

THE PRESERVATION OF CROSBY HALL, c. 1830–1850*

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ABSTRACT. *This article offers a case-study of an early preservation campaign to save the remains of the fifteenth-century Crosby Hall in Bishopsgate, London, threatened with demolition in 1830, in a period before the emergence of national bodies dedicated to the preservation of historic monuments. It is an unusual and early example of a successful campaign to save a secular building. The reasons why the Hall's fate attracted the interest of antiquaries, architects, and campaigners are analysed in the context of the emergence of historical awareness of the domestic architecture of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well as wider recognition of the importance of this period for Britain's urban and commercial development. The Hall's associations with Richard III and other historic figures, including Thomas More and Thomas Gresham, are shown to have been particularly important in generating wider public interest, thereby allowing the campaigners to articulate the importance of the Hall in national terms. The history of Crosby Hall illuminates how a discourse of national heritage emerged from the inherited tradition of eighteenth-century antiquarianism and highlights the importance of the social, professional, and familial networks that sustained proactive attempts to preserve the nation's monuments and antiquities.*

Crosby Hall, all that remains of the magnificent fifteenth-century Crosby Place, stands today in Cheyne Walk, a long way from its original location in commercial Bishopsgate. For all that it exhibits an air of authenticity, this is carefully crafted: little of the original building, which is largely hidden by the accretions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century restorations, has been left intact. Yet despite the substantial sums that have been invested in its renovation in recent years, its reputation as what Simon Thurley describes as ‘the most important surviving secular domestic medieval building in London’ is not widely

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known.¹ In the nineteenth century, however, it was renowned in precisely those terms: as one of the finest specimens of medieval domestic architecture in London and a rare survival of the Great Fire that had destroyed so much of the city's historic core. Despite the free hand that has been taken in restoring and improving the building since the nineteenth century, it is an extraordinary survival. Its continued existence, against the odds, into the twenty-first century has been dependent upon the building's historical resonances for both national and local history, and the opportunities it has offered for contemporaries to project onto it their own conceptions of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when it was in the heyday of its magnificence.²

In the 1830s, Crosby Hall narrowly escaped destruction: as the result of a public campaign it was repaired, restored, and converted into a space to house the Metropolitan Literary and Scientific Institution. This particular history of an early preservation campaign presents the opportunity to analyse the emergence of a discourse of national heritage from the inherited tradition of eighteenth-century antiquarianism and to trace the networks that sustained proactive attempts to preserve the nation's monuments and antiquities. Since the later eighteenth century, there had been gathering awareness of and appreciation for the historic value as well as the aesthetic qualities of 'architectural antiquities'. Antiquaries such as Richard Gough and John Carter documented such buildings in weighty antiquarian publications and used the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* to inveigh against modern depredations and innovations and to make the case for their preservation.³ As early as the 1770s, calls were being made for the government to intervene in the preservation of historic buildings.⁴ By the 1830s, such exhortation was becoming much more frequent, and the British government was compared unfavourably to France where a General Inspector of Historical Monuments had been appointed in 1830 and the *Commission des monuments historiques* would be created in 1837.⁵ In 1832, for example, John Britton wrote to the *Gentleman's Magazine* calling for the creation of a society to be called 'The Guardian of Antiquities', the remit of which would be to guard against further damage and destruction of historic buildings and to assist legal authorities in their protection.⁶ Such concerns were, in part, the motivation behind the founding of the British Archaeological Association in 1844, the purpose of which was summarized as the 'discovery, illustration, and

¹ Simon Thurley, 'Crosby Hall', *Country Life*, 2 Oct. 2003, p. 73.

² The best history of Crosby Hall is to be found in Philip Norman and W. D. Caroe, *Crosby Place*, Survey of London Monographs, 9 (London, 1908).

³ Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: the discovery of the past in eighteenth-century Britain* (London, 2004), pp. 277–307.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁵ Françoise Choay, *The invention of the historic monument*, trans. Lauren M. O'Connell (Cambridge, 2001); Astrid Swenson, *The rise of heritage: preserving the past in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 25–65.

