In common with Voysey and Holden, Lubetkin considered the temporal continuation of his intentions as they took three dimensional form on site and in the hands of contractors. Unlike Voysey and Holden, who both felt the need to engineer a supervisory presence

through specifications or diagrams, Lubetkin believed that the transition from two-dimensional designs to three-dimensional realisations would look after itself to an extent, and saw far less potential for discontinuity between them. The idea that this transition would happen in a manner more akin to transcription may seem simplistic when compared to both Voysey and Holden's recognition of a more fluid discontinuity. However, the relative simplicity of Lubetkin's transition was emergent from what he understood to be an increased degree of precision required by contemporary constructional methods and required of both architects and contractors. Paradoxically, simplicity could spring from complexity insofar that the complexities of contemporary construction created a kind of rigidity between design and realisation that resulted in a simpler and more predictable transition where there had once been a more fluid and interpretable discontinuity. This allowed Lubetkin to "possess" the building without having to secure it as Voysey and Holden had felt inclined to:

"In the old days when an architect chipped about at his building like a sculpture [...] you could foretell no more from working drawings than you can foretell the result of a battle from reading the generals' operation order. Nowadays, our methods of construction force us to be so precise in our planning that I personally possess the whole building in my mind before a trench is dug and my visits to the site are simply connected with forcing the most rigid adherence to my plan." (Brett and Lubetkin, c.1945 [Lub/20/1/1/ii]: 2)

This desire for control over the outcome of his projects was not, however, immutable: whilst precision engineering may have solidified any variances between the architect and the contractors, Lubetkin's designs and his sovereignty over them could still be invaded by legislative processes of planning. His strategies when he came up against what he considered to be irrational or invasive demands are evident in the way Lubetkin and some of his colleagues at Tecton¹¹⁶ approached the issue of planning. In a published feature in the *Architectural Review* of 1938 Lubetkin documented the substantial and circuitous political discourse he had been forced to take part in to get Highpoint Two approved (Lubetkin,

¹¹⁶ Tecton was the practise in which Lubetkin was, in essence, the principal architect. Formed in 1932 and disbanded in 1948, the partners changed over the years but the core of the practise included, additional to Lubetkin, Francis Skinner, Denys Lasdun, Godfrey Samuel, and Lindsay Drake. In truth, Lubetkin dominated Tecton (Frampton describes it as "Lubetkin and his 'Tecton team'" (Frampton, 1992: 252)) and very few Tecton designs can be traced to someone other than Lubetkin.

1938: 161-163). The reticence of the local authority, he argued, was afforded by restrictive town planning measures which had been instigated since the completion of Highpoint One and which had been written not, as Lubetkin would have preferred, as an affirmation of what was possible, but in a negative tone which detailed what was prohibited, and which extended the sense of safety in the “familiar” and suspicion of the “different” that already existed. He writes,

“It was never intended that the powers given to local authorities under the various town planning acts should be obstructive to good architecture. Yet it is accepted today as almost inevitable that if an architect and his client plan a modern building, they must be prepared to spend a great deal of time on negotiations before the building is approved of: and they must face the risk of its total rejection [...] It is partly due to bureaucratic conservatism – to a natural suspicion of anything that is unusual [...], and partly to the fact that town planning regulations are treated solely as restrictive measures.” (Lubetkin, 1938: 161)

Because the local authority (the Municipal Borough of Hornsey) worked from a basis of what was unacceptable, Lubetkin entered into a prolonged period of trial and error in which design schemes were submitted for rejection. On the basis of what the planning committee liked or disliked, a new scheme would be submitted, retaining the approved features from the previous scheme and including new ones to be judged. In due course and after the submission of numerous schemes, Lubetkin had accumulated an array of features which he could use to design the building he wanted and which had secured its approval, feature-by-feature, through this process. This process which Lubetkin regarded as ridiculous is interesting because, faced with such restrictions, Lubetkin was able to astutely (if laboriously) open out an affirmative space for Highpoint Two. Though Lubetkin recognised that the process was restrictive and didactic, Lubetkin treated it as neither; more accurately, he utilised the approval process to extract affirmative potential.

Whilst Lubetkin and Tecton met no such resistance at Finsbury Borough Council (Gruffudd (2001) outlines Finsbury’s support for and compatibility with the practice), the process of building the larger housing schemes in the borough required approval and funding from London County Council (LCC). Their stipulations were far more quantitative

and less opinion driven than the ultimately successful tribulations Lubetkin faced regarding Highpoint Two.

In August 1937 a representative of Tecton visited the offices of the LCC to ascertain what material and financial possibilities existed for the proposed Buscasco Street Scheme (which later became Priory Green): they included, reported its author, densities of no more than 60-62 rooms per acre and a maximum six storey height, and the bureaucratic procedure that Tecton and Finsbury would have to go through was also noted (Anon (Tecton), 1937a and Anon (Tecton), 1937b). In this case, Lubetkin (Tecton) submitted uncomplainingly to these stipulations, as there was no “battle” to endure as there had been at Highpoint Two. Neither Lubetkin nor Tecton made a habit of pitching themselves against (or hollowing a space in) the regulatory environment except when, as at Highpoint Two, their intentions were met by an over-zealous understanding of the town planning legislation. If the planning left a sufficiently large affirmative space for the practice to achieve what they wanted (and it appeared that the LCC’s were sufficiently low key to allow this) then that aggressive posture was not taken. Indeed, in the case of Buscasco Street/Priory Green, Lubetkin (Tecton) submitted to their stipulations twice, as there was insufficient time to start the scheme before the outbreak of war, and by the time the Buscasco Street/Priory Green scheme was built, different density and height stipulations were in place (two-hundred persons per acre at no higher than eighty feet). Thus, when getting his projects built, Lubetkin (and Tecton) could deploy imaginatively aggressive tactics when it suited them, and at other times they employed diffidence. But even at his most aggressive, Lubetkin used the existing structures and norms that were obstructing him to create an affirmative space for his work to happen as he wanted it to.

Lubetkin’s ideas, architectonically enabled:

My findings so far suggest that Lubetkin’s aim was to generate through architectural means a material demonstration of how reality was more than what the senses made apparent: that it was, in fact, emergent from a coherent and universal substratum. What I cannot do is make steadfast claims as to how ambitious Lubetkin was regarding whether his buildings should simply demonstrate the more-than apparent scope of reality, or whether they should fill out that scope with detailed accounts of that substratum and how it worked. Put another way, I cannot be sure whether his buildings were gestural signposts pointing out

interesting things, or detailed and didactic maps of that causal field. The answer would partly depend on how capable Lubetkin thought people were to read or otherwise apprehend the suggestion or demonstration of such a substratum in his architecture, but my preceding analyses suggest that Lubetkin's understanding of people's capability varied. I cannot be categorical in this regard: I can *suggest* that Lubetkin's buildings were more gestural in their intent and support this by reiterating his faith in people's analytical abilities, an extra-architectural motive power that could perhaps have done the more complex work of filling out the scope for him in an autodidactic way. Having said that, I am also faced with his criticisms of ideology and fashionably thoughtless art whereby he observed the opposite process at work. This contradiction does not easily resolve, and that lack of resolution extends materially through Lubetkin's belief that;

“The pattern of truth is complexity but complexity is structurally incompatible with the pattern of our understanding so that truth has inevitably to be lopped into consciousness” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/18/1/lxxvii]: lxxvii)

This assertion seems to be at odds with his faith in people's linguistically generated analytical ability. But at the same time it tentatively supports the possibility that he saw his architectural demonstrations as gestural towards the bases of reality rather than explicating them. In this alternative iteration reality had to be converted into simpler forms before people became receptive to it, and art, Lubetkin argued, was one such medium of conversion.

“Art provides us with a simplified concept that illuminates the world for us by communicating emotional associations in a rhythmic or formal context which makes us receptive. [...] Composition of any work is determined by the logic of the theme to be communicated and not for the comfort of the age. And if eye is satisfied it is because a physical order in the order of perception corresponds to the rational order present in whatever is intelligible. (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/18/1/lxxxii-lxxxiii]: lxxxii-lxxxiii)

Such insights start to open out the means by which Lubetkin intended to effect his hopes in material form, with compositions that were simple and rhythmical in the way they demonstrated the complex reality of things. Lubetkin seemed to put this conversion

process close the heart of his work, despite its strangely counterproductive effect, forcing Lubetkin to belie the actual complexity of things, either because inhabitants/users were not astute enough to grasp such complexities and had to have them rendered into a powerful sort of simplicity, or perhaps because it was the task and modus operandi of architecture (and art) to provide bold, simple, and gestural compositions that pointed excitedly to certain conceptions and left the detailed analytical work to linguistically enabled inhabitants to work out. In either event – as I cannot with certainty declare one as being “true” – architecture, in Lubetkin’s terms, demonstrated not the full or original complexity of truth, but a “proxy” truth where “truth” was the theme rather than an explicit apprehension. In Lubetkin’s terms, perhaps architecture was about, or was related to truth, rather than being involved in its precise articulation.

Lubetkin, for all his political and politico-temporal complexities, had slightly more straightforward ideas about how a building would actually convey this important theoretical message. In his c.1964 Architectural Association speech, he suggested that architectonic forms could declare singular connections to a wider reality, i.e. that forms, plains, and voids could “assert, in geometrical form, a system of thought whereby the parts are relevant only in terms [*sic*] of a constantly changing whole.” (Lubetkin, c.1964 [Lub/19/4/2/iv]: 4) Confirmed in an earlier letter to Monica Felton¹¹⁷ (17th July 1947) Lubetkin said:

“[Architecture] is a thesis, a declaration, a statement of the social aims of the age. Its compelling geometrical regularities affirm man’s hope to understand, to explain and control his surroundings. By thus asserting itself against

¹¹⁷ Although Monica Felton’s identity is not specified in these documents, I would suggest that the recipient of Lub/19/1/9 is Monica Felton, chairman of the Stevenage Development Corporation until her dismissal on the 13th June 1951 for failing to attend meetings of the corporation, and failing to present herself to the Commons Public Accounts Committee on the 7th June. Felton’s story makes for an interesting contextual aside. Hansard’s entry for the 13th June reproduces an exchange between Anthony Eden (Conservative, Deputy Leader of the Opposition) and Hugh Dalton (Labour, the Minister for Local Government and Planning), who, in dismissing her from her post steadfastly insisted that “it is a matter of total indifference to me whether Mrs. Felton was absent in Hollywood or the Riviera or anywhere else. The point to me is that she was absent, and neglected her functions.” (HC Deb 5th series, 13th June 1951, vol. 488, col. 2308-2309) A blizzard of further questions arose on the subject of her location (North Korea) and her alleged sympathies (communist) on which Eden asked: “is the right hon. Gentleman sure that it is in order for a Government official to travel abroad on a visit to enemy territory, or a matter of that kind? Is not that the concern of the Government?” (Ibid, col. 2310). Her correspondence with Lubetkin gives us some idea as to the ideological firmament he placed (or found) himself in and reminds us of the sort of resistance (and indeed, risks) he might have faced for his political persuasion, although I believe was probably more socialist than outright communist. The potential degree of that resistance is hinted at in Green (1951) who notes that there was a discussion as to whether Felton’s presence in North Korea was, as Eden hinted, treasonous insofar as it might aid or comfort the Chinese (it wasn’t: war had not been officially declared and the Director of Public Prosecutions recommended against such a charge) (Green 1951, p.462). Felton actually received the Lenin Peace Prize in 1951 and published a number of books, at least two of which discuss her time in North Korea and the basis for her sympathies (*What I saw in Korea* and *North Korea: That’s Why I Went* (Felton 1951, 1953)). Lubetkin may not have been as extreme as Felton, but he was certainly evangelical in his political beliefs and may have experienced lesser, though spirited, resistance and distaste.

subjectivity and equivocation, it discloses a universal purposeful order and clarity in what often appears to be a mental wilderness.” (Lubetkin, 1947 [Lub/19/1/9/i]: 1)

Such declaration helped to reconnect people to the universal and, by making sense (or suggesting the possibility of making sense) of the idea and philosophy of a single and coherent universal logic, Lubetkin hoped to remind people of their faculties to both understand and control their “surroundings”. However, declaration contains two quite different potential mechanisms: to “assert” or “compel” suggests that reconnection is performed in some way and made to happen, whereas to “state” or “declare” suggests that reconnection is vocalised in a far more invitational and contingent way. In fact, for Lubetkin, these were essentially the same thing, or at least, different aspects bound closely together in the same process. As hopeful expressions of the human ability to explain, control, and universalise, “geometrical regularities” worked to remind or hint at the possible consistency of human experience, and to vocalise that option in architectural terms formed part of the momentum towards (eventually) making it happen. Lubetkin did not believe that his architecture, or any architecture, could actually achieve this theoretical threshold and directly “assert” these changes or “compel” people to change the way they thought. It was, however, in architecture’s somewhat more indirect power to “guarantee” that those universal possibilities were actually available and attainable, and he continued...

