

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Kent</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: C16 Architecture and the Built Environment</p>
<p>Title of case study: Re-evaluating historic buildings for conservation and public appreciation</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This case study demonstrates how Timothy Brittain-Catlin’s long-term research into a group of historic buildings sharing a common theme, and designed by underappreciated architects, has had wide-ranging impacts on various groups. These groups include general audiences; amenity societies; architectural historians; heritage and conservation enthusiasts; and, in turn, public bodies including planning authorities and government agencies. The impacts of this important research range from informing cultural understanding amongst general audiences to directly influencing policy decisions about the preservation of historic buildings.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Since Brittain-Catlin joined Kent School of Architecture as Lecturer (subsequently Senior Lecturer) in 2007 his research, under the general title of ‘The reputation of architects at times of change’, has been directed towards changes in architectural practice at various historical moments in Britain: the 1830-1840s, the post-First World War era, and the post-Second World War era. A common theme has been the way in which architects were required to keep up with both stylistic and professional changes, or face loss of reputation or livelihood. Key insights deriving from research, which have developed and guided impact, include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the long-term cultural value of some architects’ work has been undermined by the traditional methodologies of architectural history and are underprotected statutorily. 2) some significant sources of research have up to now been missed by researchers (for example, the parsonage mortgage files in diocesan archives, and personal archives held by some twentieth-century architects). 3) the value of aspects of architectural practice change at certain historical periods, so that hidden qualities can be appreciated best by later audiences. <p>The research was undertaken mainly in the form of archival and site research. Research for <i>The English Parsonage in the Early Nineteenth Century</i> [ref 3.1], completed during 2008, consisted of finding, reviewing and analysing drawings and documents relating to parsonage mortgage applications made by incumbents in the Church of England to church mortgage givers. This process revealed how the gothic revival spread across English domestic architecture and how some architects faced loss of reputation, a phenomenon subsequently developed by Brittain-Catlin in his role as editor of the peer-review journal of The Pugin Society [3.6].</p> <p>A second phase of research was carried out during 2008-09 and consisted mainly of reviewing material in the Lloyds Banking Group Archives. This material related to the career of Horace Field as architect of a series of influential bank branches. The course of Field’s career, and especially its downward trajectory, was then described in ‘Horace Field and Lloyds Bank’, a detailed account of Field’s work for the bank that was published in <i>Architectural History</i> in 2010 [3.3]; and ‘Downward trajectory: towards a theory of failure’ (<i>ARQ</i>, 2011) [3.5], which uses the overall pattern of Field’s career, beyond his bank work, as a way of suggesting alternative interpretations of ‘unsuccessful’ architects. During 2009-10 Brittain-Catlin concentrated on the career of the British post-Second World War modernist architects Leonard Manasseh & Partners, specifically for a book in the RIBA / English Heritage / Twentieth Century Society series on modern British architects [3.4, 5.10], but</p>

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also to see how historical patterns in architects' professional reputations continue up to the present day. There was no conventional surviving archive for these architects, and Brittain-Catlin's research took the form of amassing material from private collections, from interviews, and from visits to various sources. Brittain-Catlin's current research focuses on the interwar Thanet architect Edgar Ranger, and he has recently completed a book on the subject of undervalued architects, to be published by The MIT Press in March 2014.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 Timothy Brittain-Catlin, *The English Parsonage in the Early Nineteenth Century* (2008), Spire Books, Reading, ISBN 978-1904965169 (output TBC1)
- 3.2 Timothy Brittain-Catlin, 'The Bishop's House, Birmingham' (2008), in *The Victorian Society, Studies in Victorian Architecture & Design, Volume One, The 1840s*, ISBN 978-0-901657-50-3, pp 96-105.
- 3.3 Timothy Brittain-Catlin, 'Horace Field and Lloyds Bank', in *Architectural History*, volume 53: 2010, pp 271-94 (output TBC3)
- 3.4 Timothy Brittain-Catlin, *Leonard Manasseh & Partners* (2011), RIBA Publishing / English Heritage / Twentieth Century Society, ISBN 978-1-85946-368-0 (output TBC2)
- 3.5 Timothy Brittain-Catlin, 'Downward Trajectory: towards a theory of failure', in *Architectural Research Quarterly*, volume 15 no 2, 2011, ISSN 1359-1355, pp 139-147 (output TBC4)
- 3.6 Timothy Brittain-Catlin, editor (2004-2012), *True Principles*, the peer review (from 2006) journal of the Pugin Society, ISSN 1747-9371: editorial policy, and various articles / reviews.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This case study presents examples of how research into underappreciated architects and their buildings has resulted in wide-ranging impacts, including enhancing public understanding and informing practical decisions by professionals, activists and public bodies responsible for evaluating and protecting historic architecture.