⁶ John Britton, 'The Guardian of Antiquities', *Gentleman's Magazine* (Aug. 1832), p. 104. See also E. J. Carlos writing in *Gentleman's Magazine* (Dec. 1831), p. 498.

conservation of our ancient national monuments'.⁷ They were also responsible for inspiring the actions of those who ensured the survival of Crosby Hall.

Histories of preservation movements and heritage, however, tend to start with John Ruskin or William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: while earlier antecedents are noted, they are seldom evaluated upon their own terms, but are rather seen as anticipatory precursors to the later movement.⁸ Astrid Swenson's recent study *The rise of heritage* emphasizes the importance of the period 1830–70 for debates about the role of the state in the protection of the past; the establishment of history as academic discipline; the successful restoration of 'lost' historical monuments; and the emergence of a popular culture of heritage. But the main focus of her transnational study is on the latter part of her period and on national bodies. Specific examples of action taken on behalf of the preservation and restoration of buildings in the first half of the century are not discussed in any detail. Chris Miele's work on nineteenth-century preservationism identified a number of campaigns or groups formed to preserve buildings in the first half of the nineteenth century but their activities and their roots in eighteenth-century antiquarian sensibilities have never been studied.⁹ Similarly, whilst the literature on antiquarianism, archaeology, and engagement with the past through material objects has increased rapidly in recent years, in terms of more specific studies of attitudes to restoration and preservation, the focus in the first half of the nineteenth century tends still to be upon the ecclesiastical fabric and a movement driven by piety and religious revival, rather than the fate of secular buildings whose value derived from their association with a national and domestic past.¹⁰

⁷ *Archaeological Journal*, 1 (1844), p. 2; *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 1 (1846), p. i.

⁸ Chris Miele, 'Heritage and its communities: reflections on the English experience in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', in Melanie Hall, ed., *Towards world heritage: international origins of the preservation movement, 1870–1930* (Aldershot, 2011), pp. 157–77; Melanie Hall, 'Conservation and the enemies of progress', in Chris Miele, ed., *From William Morris: building conservation and the Arts and Crafts cult of authenticity, 1877–1939* (New Haven, CT, 2005), pp. 1–29; Swenson, *The rise of heritage*.

⁹ Chris Miele in 'Conservation and the enemies of progress'. Important studies of early nineteenth-century attitudes to restoration, such as Simon Bradley, 'The gothic revival and the Church of England, 1790–1840' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1996), focus purely on religious buildings. The gothic revival itself tends to be conceptualized primarily as a phenomenon pertaining to religious architecture, with secular manifestations taking second place. See Philip Aspin, 'Architecture and identity in the English gothic revival, 1800–1850' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 2013), on the importance of, and scholarly lacuna surrounding, non-ecclesiastical and collegiate gothic architecture.

¹⁰ The relevant literature is extensive, but on the eighteenth-century context, see Noah Heringman, *Sciences of antiquity: romantic antiquarianism, natural history and knowledge work* (Oxford, 2013); Sweet, *Antiquaries*; D. R. Woolf, 'The dawn of the artifact: the antiquarian impulse in England, 1500–1730', *Studies in Medievalism*, 4 (1992), pp. 5–35. On nineteenth-century developments, see Stephen Bann, *The clothing of Clío: a study in the representation of history in nineteenth-century Britain and France* (Cambridge, 1984); Rosemary Hill, *God's architect: Pugin and the building of romantic Britain* (London, 2007), and eadem, 'Antiquaries in the age of romanticism: 1789–1851' (Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 2011).