“To me this represents the CONTENT of architecture. But I must make it clear that content does not mean a story, a subject, nor the programme; it means a world outlook, a visual guarantee of the consistency of the whole human experience, a committed driving force on the side of enlightenment aiming, however indirectly, at the transformation of our present, make believe society...” (Lubetkin, 1947 [Lub/19/1/9/i]: 1)

As such, Lubetkin’s aim was to provide a nourishing material and aesthetic context of encouraging reminders that such transformations were possible and desirable.

Lubetkin was not always very specific about what he wanted his architecture to look like: but his self-confessed status of “idiot” – his tendency to criticise – seems to have produced a discernable nomenclature of forms, treatments, and ideas that he would have

assiduously avoided. In attending to these eliminations, it is possible to get a sense of what material-aesthetic tactics he would have used (allied, of course, to those rarer occasions when he did specify his approach). Perhaps the most interesting branch of his taste was the “Barocco”, his own choice of term in reference to *Rococo*, the latter stages of the baroque¹¹⁸ style in architecture.

It would be easy to say that Lubetkin simply disliked the “Barocco”, but this would belie his fascination with it, one that is (perhaps) tinted with a degree of admiration. In a journey-like manner, Lubetkin’s engagements with the Barocco eventually arrived at a critical kind of distaste having engaged his analytical fascination en-route. That distaste emanated from his observation that Barocco failed to engage with logic, consistency, or similar indications that might suggest universals at work. The material-aesthetic root of this failure was in the deliberately unresolved and un-resolvable juxtaposition of parts in the whole composition and, as Lubetkin explained, that those parts should struggle against each other in their juxtaposition was not the problem. The problem was that the juxtaposition was not resolved by either by victory, defeat or harmony between them: that would imply that each part had an identity as to what “side” it was on and what it represented, but Lubetkin could not see any such identity in the Barocco. As such, their struggle was indeterminate both in terms of temporality (i.e. that no conclusion was arrived at so the struggle was indeterminately ongoing) and in terms of the absence of a determining universal logos. The constituent parts of Barocco struggled for a supremacy they could never attain because the system of composition that Barocco employed was positioned short of such resolutions : The struggle, mutual agitation, and confused, swirling movement suggested, in Lubetkin’s own words:

“There cannot be any doubt that movement as it presents itself in Barocco buildings is first of all a dramatic struggle of parts, components for domination” [...] “But it is not a struggle of opposites, with the conflict resulting in a victory of one principle against all others (like before good-bad, right-wrong, light-darkness) It is much more a tension of common participation

¹¹⁸ The Baroque style in architecture is defined by an excess of florid ornamentation and, according to Ian Sutton, non-logical dynamism such that the classical norms of stable and clearly defined forms serving evident functions are subordinated “to the single-minded expression of energy and movement” so that, for instance, columns no longer pretend to support loads, but are designed to aggressively flourish (Sutton, 1999: 171). Sutton traces its inception to 1597 (Ibid: 172). Rococo, referring to the late Baroque, is simply Baroque in its most extreme form, with a very high density of intricate, florid ornamentation and colouring.

of parts in a general tendency, endeavour, without clear realisation of own role in the total. [...] The confusion is perpetual, the movement – a natural state in which participating forces gain self recognition, during and through struggle.” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/18/1/il-l]: il-l)

Importantly, that “recognition” was always contingent upon a “participating forces” continued reassertion of its position, not of its truthfulness to a larger body of logic and underlying truths. Barocco, both in its parts and in a systemic structure that kept those parts permanently (pointlessly) embattled, was anathema to Lubetkin’s hope for coherence and logic being expressed architecturally. I detect, in some aspects of his discussion of the Barocco, a grim kind of excitement at the drama and dynamism of it and, perhaps, a degree of annoyance that it should achieve as much despite a myopia whereby the drama and conflict were the end in themselves, rather than a means to an end:

Details confirm each other, imply each other increase potency. Tension + drama of contradiction ascends in equal intervals, heavy pediments into floating fragments, multiform complexity, mobility of planes. Elevations decompose and into eparalissiment of waves, reflection on agitated water. Organised folly. (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/lxxxvii]: lxxxvii)

The ramifications in terms of Lubetkin’s actual strategies or policies for a working building is that the buildings he designed had to demonstrate a unity throughout with each part and feature relating to its neighbouring part, rather than warring with its neighbours for the sake of the exciting effect that such architectural warring could produce. It had to suggest, in this unity, something finished, something certain and agreed upon. Lubetkin’s (slightly reticent) revolt against “Barocco” is a revolt against the fact that in expending all its energy against itself, it was, in his terms, purposefully impotent.

Lubetkin expressed substantial faith in geometry as a means to expressing his thesis as to what reality was. In expressing this faith he also rendered geometry as a fixed and factual point in his philosophy and he believed (or may have once believed) that “clean edged regularities of sharp, crisp geometrical shapes have universal meaning, independent of whims and fads, perceived by all, unequivocal interpretation.” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/cxxiii]: cxxiii) A statement such as this is, perhaps, slightly out of character for

Lubetkin given the evidence thus far presented of his critical faculties. My doubts notwithstanding, he seems to suggest that the physical manifestation of geometric shapes was emergent from the (abstract) logic of mathematics, almost like mathematics solidified, and moreover, those geometric shapes could only be seen as thusly emergent, their logical origins were more powerfully vocalised in their “crisp” forms than their sensuality: to witness them one could not escape the fact of their “relations” with an underlying logic, no matter how base and sensually myopic the encountering person was. As such:

“Relations satisfied by matem. equivalents, geometry – very embodiment of balance, harmony, causality , logic.

Not only seen but validated. BL” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/cxxiii]: cxxiii)

The very regularity of geometry meant that it could do – could only do – this, and it can be contrasted to the Barocco insofar that shape expressed geometrically with mathematical logic, resolved commonality and relationality with other parts as a result, contrasted to the perpetually warring forces of the Barrocco with a repetitious quality of forms. Lubetkin suggested, in a passage titled “art = order”:

“Repetitive events – a form of order, pattern, code.

Are what they are only because of the whole complex of which they are part” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/lvii]: lvii)

And that their character, quite unlike that the Barrocco, was one of “Modest self effacing deferential simplicity, restraint grandeur of design obtained by grouping” (Ibid: [lviii] lviii), a modesty that allowed for their resolved relationality. Nonetheless, geometric regularities were a risk. Mathematics, as Lubetkin noted “Look for proportions in the universe and cast their arguments into the form of proportions.” (Ibid: [xcii] xcii) They could, potentially, close reasoning tightly around “proportions” (i.e. quantitative expressions) without the all-important attempts at seeing beyond such expressions into the abstract and toward notions of significance. Understanding this risk, he cautioned:

Knowledge conditioned not only by senses, but by own interests and purpose.
The world is not simply there it is made by us by selecting and grouping in

relation to kind of activities we engage in.” (Lubetkin, undated [Lub/17/1/xxxiii]: xxxiii)

As such, bold crisp, and defined geometric shapes connoted their common logical origins, but in doing so seemed to contain the limited risk of closed understandings being invoked by their mathematical origins, not as an object shaped by an unerring logic, but as an object that was, from one side to the other, just an occupation of space. What Lubetkin actually hoped for was a geometry beyond geometry, for an occupation of space by forms so crisp and taut that they could only be the exercise of a productive logic.

Lubetkin’s rejection of functionalism:

In early 1959 the BBC organised a discussion of Le Corbusier, timed to coincide with the opening of a Le Corbusier exhibition, which was to be broadcast on the *Third Programme* and to which Lubetkin was invited (Cohn, 1959 [Lub/20/2/13]¹¹⁹). In and of itself this represents a particularly interesting reflection on Lubetkin’s own work, insofar as it eschewed Le Corbusier’s approach (or at least Lubetkin’s understanding thereof). But this account is made even more interesting through being annotated by way of a handwritten account on its production which Lubetkin wrote the day after his Le Corbusier piece was recorded. Dated “Tuesday, 2nd February 9.45pm”, it hints at the enormous amount of work and worry that he invested in it (and it’s possible that some the other documents I’ve quoted in this chapter received similarly exacting attention): “For the last 4 days”, he wrote:

“I have been working 18 hours per day in preparing my part of the script for Le Corbusier talk – During this time Mag was left alone to look after the farm, feed the animals, keep up the fire, transport children to and from school, and during the weekend when the children were home their quarrelled in whispers, buckering on tiptoes. I have also smoked 180 cigarettes so that my fingers on the left hand are the colour of iodine.” (Lubetkin, 1959 [Lub/20/2/8/i]: i)

Lubetkin further claimed, in a rare insight into family life at Upper Kilcote, that he would have refused the invitation save for “The howls of children’s snobbish delight” (Ibid: [ii] 2) and this document further reveals the key role of his wife Margaret in the production of his

¹¹⁹ Cohn’s letter was dated 16th January 1959 and the show was broadcast on the 1st February 1959.

work (and enabling him to do any at all by somehow looking after their three children, the farm, all the domestic tasks, and the typing for all four drafts of the speech).

“...I had to comb out the 3 previous drafts to see whether some words have not been missed whilst Mag was tiping [sic]” (Ibid [i] i)

Lubetkin further suggested that in an initial meeting with Cohn to discuss the talk, she had hoped for a staid, descriptive discussion rather than a philosophically critical enquiry (the contents of which I will turn to shortly). Said Lubetkin: “I refused rudely. And because I was rude, and she was definitely scenting Papa Marx, I thought that’s that.” (Ibid: [ii] 2) In fact, Cohn did agree to Lubetkin’s proposal and recalling a later meeting, Lubetkin suggested that:

“[D]uring our subsequent talk I told her approximately what I intent to say, hoping, so to speak (and not so to say) for a raspberry even at this stage. But I only received from Miss Cohn an old English tolerant smile, and I think right now I know why she smiled.” (Lubetkin, 1959 [Lub/20/2/8/ii]: 2)

What I detect here is an implied suggestion that Cohn retained Lubetkin either because her stance was sympathetic, or that she believed his inclusion would make for “good copy” and that Lubetkin was, in essence, being used to spice up the show. Cohn’s “old English tolerant smile” could be interpreted either way: Lubetkin didn’t specify. Notwithstanding this open-endedness, this document is important insofar as it emphasised Lubetkin’s domestic and family life, and his reliance on Margaret’s substantial labours both in domestic terms and in support of his (also substantial) professional labours. It also hints at the degree to which he eschewed or displaced his children, who appear in the particular context to be intrusive, annoying, and base in their delights. It is finally, a useful contextual insight into the contemporary reception of Lubetkin. I have already suggested that as an (apparently) ardent socialist, Lubetkin’s beliefs may have placed him at risk of being criminalised¹²⁰ (through his correspondence with Monica Felton, for example), but his beliefs and his expression of them seemed more likely to meet a belittling kind of English tolerance that found such expressions neither risky or distasteful, but apprehended them as

¹²⁰ See my previous footnote on the abortive criminalisation of Monica Felton.

quirky, silly, and entertaining. This was not the outright rejection that Felton had faced. Instead, it represented a disparaging kind of inclusivity.

The talk itself returns us to the architectural hopes for particular kinds of actions and messages, and much like his rejection of M.A.R.S, Lubetkin's criticisms of Le Corbusier help us to understand where he placed himself relative to architectural design, art in general, and the social function of both. Le Corbusier, he argued, had grown his approach "organically from the 19th Century positivist philosophy, as formulated by Auguste Comte" (Lubetkin, 1959a [Lub/20/2/4]: 1) and resultantly, Le Corbusier's universe was one of separate, self contained and self-sustaining phenomena which could be fully apprehended by the senses and, therefore, extended no further than what the senses could ascertain (Ibid: [ii] 2). What was missing in this account (and what Lubetkin missed, i.e. was sorry for the absence of) was the possibility of continuity and Hegelian notions of coherent realities (Ibid). In short, reality was broken up into fragments, adjacent but non-cohering, and each divorced from causal origins: this false autonomy reminded Lubetkin of previous generations of architecture.

"Each separate block becomes an expandable interchangeable entity to the point of parading in an arbitrarily borrowed historical dress. And it is the dress, to be sure, the observable surface appearance, the pure *form*, that defines architecture in a world, ex hypothesi, devoid of causality, concerned exclusively with the measurable aspects of phenomena, where knowledge can be acquired only through sensations.

Such is the heritage of the 19th century eclectic architecture, and I submit that if we now turn to Le Corbusier's work, we will find the very same features."