1 REACH: the diffusion of the findings through research to new audiences:

Effective audience development in this field relies on a long period of gestation before impact can be claimed, since amenity societies and public agencies take into account demonstrable public interest over a period of time when taking decisions. Brittain-Catlin is one of Britain's most widely published architectural commentators. He has been reviewing and writing continuously for *The World of Interiors* (monthly, readership estimated at 161,000 worldwide) since 1989. He occasionally writes for *The Tablet*, a literary weekly with an average circulation of about 20,000; and for *Architecture Today* and *Architectural Review*, the readers of which (just under 20,000, and 12,807 respectively) are mainly architects, regularly bringing his research insights to a professional audience outside academia. His general readership books *How to Read a Building* (2007), *Churches* (2008), and *Architecture* (2008) have enabled the promotion of a new interpretation of AWN Pugin, the C19 gothic revival and parsonage building to a growing general audience. These books are widely loaned by libraries (7,538 loans, June 2008-June 2012 (latest figures available)).

Following his earlier contribution to the narrative of the Channel 4 programme 'Time Team' on Pugin's house in Ramsgate (about 2M viewers and frequently repeated since 2008), he contributed substantially in this REF period to a BBC4 documentary on Pugin celebrating his bicentenary (2012) which has been repeated many times. In the producer's words, the programme '*wouldn't have had such an impact but for your excellent contributions*' [letter from corroboration 5.1 below].

2 REACH: the development of a new critical audience among influential members of the general public, generally through impact on amenity societies

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Research on parsonages, Field and Manasseh has been and will be incorporated into large-circulation, authoritative guides such as *The Buildings of England* (Yale UP; several counties, since 2006; most recently, *East Sussex* and *North and North East Kent* (both 2013)) and elsewhere, with explicit acknowledgment [see letter from Yale UP, 5.5]. Leonard Manasseh (see below) will feature in the next edition of the authoritative *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* as a result of Brittain-Catlin's work, and he was formally consulted by OUP regarding plans for changing the current content and scope of this important reference work.

Through his work with professional bodies and amenity societies Brittain-Catlin has significantly improved understanding and appreciation of Victorian and gothic revival architecture and led a re-evaluation of key examples. He was for eight years (until 2012) editor of the Pugin Society's journal and active member of its committee. The Society has about 400 members internationally, and is continuously growing. It disseminates new research about the Pugin family to a wide audience [3.6] which contains many members who are influential opinion formers (such as politicians, artists in other fields, and many people active in building conservation as practitioners as well as writers and polemicists). He has been a member of the Southern Buildings Committee of the Victorian Society since 2001 [5.2]. This committee is one of two which in effect act as the executive committee of the Society, determining both in general and in detail the policy of the Society regarding alterations to Victorian buildings. The Society is a statutory consultee, and local planning authorities are expected to submit significant proposals to it. Examples of continuing and long-term impact on committee decisions have related to development at a series of Pugin houses: The Grange, Ramsgate; the former rectory, Rampisham (upgraded in 2006 to Grade 1 as a result of Brittain-Catlin's research); and Oswaldcroft, Liverpool, during the current period (see below).

The key insights from Brittain-Catlin's continuing research into the early gothic revival have been frequently presented by him to general audiences drawn from the membership of amenity and similar societies, including the Dundee Conservation Lectures held in 2010 and 2011; the Vernacular Architecture Group (2009); the Essex Historic Buildings Group (2012) [5.6]; the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group (2012); the Friends of St Augustine's Church, Ramsgate (2012); the Charing and District Local History Society (2013); the (national) Art Fund (2012), and others. These talks are generally followed by an article in a society's newsletter which then reaches all members. The researcher has received many letters from local history or architectural enthusiasts inspired by *The English Parsonage* to carry out related researches in their own area.