The case of Crosby Hall highlights how the development of antiquarian and historical scholarship in the realm of domestic and secular antiquities from the eighteenth century onwards combined with narratives of national historical development, focusing upon the contributions of urban and commercial life to modern progress, to bring hitherto unregarded buildings into the limelight.¹¹ Its fate is indicative of a trend towards a more inclusive sense of the nation's architectural heritage than that of the eighteenth century which tended to focus upon the high profile buildings of church and state, and it reflects a growing interest in the historic fabric of London (and other cities) that can be evidenced in a wide range of publications devoted to London's buildings and to its history. It is important to remember, however, that Crosby Hall is a rare survival: most historic buildings which stood in the way of improvement and modernization were pulled down. Unsurprisingly, the campaigners of the 1830s and of the early twentieth century, when the Hall was threatened with demolition again, faced an uphill struggle in convincing a wider public of its value and in persuading them to pledge their financial support. The reasons for their success demand interrogation: the visibility of the Hall's location in the heart of the City of London, the tight network of activists, and the high profile of those whose support was solicited and lent for the campaign were all clearly critical. The agency of particular individuals, notably Maria Hackett, discussed below, was also crucial. But overall success hinged upon the Preservation Committee's timely representation of Crosby Hall as a building that was emblematic of London's history and their appeal to the period's burgeoning interest in the late medieval and Tudor era as one that was crucially formative in national life.

I

Crosby Hall has been a London landmark, ever since the wealthy wool merchant and grocer, Sir John Crosby, acquired the lease of a plot of land from the Italian merchant Cataneo Pinelli in 1466 to build himself a townhouse to rank with the urban residences of the aristocracy. Describing the house in Bishopsgate in 1598, John Stow observed that 'This house he built of stone and timber, verie large and beautiful and the highest at the time in London.'¹² By the end of the seventeenth century, however, when publications descriptive of London started to increase, Crosby Place was no longer the distinguished residence it once was.¹³ As early as the 1620s, it had reportedly become much decayed and repairs were ordered to be put in hand. By the 1640s, it was being used as a royalist prison. Although it escaped the Great Fire of 1666, a separate conflagration a few years later destroyed all but the Great Hall and the north wing (the rooms that

¹¹ Charles Dellheim, *The face of the past: the preservation of the medieval inheritance in Victorian England* (Cambridge, 1982), similarly explores the interweaving of themes of local and national identity through exploration of the urban past.

¹² John Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (2 vols., Oxford, 1908), 1, p. 172.

¹³ Michael Harris, 'London guidebooks before 1800', in Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds., *Maps and prints: aspects of the English booktrade* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 31–66.

would later be known as the Council Chamber and the Throne Room). Much of the original fabric was demolished and new houses were erected in its place to form Crosby Square. From 1672, the Great Hall was leased to a Presbyterian congregation for use as a meeting house, for which purpose a floor was inserted, splitting the space in two, with the downstairs retained as a warehouse. Meanwhile, the rooms in the north wing were separately leased and were used as a warehouse by the East India Company. In Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1677, the site was prospectively listed as the General Post Office.¹⁴

Ignominious decline through neglect and misuse continued throughout the eighteenth century. In William Maitland's *History of London* (1739) the 'spacious, lofty and magnificent edifice' was tellingly referred to in the past tense as having 'anciently stood' in Crosby Square. By 1766, it was simply commemorated as 'a very large house, built by Sir John Crosby, grocer and woolman, called Crosby Place'.¹⁵ By 1769, the Presbyterians had left, only to be replaced by a congregation of Rellyanists, followers of the Universalist preacher, James Relly. After his death in 1778, the lease passed to a firm of packers, Holmes and Hall, who inserted a second floor into the Great Hall (see Figure 1). As one of the nineteenth-century campaigners was to note with regret, 'its magnificent roof [was left] in a mere lumber garret; the ante-room ceiling and Council Chamber floor were broken through for their machinery, and the octangular bay window served for a counting house' (see Figure 2.)¹⁶ Little surprise then that those topographers and antiquaries who bothered to update Stow passed over Crosby Square, as the surrounding area was then known, without reference to the house or to Sir John Crosby himself.¹⁷

The shift in taste towards the picturesque in the later eighteenth century and the growing popularity of antiquarian and topographical publications, however, opened the way for a re-evaluation. The irregularity, asymmetry, and curious detail associated with gothic and vernacular architecture acquired aesthetic appeal in its own right, enhanced by the imaginative associations and meditative potential inherent in the age and decay of these buildings. Crosby Hall began to attract increased attention, first from topographical artists and, a generation later, from architects of an antiquarian persuasion.¹⁸ Thomas Pennant was the first to identify the building as a historical curiosity, rather than simply repeating

¹⁴ Norman and Caroe, *Crosby Place*, p. 30.