(Lubetkin, 1959a [Lub/20/2/4/ii]: 2)

The key aspect here is the displacement of hypotheses (i.e. causality) with measurement: Lubetkin conceded that Le Corbusier's architectural positivism had, in attending closely to the immediately (sensually apparent) factual nature of things, dispensed with *a priori* dogma (Ibid [iii-iv], 3-4), but lamented that it "also included a mood of aimlessness and scepticism that continued to sap vitality [...] the tidy analytical approach of the bureaucrats and trained specialists often amounts to nothing more than the vivisection of life ideas and the

fetishism of brute facts, in their finality, results in a static outlook, which is inimical to change.” (Ibid [iv], 4)

What is evident from Lubetkin’s criticism is the degree to which he recoiled from the arid functionalism that (he supposed) Le Corbusier practiced, and I would argue that one of the most important aspects of Lubetkin’s approach is an anti-functionalist ethos, starkly evident here, even if his opinion of Le Corbusier is perhaps slightly disingenuous¹²¹. This recoiling serves to confirm a particular grip on reality in his own approach, and a trajectory for architectural effectiveness therein, that was absent in Le Corbusier’s, whose approach effectively imposed a falsely functional epistemology on a much richer and variegated reality than he was willing to admit to (even if, Lubetkin argued, the “sober positivist is inevitably driven in spite of himself to conclude that beyond the dead-end of ascertainable facts there must be something unaccountable, irrational.” (Lubetkin, 1959a [Lub/20/2/4/iv]: 4)). Lubetkin was, in effect, claiming to work in, and produce working architecture in, a real world of real (and changeable) inhabitations; not in a rarefied, functional, disconnected existence which appealed to a singular aspect of reality and real life. Architecture, if it was to work, had to firmly grip the nature of the reality in which it was expected to work. This is not to say that Lubetkin rejected functionalism: rather, he incorporated and subdued it into a much larger schema, asking: “How are we to account for the richness and variety of our experience, our emotional life?” (Ibid) and concluding that analytical methods...

“lead in the last resort to an accumulation of frozen, lifeless, abstract forms. It ultimately surrenders the rich and colourful material reality to the phantom of efficiency, and thus accepts technique as master instead of servant.”

(Lubetkin, 1959a [Lub/20/2/4/v]: 4a)

As such, Lubetkin’s rejection of Le Corbusier marked his own rejection of the disconnection (with causal origins) and aridity (of richness and emotions) he detected in Le Corbusier’s approach.

¹²¹ In his Corbusier speech, Lubetkin noted that Corbusier eventually rejected his purely functionalist approach in favour of an artistic articulation in his later work.

Lubetkin's architectural ambitions, in summary, were aimed away from the fragmentary and disjointed extremes of positivism that he found in Le Corbusier's work, but without taking up occupancy in a different extreme of functional pragmatism. Or, put another way, he no more wished to indulge in the fetishisation of things in their singular sensuality than he wished to fetishise their utility. Reality, as he understood it, allowed for neither to stand apart: things could not stand ontologically separate from universal logos and mean only what our subjectivities conjured about them but they couldn't shrug off the subjective and default to mere function either, a betweenness that he expressed a number of times in his notebooks:

“Separation of UTILITY and EMOTION leads to a logical conundrum:
Since all our motives, purposes are generated ^{rooted in} by emotion –
UTILITY without emotion – is
UTILITY without PURPOSE!
BL” (Lubetkin, c.1969-1975 [Lub/18/2/cxv]: cxv)

In short, Lubetkin hoped for a more-than functional and more-than immediate architecture because reality, as he understood it, was laden with emotions and perceptions that were not amenable to function, and laden with connections and reaction from a consistent and causal basis that were not amenable to quasi-positivist isolation. What follows is my account of how he hoped to vocalise this spectrum in his work.

Lubetkin's human architecture:

Of course, the functional and emotional are by no means separate, and in this sense it is interesting to compare, as Lubetkin did, Highpoint One with Highpoint Two. Highpoint One was one of Tecton's early commissions, a block of flats completed in 1935, which was joined in 1938 by a second block, Highpoint Two, adjacent to the first. This offers a unique opportunity to view two very different formulations of Lubetkin's work constructed within only three years of each other. But my interest is rather more focused on the article that he wrote for the *Architectural Review* in 1938 in which Lubetkin himself narrated both the new block and compared it to Highpoint One (Lubetkin, 1938). Highpoint One, he explained was a far more limited compositional offering because there was limited opportunity to be

compositional: the structural technology of the time dominated its finished form, as he explained:

“The architectural character of the first Highpoint was essentially diagrammatic. In form its exterior was a vertical projection of its plan and the elements that constituted its exterior, though carefully proportioned and related to each other, remained somewhat impersonal in character” (Lubetkin, 1938: 166)

Improvements in constructional technique and style, however, allowed a different treatment at Highpoint Two and the buildings and projects that followed - the functional and structural element were substantially less assertive and the space they left vacant could then be used as a compositional space, allowing Lubetkin to move “towards a maturer and much more imaginative architectural language [that was] an important move forward from functionalism” (Ibid). Specifically, Highpoint two was, Lubetkin contended, more “human” by means of “accentuation” and “variety”, thus:

“In the new block [...] the on the other hand, the conscious accentuation of certain forms and the variety of the materials used give a much more human character to a facade that reads as a more deliberate architectural composition.” (Lubetkin, 1938: 166)

At Highpoint Two, sophisticated structural functionality enabled Lubetkin to move away from functionalism and include compositional elements in the design that hadn't been feasible at Highpoint One. Moreover, composition allowed for a more “human” result and one possible means of such a result seems to be, as I have already suggested, a sense of being “deliberate”: that the start of realising an intention through architecture is contained in the diffuse sense that such an arrangement of features, treatments and spaces evinces the exercise of choice, that such an effect has been assembled not by accident, whim, or as a transcript of functional elements, but to some kind of plan. “Deliberate” is not so much doing something, as looking purposeful or acting purposefully so that those experiencing a designed object, though they might not “get” it, do at least “get” the sense that it must be trying to do something, or that such a composition is, at least, not likely to be attempting to do nothing. I get the sense, in Lubetkin's work, that the start of articulating his thesis was

in such preparatory compositional acts of not doing nothing, a pre-articulation of presence, that prepared the ground for more particular articulations.

A pre-articulation of not doing nothing at Highpoint Two was followed by what seems to be scalar attempts at being “more human”, wherein Lubetkin described Highpoint One as “somewhat impersonal”. I use the term “scalar” to summarise my understanding of what Lubetkin did to achieve this at Highpoint Two, because his compositional treatment was more variegated, in a way that Highpoint One could not have been. This variegation and “accentuation” implies that, in compositional terms, a large scale, either in the monolithic sense of a large blank volume/surface, or the monotonous sense, of the same thing repeated along the same axis, did not work for people. This further implies that variegation and tessellation should characterise architectural compositions rather than blankness and monotony. My argument in terms of scale is not, therefore that the size of the building was important for Lubetkin but that in order to correspond with user/inhabitants Lubetkin believed that the composition of the building needed to be richer than unmediated largeness could provide containing larger qualities of smaller parts and varying treatments and features that were interestingly arranged. This sounds like, and probably is, an act of harmonization between the building (in terms of composition) and the capacities he presumed potential user/inhabitants had in terms of how apt they were to notice things that were either too monolithic or monotonous. Perhaps this makes sense relative to Lubetkin’s understanding of the human capacity to be interested and enquiring insofar that the monolithic and monotonous did not contain enough variety and contrast (and quite possibly in purely qualitative terms, enough content) to narrate anything of interest; that one literally couldn’t tell anything from it, that there wasn’t enough “data”.

This argument hints at an aesthetic kind of lexicon and, indeed, Lubetkin’s discussion of composition tends to refer to the elevational as something visible and observed (see quotes, below). His compositional ideas are much less evident in the interiors he designed, wherein ergonomics are more important. However, I wish to trace the key aspects of Lubetkin’s compositional approach to two later documents, both concerning Spa Green¹²² (a housing estate of 129 flats), and comprising a published account of the new estate broadly similar in purpose and tone to Lubetkin’s earlier account of Highpoint Two (though lacking the

¹²² Referred to as the “Roseberry Avenue scheme” in some earlier documents, this public housing scheme was completed in 1950 (although the commission and design precede the Second World War) in what is now Islington, London, comprising three large blocks of flats. See Allan (2002: 108-111) for further details and illustrations.

belligerent preamble) and a longer, unpublished account of Spa Green, circa 1944 (Lub/1/24/1), which may have served as the source document for the published account. Both reiterate Lubetkin's belief that functionalism isn't enough, and moreover, pares the user/inhabitant back to their biological basics in providing, and believing that people need no more than bodily requirements, thus:

“In the Roseberry Avenue scheme the attempt is made to combine uncompromising clarity of plan, articulation of volumes, and causal interrelation between structure and design, but without, however, allowing these to become the whole aim” (Lubetkin, 1951: 140)

He added that developments in constructional techniques allowed for...

“...freeing the elevations from their structural burden, to introduce a richer, three dimensional treatment, combined with the use of traditional materials and colours [...]. The solid and void of balustrades alternates from floor to floor, to give an overall rhythm, which allows the elevation to be perceived as a closed composition rather than a series of strips” (Ibid)

This outlines a rectification in which Lubetkin was determined not to “dismiss, as earlier modern architecture has, the principles of composition or the emotional impact of the visual” (Ibid: 139-40). In this sense, composition, “a richer, three dimensional treatment, combined with the use of different materials and colours” (Ibid: 140), was specifically geared for emotional “impact” through a similar sanding treatment as I argue for at Highpoint Two, and was similarly attributed to “freeing the elevations of their structural burden” (Ibid). In addition, Lubetkin mentions the importance of relieving monotony, especially given how ubiquitous he believed it to be in flat design more generally, not that any block of flats should pretend to be anything different...

“In designing the individual blocks an attempt was made to find a form of expression entirely characteristic of blocks of flats and not reminiscent of small domestic dwellings. At the same time it was thought desirable to try and break away from the rather monotonous character of so many blocks of flats where every floor is treated similarly with a resulting monotony which is unrivalled by

any concession towards the total effect of the building.” (Lubetkin, c.1944
[Lub/1/24/1/iii]: iii)

Acts of composition were thus constrained between the avoidance of fictions on one hand, and the importance of avoiding outright functionalism on the other, to create an “effect” which was, I argue, supposed to be plausibly “effective” (Ibid. iv). I argue that scale is at the core of that plausibility: there is a sense here that Spa Green (and Highpoint Two) needed to be feature-laden in compositional terms, a design of non-monolithic morphology where different forms variously tessellated and circuitously weave their way around the elevations, though not so variously and circuitously that they ceased to look like flats. The human scale in Lubetkin’s elevational compositions had a certain arranged density that avoided the largeness of blankness or monotonous repetition, or put another way, scalar effects of homogeneity. Considering Lubetkin’s explanations here, I would suggest that his alternative scalar effects of variegation are plausible compositions of a kind of readability, a lexicon that excludes planar voids of mass homogeneity simply because they don’t have enough content to be “read” or considered “readable”. On the understanding that there is nothing to read on a blank page (or nothing more to read than the first word if all the others are the same), the plausibility in this approach was at best partly quantitative, of there being enough “stuff” to see, arranged such that it didn’t simply merge into that adjacent to it.