3 SIGNIFICANCE: the creation of impact on local communities, through the exploitation of academic research in local sites of heritage significance

Brittain-Catlin has acted as a specialist consultant to local planning authorities and developers and has directly influenced decisions on the preservation of a number of significant buildings; and, secondly, he organised a conference with demonstrable local social, cultural and economic impact. Research into both early C19 and mid-C20 architecture has resulted in Brittain-Catlin providing advice in response to requests from local planning authorities. Examples include work for Kirklees Council, which wrote that his research was '*of significant use*' in determining an application to demolish a vicarage at Paddock, near Huddersfield [5.7]. In the case of the Pugin house 'Oswaldcroft', the Victorian Society's official response to an original listed building application was based directly on Brittain-Catlin's detailed case; the local conservation officer then suggested to a subsequent developer that Brittain-Catlin should prepare the Statement of Historical Asset Significance for a subsequent application. This he did, resulting in the granting of listed building consent [5.3]. The project architect commented that '*it is without question that had we not had the knowledge and research prepared by Mr Timothy Brittain-Catlin, then our client's planning*

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application would have struggled to obtain local authority approval including English Heritage' [5.3].

Brittain-Catlin is an active trustee and publications committee chair of the Twentieth Century Society (C20S), which supported his case for the listing of Leonard Manasseh buildings in London [5.4; 5.10]. Other listing applications have since been initiated through C20S on the basis of his research. The Designations Director of English Heritage has written confirming the important role of the C20S / EH / RIBA series, to which both Brittain-Catlin and Adler contributed during the REF period, in *'the delivery of protection through listing, through informing planning decisions, and by engaging owners and their agents in better appreciating their property. We have directly drawn on these titles in preparing listing recommendations for DCMS, and they contribute directly into our thematic assessment approach'* [5.10]. Similarly, The Victorian Society has sought the listing of buildings designed by Horace Field on the basis of Brittain-Catlin's published research [3.3, 3.5] [5.2]: The C20S will likewise seek listing for the work of Edgar Ranger, currently being researched. As a trustee of the C20S, the researcher was an active member of a body consulted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport regarding their *Improving Listed Building Consent* (2012).

The conference 'New Directions in Gothic Revival Studies Worldwide' (Canterbury, July 2012), **demonstrates the route to research impact**: the researcher's status, based on his publications [eg, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6] enabled him to convene a major international conference, and he devised a programme with broad impact potential. Events were held in Ramsgate, open to all, in which anyone with an interest in local architecture could meet the worldwide leaders of gothic revival scholarship; and Pugin Society members could attend the conference for a very much reduced rate. Conference events included talks that were accessible for a non-academic audience, drawn by the researcher's general readership books. Events were reported in the local press, and in the *Architectural Review* (international professional readership). Brittain-Catlin spoke on BBC Kent (12.7.12). Following his initiative with Thanet District Council, academic speakers at the conference were transported free in evenings and mornings between the conference site and Ramsgate in order to support local bed & breakfast owners and contribute to the local economy. The conference also introduced conference speakers to the Ramsgate Society, a local amenity society, by organising tours of the town. Thanet District Council's tourist manager Paula Harbidge commented *'Such events are wonderful for the local economy and they also enhance the area's reputation – nationally and internationally'*, (reported in Thanet Extra, 11.7.2012, p 2 [5.9]). These events are an example of successful strategic impact planning and provide a model for a type of future activity.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. **RamRaider Films** confirming Brittain-Catlin's key role as contributor to the narrative of the BBC4 documentary 'Pugin: God's Own Architect'
 2. Director, **Victorian Society** confirming his ongoing role as active Buildings Committee member
 3. **KDP Architects**, Liverpool confirming his key role as historic building consultant in achieving listed building consent
 4. Chairman, **Twentieth Century Society** confirming his ongoing role as active trustee
 5. General Editor, **Pevsner Architectural Guides**, Yale UP, confirming his ongoing role as specialist contributor, especially regarding buildings by AWN Pugin, Manasseh and Field.
- Letters are available from*
6. **Essex Historic Buildings Group**, a typical example of a local history amenity society to which Brittain-Catlin has contributed his research
 7. **Kirklees Council** regarding Paddock vicarage
 8. **Dundee Conservation Lectures** – letter and programme confirming participation
 9. **Thanet District Council** – press release on impact of Gothic Revival conference
 10. **English Heritage**, confirming importance to listing of the C20 British Architects series.