¹⁵ William Maitland, *The history of London from its foundation by the Romans, to the present time* (London, 1739), p. 419; Anon., *London and its environs described* (6 vols., London, 1766), II, pp. 202–3.

¹⁶ Charles Mackenzie, *Crosby Place described in a lecture on its antiquities and reminiscences* (London, 1842), pp. 47–8.

¹⁷ Nathan Bailey, *The antiquities of London and Westminster* (London, 1722), p. 132; see also R. B., *A new view and observations on the ancient and present state of London and Westminster* (London, 1730), p. 156.

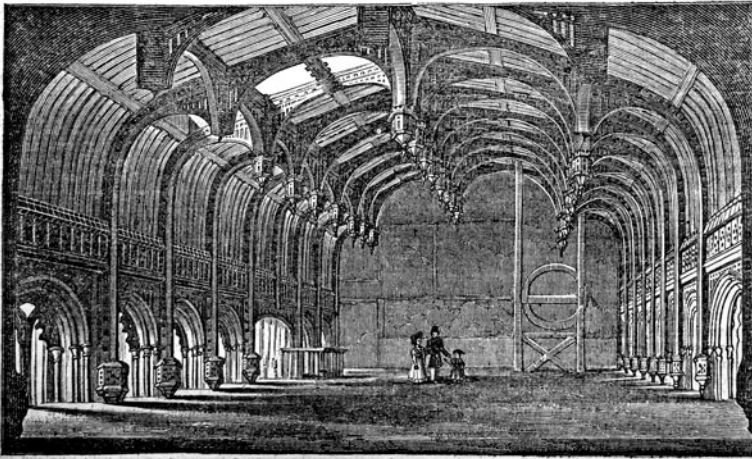
¹⁸ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, pp. 298–307. On the context of illustrated antiquarian representations of London, see Lucy Peltz, 'Aestheticizing the ancestral city: antiquarianism, topography and the representation of London in the long eighteenth century', *Art History*, 22 (1999), pp. 472–94.

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November 30 to December 31, 1832.

CROSBY HALL.



[Interior of Crosby Hall.]

Fig. 1. Interior of Crosby Hall showing the inserted floor from the *Penny Magazine*, 48 (Dec. 1832), p. 385, reproduced by kind permission of Special Collections, University of Leicester.

Stow's description. In *Of London*, first published in 1790, he observed that 'the hall, miscalled Richard III's chapel, is still very entire; a beautiful gothic building with a bow-window on one side; the roof is timber, and much to be admired'.¹⁹ The description was illustrated with an engraving of the exterior of the Great Hall by one of the leading antiquarian draughtsmen of the day and gothic enthusiast, John Carter. Pennant's lack of expertise in architectural or gothic antiquities betrayed itself here in his typically perfunctory summary, but his description highlighted three features which would be elaborated upon in much more detail in succeeding years: the association with Richard III, the bow window (or oriel window as it would commonly be referred to in the nineteenth century), and the ornate timber roof in the Great Hall.²⁰ *Some account of London* (the original laconic title was expanded

¹⁹ Thomas Pennant, *Of London* (London, 1790), p. 413. On the background to *Of London*'s publication, see Ralph E. Jenkins, 'The creation and reception of Thomas Pennant's "Of London"', *National Library of Wales Journal* (1992), pp. 325–36.

²⁰ William Hamper, 'Disquisition on the member in architecture called the oriel', *Archaeologia*, 23 (1830), pp. 105–16.