This was more than just a quantitative composition of noticability, however: it was personal and human through being personable (and humanising) as another published narration by Lubetkin suggests. “Bungalows at Whipsnade” is the earliest of the three published narratives I’ve referred to here, and concerns Lubetkin’s own “dacha” built on a sloping site near, and owned by, Whipsnade Zoo.¹²³ It is unusual insofar as it lists not specifications, but anti-specifications, (that which it hopes not to be) and it is interesting insofar as it was Lubetkin’s not only to design, but to also inhabit, and thus potentially tells us what he wanted and what he believed was plausible of architecture as a person it would happen to in terms of inhabitation. The first thing to note is that his Whipsnade dacha was not intended to be diminutive or retiring: it was definitely supposed to do something – and not a reiterative kind of something that responded to, reflected, or mimicked immediate or

¹²³ Lubetkin designed enclosures for zoos at Whipsnade, London, and Dudley, creating a whole complex from scratch at the latter.

contemporary conditions and contexts. On this matter of sovereignty and the elimination of anything that might ventriloquise his dacha (and by “ventriloquise” I mean the sense that material, professional, or ideological conditions might cause or explain its forms and features) Lubetkin was adamant; the bungalow did not form a “link in any chain of specifically Nordic or English tradition” (Anon and Lubetkin, 1937: 60) nor was it “dictated by any trigonometry of the lines of kitchen circulation, or by angry attempts to trap sunlight into some dust-proof corner, or by the standard length of reinforcing rods”(Ibid), and there was emphatically no suggestion “that its design grew “naturally” from the given conditions like an ordinary pumpkin, Victoria Regina, or deep sea fish” (Ibid). In fact, Lubetkin argued:

“It is not a “Modern House”, a “Shelter,” which, according to professors, should be self obliterating, unselfconscious, and insignificant in its hygienic anonymity; a thing of which one can only say that it is made of reinforced concrete.” (Ibid)

These multiple dismissals forcefully hollowed out a space for the wilful character of this bungalow, insulating it from circumstances like tradition (English or otherwise), trigonometric norms, of functionality or the commonly available lengths of rebar), and rejecting the idea that the will of its design should be transacted to what prevailing conditions would dictate. It was, in the first place (and in a foundational kind of way), wilful insofar as it hoped to displace that which might impinge on its will, jealously guarding its potentials through anti-specifications which to my mind, seem to remove the specifically impersonal, saving these potentials for something altogether more human. Indeed, Lubetkin’s anti-specifications seem to emphasise (by proxy) key reminders on a theme of personal, homely acts of dwelling and, I would suggest, a personable style of communication. The impression I get from Lubetkin’s anti-specifications is that by claiming a will of its own and jealously containing its own motivations, the building could also claim to have a personality, directed away from “shelter” and towards an amicable kind of dwelling that contained the delightful, interesting, and enjoyable. Lubetkin suggested as such:

“On the contrary, the designer admits that there is, on the walls of the W.C., a collection of cold-blooded tropical butterflies; while the bedspreads have little

bells sewn onto them to brighten the dreams of the occupants.” (Lubetkin, 1937: 60)

To me, this sounds like a personal and personality-laden articulation of architecture which effects plausibility in a conversant way. I believe that the Whipsnade anti-specifications suggest that the bungalow was intentionally less like a machine and much more like a person. An anthropomorphic building, which acted as it did because it had attitudes certain ideas, certain elements that were not strictly necessary but, being as such, represented wilful exercises of choice and preference. This anthropomorphic possibility has particular ramifications for the plausibility of the building and, I believe, Lubetkin’s buildings on the whole. Like his understanding of people, his buildings were more than simply functional, and like people, they expressed that exceeding through the expression of their choice. If, as an object, the building could have some kind of personal attribute, then inhabitants might engage with it as they would with another person, treating it as such and making the sort of judgements about what it was “like” rather than it being just a building, a mere collection of rooms. I contend that the wilfulness of Lubetkin’s architecture was directed at inhabitants by a cache of material/aesthetic forms that, together, gave the building personable attributes such that people would engage with them far more intimately and in detail than if they were just objects.



Fig. 5.1: Highpoint 1 (photograph by Steve Cadman)



Fig. 5.2: Highpoint Two (photograph by Steve Cadman).



Fig. 5.3: Genesta Road



Fig. 5.4: Priory Green Estate



Fig. 5.5: Dudley Zoo, Elephant House (parapet).



Fig. 5.6: Dudley Zoo, Aviary.



Fig. 5.7: Dudley Zoo, former tiger enclosure.

Entraining:

In chapter two I outlined an interview methodology which aimed to entrain the more analytical and critical thoughts of inhabitants by inviting them to question me, my presence, and my approach. I open this half of the chapter with an example of what such a methodology can produce, and the suggestion that it has made insights available to me that might not otherwise have been forthcoming.

Richard: I mean, you haven't really asked about living here

Paul: Go on then¹²⁴, I mean, what-, what is it like to live here?

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

The preceding excerpt from my interview with Richard can be equally thought of as Richard's interview with me. The methodologically invitational interview I outlined in chapter two did not always result in interviewees challenging me and deflecting the directions and ideas I proposed, but none of my interviews were quite so deflected as when Richard bluntly suggested that I hadn't "really" tapped into the nature of his experiences as an inhabitant. It is worth beginning the second half of this chapter here, not only as a brief reminder of the methodology I hoped to weave through my interviews, but also because it points to how different my expectations and presuppositions were as compared to the accounts my interviews provided me with, and in Richard's case, felt able to provide for me within the framework of the interview. As he became the interviewer, he took the opportunity to unwind these expectations and suppositions as he understood them, and continuing our conversation, he asked me:

Richard: Ok, do you think living in this building is different from living in a...
er... living in an ordinary building?

¹²⁴ This reads in a way far more belligerent than it actually sounded.

Paul: Yes. I definitely do. But the thing is, without doing an involved ethnography, and actually coming and living in one, I don't know that I'd be able to imagine what it'd be like. I know that it can't be the same.

Richard: Mm.

In this instance I attempted my own deflection by amplifying a claim that I could not be reasonably expected to have an opinion that mattered because I was not in a position to matter, or have the building matter to me (an ethnography). I therefore offered my opinion – “yes” – and an immediate disclaimer that defaced it, a defensive retraction into a context defined by my lack of imagination and which, in the following excerpt, I followed with a positive sort of endorsement, but one couched in uncertainty and ambiguity. Of course, not knowing could equally connote too much imagination rather than its absence, and it was this kind of conclusion that Richard vectored the discussion towards, challenging what he perceived to be my over-imaginative hope to find a building full of forcibly or surreptitiously articulated impacts on inhabitants like him, through buildings such as his house, and from architects such as Lubetkin:

Paul: [It's] the reason why I fall back on interviews I think, it's because I can't make that imaginative leap. I have a vague impression that I'd like it. I-, I don't think about this, but I think I like all of the buildings I've looked at so far, er, from all three of my architects. But... it's difficult for me-

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Despite me, but in a methodological way which I hope was also because of me, Richard articulated an aspect of his experience which demonstrates a degree of analysis in his understanding of the building which, as I argue below, may also be evident in the experiences of a number of my other Lubetkin interviewees. I would suggest that the above excerpt is not an experience of ineffective or empty architecture that fails in its pitch, intensity, or the adequacy of its devices to force an effect, but an experience and understanding of Lubetkin's work as the deliberate articulation of forms and features to deliberately create agentic space for inhabitants like him. Richard does not believe that Lubetkin was seeking to impose either narratives or parameters into the inhabitations that can happen in his house. His house, in Richard's own terms, works much more like a [Redacted interview material] on which inhabitants can follow inhabitations of their own devising, and unlike the impositions that Victorian properties are understood to foist on inhabitants, Richard does not believe that Lubetkin intended to make him think or behave in any particular way. What strikes me is how deliberate the absence of deliberateness is understood to be here. It does not entail that Lubetkin's architecture is one of voids and blankness: it is, rather, the deliberate creation and of an affirmative environment by using certain architectural tactics, forms, and combinations of features which are effective at *deposing* that which would interfere rather than imposing on Richard's freedom to inhabit the building and "pose" his life into it:

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

My understanding of Richard's experience is one where his choice and creativity to make his own "narrative" or "posing" happen is not forced to work against the grain of the architect's preferences – his inhabitation is not despite the architecture. And by the same token, his inhabitation is not because of it either: the features of his life and the nature of his thinking are not induced by deliberate architectural features. It is for this reason that I start this half of the chapter with Richard's account. I believe that he expresses, in a way perhaps more explicit than my other interviewees, a theme that is nonetheless present in all the accounts that my Lubetkin interviews provided me with. This theme is the apparently paradoxical benevolence of a building whose ability is directed at having no ability for itself and, indeed, getting rid of the ability that it does or could have by purposefully transacting it to the inhabitant. This analytic, central to Richard's inhabitation of his house and present in the inhabitations I discuss below, has substantial ramifications as to what a building, and Lubetkin's buildings in particular, are capable, incapable, and capably non-capable of doing (or paradoxically doing).

Keith¹²⁵ does not recognise the potential for his house to communicate, far less impose, an ideology either by way of a statement of intentions, or the actual attempt to carry out those intentions on him. I would suggest that the relatively inert nature of his house stems from a style of inhabitation that includes particular analyses and understandings which likely reflect the fact that, at the time of the interview, Keith worked as a semi-retired architect. His analysis is interesting in that it contains an anti-analysis, outlining the sort of analysis that is "a danger", and I suggest the following quote demonstrates that this danger stems from the possibility of fictionalising a building through over-imaginative acts – including research acts – of reading-into, which connects the building to a level and intensity of ideas that belies the normal, sensible, and perhaps commercial processes of producing a building. In Keith's account, I get a sense that to see the building as being able to contain and potentially effect ideals is, in itself, a kind of ideal which reforms the building so that it can be found to be as it was hoped to be, but one which is unrealistic and potentially unfair. And perhaps Keith recognised that it was an ideal that I may have brought with me to the interview.

¹²⁵ [Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]
[Redacted interview material]

Once this danger is, if not ameliorated, then at least recognised, Keith felt more able to venture what Lubetkin might have been trying to do from a more normal context (of needing work and being given a brief), one of which was to [Redacted interview material] and perhaps – with a firm emphasis on *perhaps* – “re-examine” what a house could be by disregarding what houses were at the time. Keith’s experience puts his house into a sensible context, which rules out the heights of idealism (to include the potential for my idealism) but still recognises the potential for the building to give away certain intentions such as these wilful acts of originality. But it’s important to understand that such acts, and the way his house is understood as the outcome of them, are only plausible from this sensible context which precludes, additional to overt idealism, the idea that they can be deployed to reconstruct and alter his experiences and thoughts, and Keith reiterates that [Redacted interview material] - - - - -
- - - - -]. Furthermore, and in much the same way that Keith may have countered the ideals I may have brought with me to his house, reading about or being told about Lubetkin and his idealism does not transform the building through appending biographical or theoretical narrations to the forms, or stretch his idea of the building’s plausibility. In this sense, his experience of the building seems to coalesce around its physical form, rather than ceding credence to what external narratives can tell him: they are still too much of a reading-into, and I would further argue, a potentially unfair removal of the building from a context of functional normalcy to a position where the building is asked to articulate things that are not plausible or reasonable to expect of it.

Paul: Your knowledge about Lubetkin, has that changed the way you think about and experience your house? Or do you still-

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In deflecting my questions about the house, Keith expressed a particular analytic of plausibility based around scale, and how the scale of the building, understood here in terms of size and status, generates opportunities to route discourses into it. The suggestion in this instance, which is also a formation of plausibility, centres on the issuing of a brief as a formative act before the architecture happens, one that opens out the space and the opportunity to create the sort of content that might plausibly have effects or make statements. In Keith's experience, this plausibility in itself is of a macro-scale insofar that it may be the plausibility in his experience that defines all the other plausibilities for his inhabitation thereafter, or lack thereof. Put simply, his house does not communicate or perform any kind of ideology because it was never in a position to: it was conceived from the outset on a scale too modest and formed too tightly around delivering the necessary provisions to enjoy the necessary leeway that he thinks such intentions require. The brief does not adequately resource such possibilities, as he explains:

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

This is not a case of Keith imposing a silence on his house through an articulation of annoyance or affront at sharing the house with latent intentionalities. It is, rather, the plausible belief that for a building to make statements and route discourses and ideologies through it, an adequate brief is required which will resource such efforts. As such, there are all sorts of buildings that can plausibly have such properties (like Finsbury Health Centre and Highpoint) but to no small extent the capacity for those properties are pre-given by the sort of brief which doesn't exist for Keith's house, and which therefore does not make that plausibility available.

Benjamin was also inclined to contend what may have been a hope in the back of my mind to locate a vector along which his house could reiterate (and install in his experiences) the particular hopes that Lubetkin had. Benjamin's contending was rather less implied than Keith's contending had been in understanding my approach to be errant. To no small extent this was because I mangled the delivery of an (admittedly challenging) question on the status of the building and what potentials he thought it could contain¹²⁶. I had, embarrassingly, used the word "alive" and the suggestion of "having a heartbeat" in an attempt to describe what a building might achieve, or fail to achieve, in terms of character or attitude (I don't exactly know why I didn't use "character" and "attitude", as they were the terms I specified on my cue cards). Nonetheless, this was a useful mangling: it allowed me some insight into a critical and enquiring corner of Benjamin's inhabitation that might not have otherwise been elucidated to the same degree. In hindsight, I am glad that my performance in the interview was questionable in this way, and glad that Benjamin felt comfortable enough to find it questionable. Certainly, he contended, his house was not alive, but formed from undoubtedly inert materials. But by the same token, that inert constitution was still able to hold ideas and ideals in some sense than Benjamin describes as "indivisible", and which the building definitely expressed through the nature of how its forms were arranged into a geometric kind of aesthetic. Moreover, this expressing became an awareness in the excerpt below – "you become generally aware" – and this transition from expression to awareness suggests the potential for something to have been transacted,

¹²⁶ This was part of a series of questions that sought to invite discussion, or dismissal, of whether the building could contain more than the sum of its component parts, and if/how those parts could be actant in a way that exceeded the materials from which they were formed.

or perhaps even imposed into the experiences and awareness of the inhabitant from the building without the inhabitant's necessary co-operation, i.e. the possibility that "awareness" is the inhabited outcome of an architectural practice where expression has been successfully given exceptional and inexorable momentum.

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

Of course, if Richard, Keith, and Benjamin are correct in their explicit or (possibly) implicit recognition of a certain ideal that I impress on them through my approach, then I could be making too much of this transition from expression to awareness. In fact, the sheer number of times that the un-alive reality of the building is reiterated in this excerpt leads me to suggest that the ideas and ideals incorporated in Benjamin's house remain there in evidential, rather than enacted terms. The expressions that he discusses here may be understood by him as traces or palimpsests that can be made to evidence Lubetkin's likely intentions, reconstructed by Benjamin as a function of a particularly analytical inhabitation which, I would suggest, is equal to but very differently directed to that which Keith maintains. By reiterating their un-alive reality, Benjamin may disallow them an animate status in and of themselves, until his particular and enquiring inhabitation has activated them as evidence and granted them that status. The building is thus a repository, not a recurrence, a recording of certain acts and intentions without its own playback mechanism.

In saying as much, I am very obviously veering from one extreme of awareness and intentions forcefully actualised in buildings, to another of expressions where intentions are actualised from buildings by particular acts of inhabitation. Whilst “becoming genuinely aware” sounds like it might be the former scenario, I believe that it actually discloses an investigative aspect of Benjamin’s inhabitation which, in its analytical posture, produces plausibility.

These investigative aspects have emerged in other interviews where different plausibilities are produced, and in Richard’s case, one such instance is understood to be present in the building, but not *for* him. Responding to a question I asked on what he thought Lubetkin’s motivations might have been (and how he might know about them) Richard suggested that Lubetkin’s motivations were not, in fact, simply routed towards the inhabitation of his house and providing him with a narrative to absorb (as I’ve established above). In fact, Richard’s house has the potential to be motivated otherwise, rather than automatically oriented towards him as an inhabitant. Lubetkin’s motivation could just as easily be routed away from the house and, ultimately, towards Lubetkin himself, the impression he wished to make, and (potentially) the clients he hoped to attract. Richard’s house is thus understood akin to an announcement or, perhaps, an advertisement:

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In a number of cases, the appeal and plausibility of the buildings which my interviewees occupy is attained by the originality of the building. Three of my interviewees made statements much like that which I quote from Richard here insofar that [Redacted interview material] -----] and this annoyance is part of a larger process whereby the originality of the building, i.e. as it existed on completion, is more important and more meritorious than those changes and alterations

that have been applied thereafter. In one sense, the reassertion of originality represents a reconnection to the professionalism which is credited to its original design, and the idea that Lubetkin knew best how the building should work. I would argue that this understanding (and experience) has motivated Benjamin to alter his house back to how it used to be. I should make it clear that this restoration is not motivated by nostalgia or a taste for the modernist past (although Benjamin does have a taste for modernism). His motivation, suggested in the following excerpt, restores Lubetkin's professionalism to his experience and makes the useful and pleasant offerings that Lubetkin wove into the building available for him to benefit from again.

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

Benjamin's restoration seems to be underpinned by reasoning in that it isn't motivated by a particular respect for Lubetkin (or such romantic notions): it is motivated to restore Lubetkin's respect for them and the forms and features that, in their original state, articulated this respect. This makes logical sense to Benjamin insofar that these are beneficial features that render useful and pleasing service, and it is pointless to remove that which is beneficial and logical to reinstate it. Of course, the restoration itself is not without recognition of Lubetkin's ability, even if it is not motivated as an act of respect for him. His professionalism is recognised through being reconnected to in this way, and where previous residents have left the building alone, that professional articulation of domestic space is evident in terms of the service it renders: [Redacted interview material - - - - -

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The logic of this restoration also has a potentially powerful temporal element: it articulates a co-presence that diminishes the intervening time between the building's originality and Benjamin's later inhabitation. This diminishing works in two ways, first: it changes how much those prior inhabitations mattered (that their importance is diminished) and second: it compresses the time elapsed since the completion of the building such that the building is engaged with as though it is of present origin, not a past object restored to emphasise its past origins. Previous inhabitations accost this co-presence because they imposed themselves on Lubetkin's original ideas; they not only obstruct them and their efficacy, but they obstruct that co-presence of time by distancing the building from its original form. In other words, as Benjamin effaces the inhabited history of the building, he restores some sense of its originality not so much as a restored historical object, i.e. something of the past in the present, but as a repaired contemporary object that never ought to have been absent from the present:

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

The original features maintain a beneficence, pleasantness, and usefulness which are still effective, and seem to grant Benjamin's house, and Lubetkin's forms therein, a recursive kind of plausibility such that it achieves a long-lived kind of present-ness. In this case, the altered kitchen window and the new hatch removed an existing feature or obstructed existing features whose beneficence was more substantial and meaningful in their original format and hence, despite being older than the new features, they could be said to be more present if presence is understood in terms of the plausibility of functioning relevance. If, conversely, those new features had been improvements, this account may have been quite different: had Lubetkin's original features, been deficient in meeting Benjamin's needs or

otherwise failed to be beneficial, the plausibility for the contemporary understanding that Benjamin seems to maintain in his inhabitation might not seem logically possible any longer.

The nature of Benjamin's plausible temporality is contained in the sense that the forms and features that he has restored at his house are not of the past, but of the present, and hence plausibly working in the present. George's account of temporality forms an interesting complication of this dynamic through a plausible kind of interloping. Part of the attraction of Highpoint for George is its spaciousness: spaciousness was high on his list when he was looking for a new flat and he appreciates it in and of itself. But there is a temporal edge to his appreciation and a recognition that such spaciousness may not be valid in a contemporary context. In fact, as he explains, spaciousness is also a potential waste of space:

[Redacted interview material]

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[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

[Redacted interview material]

In contemporary terms, spaciousness is implausible: spaciousness is where something else could go that isn't just spaciousness and, if left as much is understood as wastefulness. And yet, the actual existence and experience of spaciousness at Highpoint is entirely valid in George's experience and the way it fulfils his wishes of the building. The idea that spaciousness is assumed to be not "modern" and of the past does not render its beneficence any less potent in the present, despite the idea that it would no longer be practiced in the present and is unacceptable to present norms and the way present approaches would work. Spaciousness at Highpoint, is producing an effect of the past, and George clearly understands as much. Unlike Benjamin, the fact that this past effect is presently producing benefit does not cause it to be understood as being of the present.

Highpoint's spaciousness is interloping from the past, but in George's experience it is doing so in a successful way such that being of the past does not render it implausible.

The responses I received from my Lubetkin interviewees in response to my questions were some of the most striking in this study, not least because of the way they were directed against me in the acts of "friendly unfreidliness" I described in chapter two, refuting my approach to the interview in doing so. The possibility that such a methodology offers for interviewees to be epistemically entrained into the interview process is one that I consider promising, and which has produced insights that would not have otherwise been available to me. One result of this is an explicit statement from an interviewee on the danger of over-interpretation, backed up by an analytic of when interpretation is plausible of a building (in this case, scalar in nature). A further result is the complicating of the temporal nature of astute inhabitation, one in which architectural features can be made plausible either by being considered present (i.e. old but still contemporary), or successfully interloping in the current despite being of the past. Similarly, acts of restoration can be understood as restoring something to the present that should have never been absent, and that more recent accretions have less contemporary validity than original features.

Perhaps the most interesting result of my discussions with those who inhabit Lubetkin's buildings, though one evident in my interviews with Holden and Voysey interviewees too, has been the apparently paradoxical benevolence of a building which uses its opportunity to produce effects to create a space for inhabitation purposefully freed of effects, except that of a growth medium for inhabitants. A not insubstantial portion of the plausibility of a building may, therefore, be contained in its self-effacing nature by opening spaces in which inhabitants proceed unimpeded.

6.

Conclusion:

My intention, in this final chapter, is to make an argument for the idea of *plausibility* in architectural geography, i.e. that which a building is considered able to do (and by “considered” I mean habitually analytical and considered acts of enquiry). In asking “how does architecture happen within peoples’ experiences” and reviewing how the current architectural geography literature answers that question (see chapter one), I have identified *plausibility* as an area which, I argue, needs to be taken into account when geographers study architecture. This is especially important relative to the diffuse and re-happening way that architectural geography approaches architecture, diffuse insofar as it is produced over multiple sites, and re-happening insofar as it is in continual change through being used and inhabited. However, the small body of literature that I reviewed in chapter one leaves me with what I can best describe as a “kinetic” impression. By “kinetic” I mean that effectiveness of architecture seems to be understood as attempts to nudge, push, and steer, but rarely to converse, entreat, or argue. Buildings are not thought of as engaging with people in an actively cerebral way. What buildings do is make impressions – literally, to bear down and make an impression, a kinetic kind of effect which is manifested as a sense or a feeling, without needing to be drawn out by analysis and interpretation. The possible exception may be Jacobs (2006), but whilst her *building events* are created from, and seemingly interpreted from, bases of analysis and consideration, the events themselves are proximate to the buildings. For example, in the case of the Ronan Point collapse (Jacobs, 2006: 17-20), the blunt trauma was the work of the building, whilst an enquiring narration was provided by the building event. Ronan Point, in this instance, has turned out much like the prayer room at Liverpool John Lennon Airport, or Nant-y-Cwm Steiner School (Kraftl and Adey, 2008). The prayer room, for instance, is analysed as if it is supposed to be inhabited without consideration, so that features such as books and lighting bear upon the inhabitant or user rather than engaging with them. The effects they describe (below) are “senses” – they do not need to be helped into existence by prayer room users through any kind of analytical engagement whereby they have to query and consider what these materials and forms are doing (nor is such an engagement expected from the prayer room’s design):

“[T]he organisation and choreography of materials and bodies creates a stubbornness or persistence of affect, to invoke simultaneously repetitive (a school curriculum, or one reader after another in the Prayer room) and iterative senses of space, and dwelling, simultaneously to create senses of stability and safety [*sic*].” (Kraftl and Adey, 2008: 227)

My concern throughout this thesis is that accounts such as these do not engage with the full scope of how a building happens in terms of the experiences that can be had there, and the experiences the architect intended it to provide. But I wish to point out, before proceeding further, that the arguments I make are additional to those that already exist in the architectural geography literature, not pitched against them. In outlining the role of plausibility in architectural experience (and architectural influence) my aim is to account for another aspect of architectural experience that such literatures have yet to address in substantial detail. I hope to add plausibility to a suite of aspects that already includes events, networks, policies, bodies, affects (and etcetera) which, together, widen our concept of how architecture happens within people’s experiences. For example, in the course of my research I believe I have seen a number of *building events* in action alongside the plausibilities I have investigated, and I would suggest that such texts as Hitchmough’s work on Voysey (Hitchmough, 1995), Karol’s work on Holden (Karol, 2007) and Allan’s work on Lubetkin (Allan, 1992) merit consideration as particular forms of building event that make the actual buildings they refer to happen differently (although I should point out that I initially expected the event-ness of what we might call “design biographies” to be far more critical to the experience of the buildings I studied than was, in fact, the case). I believe I have also seen a number of instances of the kinetic effects (distilled from affects) that Kraftl and Adey (2008) discuss (see preceding quote). The experience of architecture is multifaceted, with the capacity for events, affects, delegations, discourses, and plausibilities alongside each other. Certain aspects of a person’s experience will be as astutely considered as those examples I have researched in the preceding three chapters: other aspects of that same person’s experience will be kinetically affectual, and others again will be event-assisted (and so on). Plausibility – the extent to which people believe in the ability of a building as a result of enquiry and consideration, and the extent to which inhabitant’s astuteness was conceived at the building’s inception – represents a new ingredient in this mix, an addition to the broad and noisy church that architectural geography is developing into. In a recent paper, Kraftl has suggested that the study of architectural geography could benefit from

rehabilitating representational considerations alongside affective understandings of the ongoing production (or “re-happening”, in my terminology from chapter one) of architecture (Kraftl, 2009: 129). Plausibility shares some aspects of this in that there is an element of de-coding at work, as my summaries below suggest, and plausibility also turns its attention away from those more affectual and kinetic understandings of architectural effectiveness. I would suggest, however, that plausibilities do not work as representational devices do. Representation seems to suggest the production, availability and consumption of meanings, whereas plausibility enquires as to how secure such availabilities might be: an enquiring not limited to academics who are interested in the way representation works, but shared among people such as those I’ve interviewed and varyingly influential in their experiences. If architecture is to be effective (through representation or otherwise), and if people are to “get” or be effected or affected by it, perhaps first people need to “get” and believe in the mechanics of the way it’s trying to deliver that content – in short, an enquiry into architectural plausibility, whereby plausibility is not so much the analysis of end results, as it is an analysis of the production of the functional possibility of their continuation.

The bipartite structure of the three preceding chapters, whilst useful in presenting the proceeds of two very different methodological processes at different stages of a building’s existence, is somewhat rudimentary insofar that it creates an impression of “sides” to the plausibilities I’ve investigated – that is to say, the plausibility of a building being able to generate effects and perform acts. In the first instance I have discussed plausibility as it exists from the architects’ “side” at the inception of the building and, in the second, I have discussed plausibility from the inhabitants’ “side” at the reception of the building. This duality, which I will retain in my summary (below), is only an impression, a side effect of the structure I employed, rather than any suggestion that the plausibility of architecture is inherently dualistic. I hope that, in any event, such impressions are fleeting given that my accounts in the preceding empirical chapters quickly and consistently demonstrate that the architects’ understanding of the plausibility of the building was based around the potential capacities of the inhabitant (one in which their astuteness was a resource for the architect to hope for, virtualise, and draw upon, or at least proceed on the basis of). For their part, the inhabitants I interviewed produced conceptions of the plausibility of the buildings they live in and use which were astute. More specifically, those conceptions were produced from aspects of their inhabitations that are analytical, critical, and enquiring. In turn, they were capable of producing, and had in a number of instances actually produced, ideas of how

(and how likely) the building which they inhabited could have been designed as something effective, to effect or affect their latter inhabitations.

In short, both the inception of these buildings and their current reception are suffused with consideration as to how a given building could be made to happen and be experienced in a certain way, but moreover, the architect and the inhabitant can, and do, recruit one another into these considerations. For some inhabitants, the architect matters because – broadly speaking – the plausibility or implausibility of the building as something able to render intended effects implies a designer – the architect – deliberately crafting the building to perform as much. Their analyses as to the plausibility of the architecture they inhabit often, though not always, include analyses of the architect, his motivations and ideals, which I have explored throughout the empirical chapters of my thesis and that I now summarise below.

Plausibility – the architects:

All three of my architects presupposed future inhabitants for their buildings who were capable of complex inhabitations, quite unlike the “kinetic” description of inhabitation that I refer to above. This potential in inhabitants was both assumed and reasoned for, and the buildings they designed were intended to be compatible with astute inhabitations. Put another way, the effects they designed into their buildings could only be actualised by the latter application of astute consideration or behaviour from an astute inhabitant. My understanding of all three architects in this study is that they did not believe the building could plausibly do all of this work itself. However, what the building could do is extend into the adjacent astuteness of the inhabitant and co-opt that ability. As such, the inhabitant was the motive power in the plausible architecture that my three architects practiced. Inhabitants completed the designed effect, which was crafted to engage with and maximise an inhabitants’ astuteness and amplify certain aspects of it.

The plausibility of architecture, therefore, lies with the ability of the inhabitant and the efficacy of the building’s design to prompt that ability. The building itself is implausible as a means of generating the effects that my three architects hoped for: a building’s plausibility is limited to being able to prompt inhabitants into producing the full desired effect. It is important to note, however, that my three architects didn’t take complex future

inhabitations for granted or assume that such possibilities were definitely waiting for them. Even Holden, who took it largely for granted that people were astute, efficient, and purposeful in their inhabitations, had to adjust the bare functionality of his approach to include aesthetic reminders as to the effects he was hoping to create with his buildings. In short, their architectural designs had to work up the potential for that astuteness: each architect believed that people were capable of it, but also conceded that this capability often remained latent, or could easily become errant. Plausibility required not only compatibility with astute future inhabitations, but the coercion of them in the first instance. For Holden, this meant developing a purposeful aesthetic stance that serenaded a building's functional and purposeful underpinnings. For Voysey, it meant surrounding people with examples of the outcome of keen consideration and proper affections. For Lubetkin, it entailed the production of forms that referenced fundamental universal logics. None of these coercions were designed to have definite effects – that would have been implausible – but all of them were designed to gesture boldly towards the general area of astute consideration or behaviour that each architect hoped for, and intended to be housed in their buildings.

The downside of astute inhabitants was that they could exceed plausibility – those critical faculties that completed the plausibility of effectiveness could also be used to question the architecture, query its motivations, and criticise the means by which it tried to enact them. In Voysey's case, an expanded "blanket" virtuality of design opportunity (which he created despite the clients who employed him, and the contractors who were building their houses) maintained his absolute creative control over the building so that it could not be mishandled or criticised by errant astuteness until the very last minute, giving him as long as possible to secure it and its honesty, which could not be truly honest except as his work alone, undertaken individually. That honesty of intent and purpose was vital to his gesturing, pointing as it did toward an alternative to collectivism's artifice. Holden, on the other hand, practiced very differently with what I have called a "parliamentary" approach. He recognised that his designs required astute practices that were beyond his ability, so his design process invited these astute others to practice without the draconian constrictions such as those which Voysey would have provided – indeed, at the start of his career Holden's invitational design process seemed practically without limit, with his own volition substantially (and voluntarily) redacted until the end of his training. Both approaches were considered to help secure the plausibility of gesturing – in Voysey's case by making sure

him gesturing was uncontaminated, and Holden by ensuring that the building, and its gesturing, was as expertly crafted as possible, taking advantage of as many astute others as he could. For Holden, this was entirely compatible with the solid, dependable, risk-averse approach he took, and by combining all three, his buildings were poised to gesture at productive, efficient, and highly competent service. In short, if his buildings were as highly suffused with competence as he believed they could be (and if, in a later modification to his approach, the buildings serenaded that competency), this would form the gesture towards highly competent inhabitations that he hoped for. For Voysey, as well as Lubetkin, plausibility relied on their respective understandings of disciplined astuteness – one that led to proper and spiritual affections, and the other that dwelt on order and control, glimpsed in the abstract through language. If astuteness was not disciplined as they thought it should be, the effects would be lost, and they both pitched themselves not only against thoughtlessness (as each interpreted it) but against wrongly directed intelligence.

Despite the risks of intelligence as I've described them here, the astute inhabitant was much preferable to the docile inhabitant as far as Voysey and Lubetkin were concerned. The plausibility of their architecture required people to be able to think critically and provocatively – the social and cultural realities of the places into which their buildings would go required it. Both Voysey and Lubetkin looked upon their respective times with dismay, Voysey perceiving the redaction of independent, ethical consideration in the face of collectivism, and Lubetkin perceiving the failure of control at the hands of irrational norms. Any potential inhabitant willing to drift in the currents of such norms might simply accept the material offerings of the building as shapes, forms and colours (in short, a kinetic kind of engagement) and never think to query it for deeper meanings and more substantial effects.

Holden, by contrast, did not look upon the world with disdain, and never really discussed the possibility of inhabitants being over- or under-astute: nor, indeed, did he ever design for an inhabitant that wasn't purpose-fulfilling (I have previously mentioned that he never designed a building for leisurely dwelling). The inhabitant, for him, was a fixed point whose astuteness, at least whilst they were in his buildings, might vary, but always remained close to pragmatism, and this absolved him of the troubling possibilities that Voysey and Lubetkin faced. It may have also allowed him to consider that the effectiveness of architecture was more securely contained in the buildings he designed than in the

inhabitations that complimented them. Nonetheless, he did recognise the necessity for complimentary inhabitations of a rather more pragmatic kind than Voysey or Lubetkin, and the additional need for the building to do work beyond immediate functional expediency to secure it. This is suggested by the later development in his practice of an aesthetic style that aimed to boldly state the functional intent of the building, to suggest to those who looked upon or approached it that this particular building aimed to work beautifully. As an aesthetic lexicon, this can be interpreted as a pre-conditioning kind of prompt for purposeful inhabitations to follow, a plausibility contained in readying or forewarning approaching inhabitants as to the nature of the building's function, and aiming to secure in advance the benefit of their astute ability once inside, and confirming Holden's wish to maximise the purposeful, efficient, and astutely pragmatic capacities of his inhabitants. Such a conversant approach can also be seen in the plausibilities of Voysey and Lubetkin, that is to say: if a building is made to look as though it is trying to appeal to or otherwise do something, that tactic can cause the potential inhabitant to pay closer attention to it than, say, a relatively plain building. The difference is that Holden was trying to assist and enhance an astuteness that existed securely, whereas Voysey and Lubetkin were battling to rescue an astuteness which, in their interpretation, was far more vulnerable and much less assured.

For the three architects I have studied here, the prompting of inhabitants to complete the effects that architecture alone is *implausible* for is central to their understanding of architectural plausibility. Each architect undertakes this process with different tactics and through different philosophies in a way that my summary above can only hint at, and which the previous three chapters detail in much greater depth. During my interviews with the inhabitants of their buildings, the variety of plausibility is similarly expansive, and is only touched upon here.

Plausibility – the inhabitants:

Plausibility among inhabitants is, in many cases, affected by temporality, and the way in which inhabitants address temporality produces different plausibilities. The building, in temporal terms, is thought to be more plausible if the architect has made adequate provisions for the passage of time – if, in short, the architect was seen to be forward looking and pre-empted future needs so that effects would actually happen in the future.

This demarcates a thought-through efficacy in the building's inception, alongside usability in the present, and is understood to be plausibly and intentionally effective. By the same token, temporal failure substantially undermines the idea that the building is effective. If the design of the building fails to effectively reach beyond the immediate chronology of its inception, this failure can be analysed as a fundamental inadequacy at the design level and the judgement of the architect, which casts the potential plausibility of the building into considerable doubt. In certain cases, this is interpreted as the intrusion of past conditions into the present in a way that is manifestly unsuitable, and locks the building into a past timeframe from which it cannot plausibly effect the present.

The restorations some inhabitants undertake of their buildings may represent equally potent temporalities that partially collapse the disjuncture between the inception of the building and the current inhabitation. Restoration generally includes processes of research which gently reveal something like the originality of the building in the present, a process which can produce plausibility as the features of the building are connected to the specifics of its inception and become, in some sense, explained instead of curiously present. Such research can be considered through the lens of a *building event* (Jacobs, 2006: 11), but if this is an event, it is one actualised by the inhabitants as part of their inhabitation. This differs from Jacob's conception, in which building events are part of official discourses that are actualised by statutory weight, not by the inhabitants, and both the motivation to undertake such research, and the proceeds of that research, can potentially produce a double plausibility insofar that the motivation in the first instance is usually an interest in the building and a wish to return it to an original form, the research for which brings features of its inception, including proposed effects, into sharp relief. (It is, of course, possible that such knowledge stalls or even redacts plausibility if those new insights are interpreted as, for example, patronising).

Restorations do not automatically produce temporal plausibilities, nor are they always predicated on acts of research. In some cases, the restoration of a building has been at least partially motivated by recovering the professionalism of the architect from accreted layers of inhabitation and alteration. The perception of professionalism denotes a likelihood of effectiveness. As compared to these accretions, the original professionalism represents an improvement and this analysis may produce some degree, and perhaps a substantial degree, of plausibility for the architecture. I would suggest that the logic of restoring initial

professionalism is, to some extent, generally contemporaneous with research interests in the building as described above, but they can and do exist separately – research can take place without restoration and vice versa. In the first instance, the interest of the inhabitant is a potential precursor to plausibility, and in the second instance, a consideration of the building leads to the conclusion that the original features are superior to and more effective than latter additions, not necessarily because this is definitely the case, but because the attentions of a professional architect, even if he is buried behind accretions, are logically more likely to produce effective, useful and beneficial features. This conclusion benefits the original building with some degree of plausibility insofar that it confirms the quality of the original design, a restoration based on the logical outcome of consideration, rather than an interest in restoration *per se*.

The idea that an architect has given thought to the future inhabitation of a given building also evidences the exercise of care and consideration by making certain provisions available (ranging from the banality of door-latches to the joy of frivolity) – evidence which is astutely arrived at, and which generates substantial plausibility in the process. Almost all of the inhabitants I interviewed who felt that a building was beneficial for them believed that it successfully delivered deliberate effects and that their effective beneficence had been instated by intentional acts of design. In some cases, this led inhabitants to believe in the plausible effectiveness of the building more generally, on the basis that those features had been successfully instated. Alternatively, the absence or misplacement of care substantially redacted plausibility. If care could not be effected, then the building itself was often considered ineffective by failing to execute an essential task. Such an absence, where there ought to be an intended, crafted presence, made the building seem implausible as a means to be effective more generally.

In either such scenario, i.e. the enjoyment of beneficence or the disdain at its absence, a number of inhabitants connected with the design of buildings. In those cases where beneficence was absent or skewed, opportunities arise to consider how the architect could have proceeded, or how the inhabitant would have proceeded had they been the architect, to rectify this (with the interesting effect of producing a virtual kind of plausibility). Where beneficence was seen to be present, some inhabitants were given to consider why, and by what means, this should be the case. In both cases, inhabitants involved themselves thoughtfully in the mechanics of architecture being effective such that, even in those

buildings where beneficence was absent, the means and likelihoods of effects being plausible (i.e. imagined how they ought to be) was considered.

Closely related to this is the inhabitants' consideration of the architect in what I have called "diagnostic" terms. In some, but not all cases, making sense of plausibility required that a practitioner be connected to the building, or a particular feature (beneficent or otherwise). Instated plausibility, when it is understood to be deliberate and working, is logically considered to be the outcome of a strata of motivations (as to why this feature is desirable), ideas (as to what or how a feature might best be instated) and efforts (the crafting of that instatement). This has emerged in some cases as a key component of the plausibility of the building. Connecting the working features to the intentionality and the character of the designer confirms the intentionality of the effectiveness that inhabitant's experience, an analytic of plausibility generated by transiting the features in question from an accidental to an intended status.

It's important to note that architectural effectiveness is managed through the lens of plausibility by inhabitants such that the existence of implausibility in the architect's approach to their building is kept separate from those things that they consider plausible, a process I have referred to as "splitting". A recurring feature of my interviews suggests that each inhabitant maintains a point – whose position may be quite flexible – at which plausibility reaches a maximum for their building as to the effects they consider that it can have. Below this point, the analytical part of their inhabitation grants credence to the possibility of effects, but that is not to say that anything above this point is outright implausible. Though such things as Holden's bodily metaphor may not be plausibly experienced by Holden inhabitants, it is considered plausible as a metaphor or heuristic for his own use. For those occasions when the effective hopes for the building are seemingly implausible, the split acts like a partition, the position of which is analytically defined, and the implausibility of the overambitious or ridiculous is kept from tainting that which is considered plausible – even if the architect originally conceived of the effects in a more unitary or inseparable way.

This process of splitting represents the potential of the inhabitants in this study to craft the plausibility of the buildings they inhabit in particular ways, in that the retention of certain plausibilities, and the partitioning (or ignorance) of others, creates an "invitational" field in

which inhabitants perceive that their choices of lifestyle, tastes and habits will actively assisted by them. In fact, in a number of cases the effectiveness of the buildings I've studied were interpreted as deliberately affirmative, specifically designed to redact obstructions and open out affirming spaces for choice-laden dwelling. (It's worth noting that most of the buildings that are disliked, or at best partially liked, in this study are so judged because they are, in fact, obstructive.) Such spaces should not be interpreted as blank – in many cases they were interpreted by inhabitants as produced by particular effects of particular features, and in some cases were analytically perceived to be like growth mediums, rather than voids.

The plausibility of effective architecture is also enhanced – and simultaneously constrained – by hierarchical understandings of effectiveness among the inhabitants I've studied, and in particular the diffuse nature of likely effects that inhabitants expect and think plausible of their buildings. I would suggest that most inhabitants do not expect, nor think it plausible, that their buildings should render precise and definite effects. The plausible action of architectural effect is, rather, considered to be that of general impressions or themes, and this expectation generates a plausibility insofar that they do not, in the first instance, ask or expect too much from the building. This does, however, constrain the building from plausibly attaining precise effects. Similarly, some inhabitants take the building as a finished product, to be experienced at face value without enquiring after its potential motivations and the mechanisms for effecting them. Perhaps the most interesting examples of diffuse plausibility are experiences of potential by inhabitants. An inhabitant may not need to know, understand, or even experience the importance or effectiveness of their building, but an awareness of the potential for such things, despite never solidifying from potentiality to actuality, may constitute the production of plausibility in diffuse form. This has been the case in some of my discussions with interviewees on the subject of heritage, which is not credited with producing effects *per se*, but which connotes that the building is somehow special and noteworthy, and that this is a signal that it *could* produce such effects, or else merit its status in some significant way. The potential for significance can be instrumental in producing diffuse plausibilities on the basis that they – or something – *could* happen, a pre-conditioning kind of plausibility.

There are a number of other analytical acts that inhabitants enter into in their construction of the plausibility of a building that can be understood as pre-conditions. One such act is to

consider whether a given building is of the sort that can deliver ambitious effects at all, and a number of my inhabitants have arrived at considered hierarchies in this respect. Smaller, more modest buildings, for instance, may not be considered to contain sufficient design scope for generating substantial effects, and their plausibilities are limited as a result. Similarly, plausibility can be either enhanced or diminished depending on how active a building is at attracting attention, with a possibility that analytical responses to buildings have to be provoked by architectural verve, bombast, or deliberate design articulations of difference to prompt people out of taking that building for granted, or noticing it as a “kinetic” level only. Finally, and somewhat obviously, plausibility depends on what the building matters for in the conceptions of inhabitants. If, for instance, the effectiveness of the building matters less than the discourses, events, and stories that happen in it – if, in short, the building is considered to be the stage rather than the performance – then plausibility is neither enhanced or diminished as such. There are times when a building can take on the role of a container in the experiences of inhabitants, whereby plausibility is not really a consideration. The effect of architecture in this instance is for the provision of fertile ground for these other, more prominent discourses and happenings to proceed, and a place for other effects.

In the broadest possible terms, the above summaries represent my findings and, with them, the contribution of a new perspective to the field of architectural geography and its understandings of how buildings are experienced. To occupy this perspective, I arrived at a particular methodology (detailed in chapter two), which I now turn to by way of drawing this thesis to a close.

Methodology and analytical capacity:

In the first instance, I reiterate a point from chapter two: this thesis is not an historical geography. The methodology I required was one that could grasp the concept of longevity, of something relatively old continuing to be present, and my archival studies specifically sought to discover how architects had attempted to plausibly sustain the effects of their buildings. This has led me to an unusual position as a user of archives for something other than the purposes of historical research. But it is a position which is inherently portable, as Lorimer would describe it (Lorimer, 2010: 257) insofar that, by treating my archival study as essentially present, I am absolved from having to re-imagine and re-animate it (Ibid).

From the outset, I approached the archive as though it were current (rather than “dusty” (Ibid: 248-249)). Specifically, I approached the archive as if it were contemporaneous with buildings that were, after all, still in existence. For me, the buildings became distributed objects of study, located both on site, and in the archive, and my archival findings did not belong any less to the physical buildings because of that disjuncture (indeed, the theme of my methodology has been one of overcoming disjuncture). I believe this to be an important equalisation of Lorimer’s “vitalism” (Ibid: 257) in which the portability of archives from the repository to the field becomes a co-presence, that is to say, of the same thing in distributed form, and assuming that the archive is already part of an already animate (and widespread) object, rather than re-introducing it to a field in which it had previously ceased to occupy. This ethic helped me to equalise the presence of the manuscripts with the building and the inhabitants, rather than approach the archive as something of the past and with diminished viability in the present. I would suggest that such equalisations are important in studies that deal with longevity, or cannot be certain as to the whether the objects of study are of the past, or how the transition from present to past can be identified. My research could not have been undertaken without this approach in place, and though I may not have been as delicate with my archival research as Lorimer was, I am convinced of the importance of leaving the possibility open for archives to be distributed into the present (and for the present to be distributed into them).

Co-presence is also a theme of my interview methodology, one in which I have taken the covalent entraining of Ezzy’s approach (Ezzy, 2010). I combined them with Brinkmann’s epistemic approach (Brinkmann, 2007) in order to place interviewees such that they can astutely engage with the interviewer. Such an approach is, I suggest, promising: some of that promise is overtly demonstrated in my interviews with those people who inhabit Lubetkin’s buildings (see chapter five). Opening out a free and unimpeded “caressed” space (Ezzy, 2010: 166) for an interviewee to speak in is not necessarily fair, voided as it is of epistemic opportunity. Such opportunities have to be made available within studies such as mine, which aim to engage with the analytic potential of interviewees not by bombarding them with epistemic norms, but by making the interviewer vulnerable to them, almost as an epistemic inferior in the interview dynamic. The friendly unfriendliness I was able to create because of this not only engaged with analytical capacities (which, I suggest, are relatively rarely engaged with in architectural geography), but allowed the sort of deflections and refutations from my interviewees which produced insights I never could have envisaged,

and displaced insights which I may have tried to instil. Because, in my experience, such a methodology has produced such interesting results, I would argue for the consideration of such friendly unfriendliness as a methodological starting point not only in architectural geographies, but in human geography as a whole.

Summation:

My purpose in this thesis has been to investigate how architecture happens in people's experiences. It has focused on what architecture is understood to be capable of when architecture is addressed astutely, that is to say: in terms of analytical capacity. I have conducted extensive empirical investigations into the architectural production of effects (i.e. to affect people's experiences) by architects, and the experience of effects by inhabitants of their buildings. My findings suggest that there are a number of different ways in which architectural capability is astutely considered by architects, inhabitants, and users. These findings were enabled by a methodology which specifically sought to engage with analytical capacities as part of the research process. My analyses suggest that such astute considerations by architects, inhabitants and users constructs and accumulates plausibilities, understood as the process and result of investigating effects with a view to their likely efficacy, not so much in terms of the results, or impact, of that effect, but in terms of how steadfast an effect is thought to be. This forms my original contribution to the field of architectural geography in which the analytical capacity of architectural experience is under-represented.

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Appendix:

Over the following pages I have provided, in the first instance, some examples of the cue cards I used during my interviews. These are followed by a full transcript of my second interview, undertaken in 2007 with “John and Anna”, who live in one of six Voysey households in Cumbria. (Other than living in Cumbria, their identities, and potentially identifying remarks, are blanked throughout.) In my first two interviews, I experimented with a “reveal” – a presentation of some of my findings from the Voysey archives for their consideration, and as a means to open out further opportunities to demonstrate their astute generation of (im)plausibility. In all the remaining interviews I elected not to repeat the reveal. Although it was compatible with my interview methodology, I judged it to be an imposition, and allowed future interviews to demonstrate astute inhabitations as they emerged from their experience of the building and their existing knowledge, rather than from my archival findings. The reveal was posed after the principal themes of the interview (examples of which follow by way of cue cards) had been covered, and were then returned to in light of the reveal.

Examples of my cue cards follow over the next two pages, followed by the content index and transcript of my interview with John and Anna.

Addendum to the electronic deposit appendix:

In this electronic deposit of the thesis, the above-mentioned transcript is excluded excepting the frontispiece (p.337). I have, additionally, included the correspondence between Aberystwyth University’s repository advisor, Dr Nicky Cashman, and myself in regard to the redactions in this version of the thesis (from p.338).

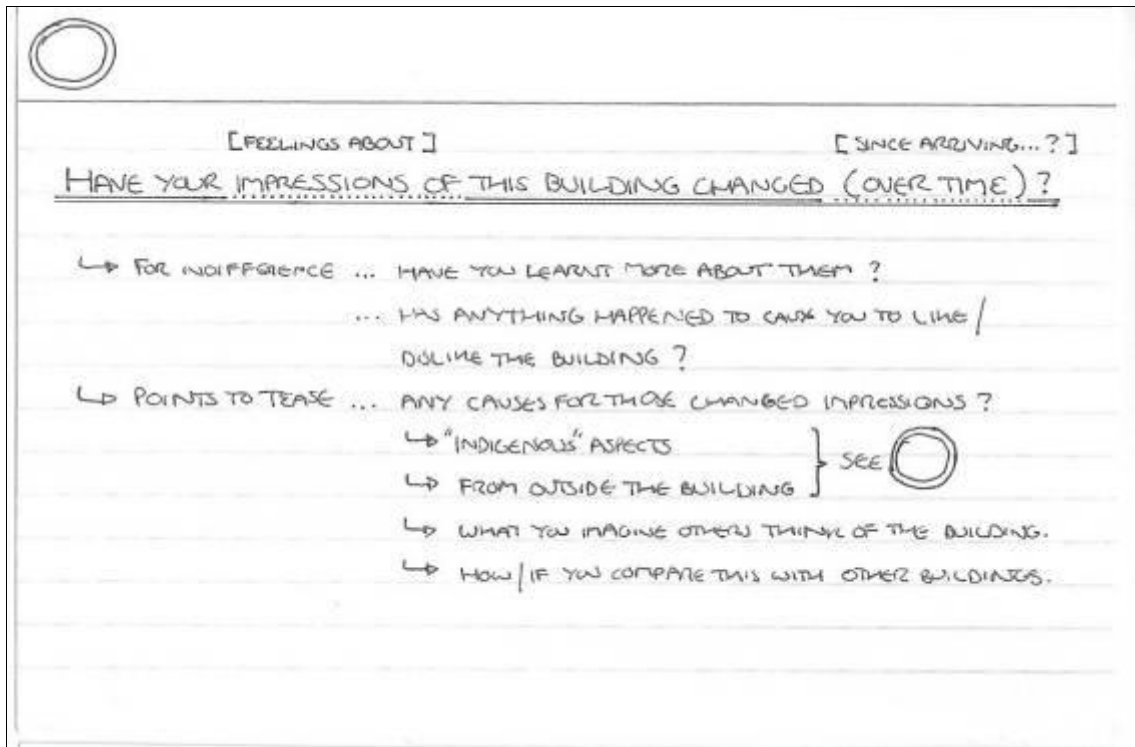


Figure 6.1: Cue card, "Have your impressions of this building changed over time?"

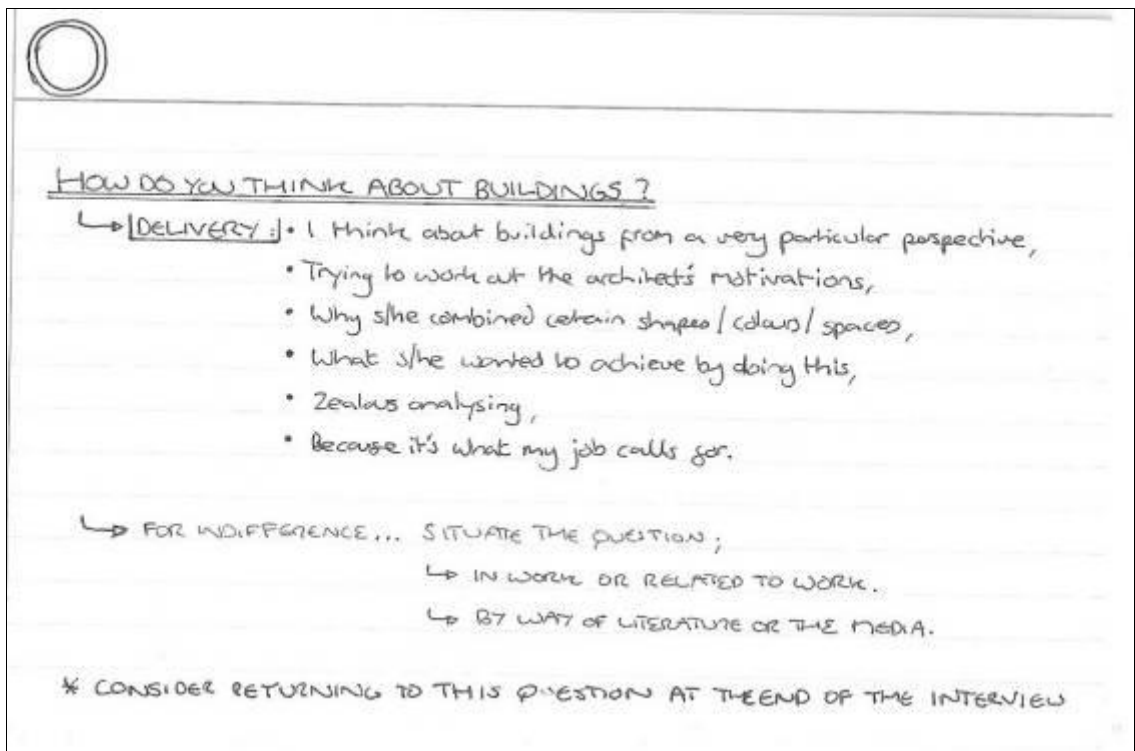


Figure 6.2: Cue card, "How do you think about buildings?" Generally used to open interviews, the intention was to explain how I thought about buildings and how I wanted to move away from my preconceptions to better understand their experience.

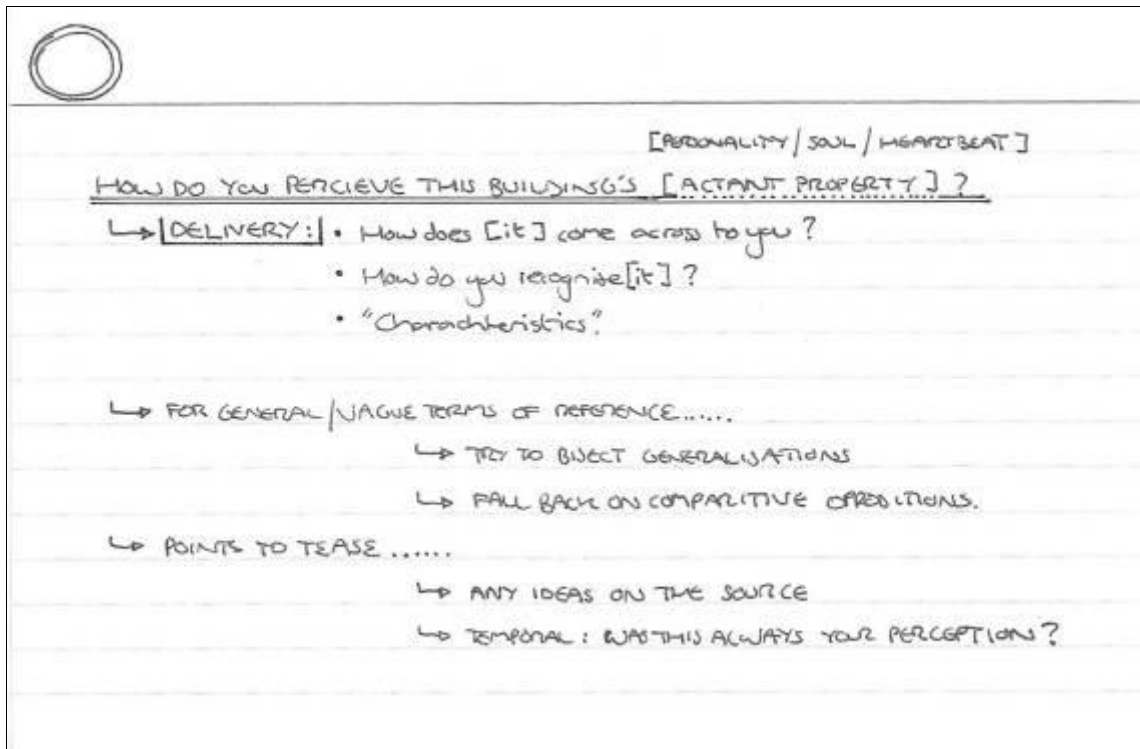


Figure 6.3: Cue card, "How do you perceive this building's personality/soul/heartbeat?" This card was later changed for one which replaced personality/soul/heartbeat with "character/attitude", although I still caught myself using the original terms.

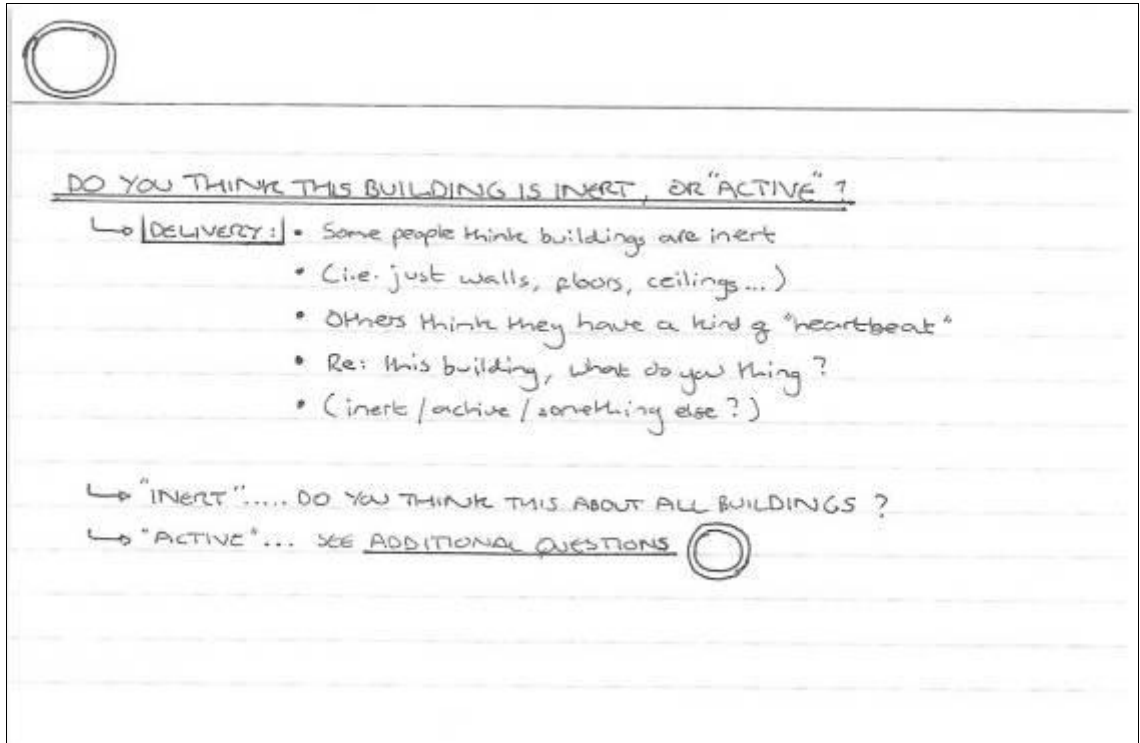


Figure 6.4: Cue card, "Do you think this building is inert or "active"?"

█
Transcription of █ interview.

Date: █ June 2007
Location: █

Interviewer: Paul Wright

Interviewees: █ and █

Pre-interview briefing: Standard: privacy, permission to record, and recognition of leading and “porous” questions.

Recording: Approx 90 minutes (1105 counts), analogue and mono, at single speed on C90 cassette using the internal microphone, all of side A, all of side B.

The transcript of this interview is not provided in this edition, but is provided in the printed copies of this thesis (where it runs to p.368), please refer to p.x for further details of these printed copies.

viii (b).

Appendix – Electronic Deposit edition:

Copied below are three e-mail correspondence with Dr Nicky Cashman, Repository Advisor at Aberystwyth University, regarding the production of this edition of the thesis.

From: Paul Wright [mailto:pww98.aber@googlemail.com]
Sent: 06 December 2010 14:22
To: cadair@aber.ac.uk
Subject: Embargo query

To whom it may concern;

I am about to send my bound and corrected thesis back to Aberystwyth, and I have a query regarding the electronic submission.

My thesis includes a number of interviews, which the interviewees consented to on certain understandings. The first of these was anonymity, which I've covered in the way the data was presented/analysed and is not a concern. The second of these was the latter availability of their conversations with me. At the time I undertook the interviews, an electronic deposit of the thesis was not, as far as I am aware, mandatory. My interviewees (and I) assumed that there would only ever be two publicly available copies of the thesis: one at the University and the other at the NLW. Although my interviewees did not specifically object to the wider availability of these conversations, their consent was not explicitly secured for the substantially enhanced availability that Cadair provides.

The ramifications are:

- a. Some of my interviewees may have withheld consent if this has been known to them – it's unlikely, but not impossible.
- b. Some of these conversations would have been different if my interviewees had known that the thesis would have been as easily available as Cadair makes it, as opposed to the availability that two library deposits alone would likely provide. My interviewees may have divulged details to me which they were comfortable to share with a limited readership, but far less inclined to be made available without such limits.

Given that the interview material is written as three distinct and bounded sections within my thesis, I could create an electronic deposit edition which simply blanks these sections, or I could, as an alternative, be more selective within these sections and blank the interviewee quotes and my more explicit analyses of them. If, however, neither such option is viable, I would have to ask you to consider a long-term embargo on the electronic availability of my thesis.

Your insights in this matter would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Wright.

From: Nicky Cashman [nnc] [mailto:nnc@aber.ac.uk]
Sent: 08 December 2010 09:35
To: Paul Wright
Subject: RE: Embargo query

Dear Paul,

I totally understand your predicament. Looking at the options you mention, would it still be possible for you to 'be more selective within these sections and blank the interviewee quotes and my more explicit analyses of them' ? If this is possible and you are happy to do so, then that would be the most ideal situation as far as I'm concerned. Let me know if this is the case.

Best wishes,

Nicky

Dr Nicky Cashman
Ymgynghorydd Cadwrfa / Repository Adviser
Llyfrgell Thomas Parry Library
Prifysgol Aberystwyth / Aberystwyth University
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
SY23 3AS

<http://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/>

From Paul Wright
To 'Nicky Cashman [nnc]'
Sent 09 December 2010 01:15
Subject RE: Embargo query

Dear Nicky;

That will be fine – I'll run through the thesis and blank the bare minimum from the interview sections that I can. I'm afraid I can't do this immediately, but I hope to be able to complete it early next week. Am I correct in thinking that Cadair became fully operational in 2008? I recall that it went through a pilot stage first. In any event, over half of my interviews had been conducted by Christmas 2007.

Best,
Paul.