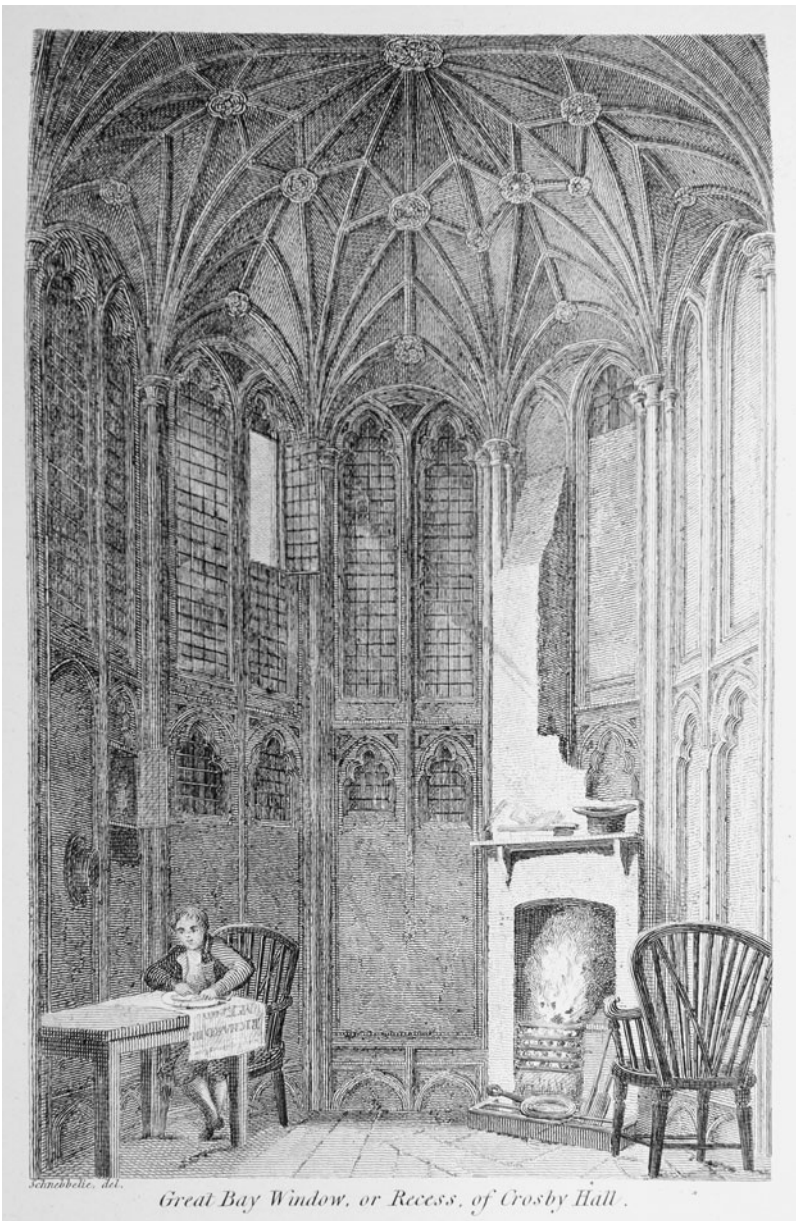


Fig. 2. The interior of the great bay window from Robert Wilkinson, *Londina illustrata* (London, 1819), reproduced by kind permission of Special Collections, University of Leicester.

upon in later editions) was a resounding success, and was followed by five subsequent editions and abridged versions. Meanwhile its content was shamelessly plundered and reproduced in the texts of other less compendious volumes aimed at the growing numbers of visitors to London. The publication coincided with a growing fashion for extra-illustration: publishers responded to this trend by commissioning engravings and etchings of scenes, streets, and buildings in London with which collectors might illustrate their volumes, amongst which Crosby Hall regularly featured as a subject.²¹

Storer and Grieg provided the first extended description of Crosby Hall, accompanied by a series of detailed engravings in *Select views of London* (1804); this was swiftly followed by James Pellar Malcolm's description in *Londinium redivivum* (1802–7).²² Between these two publications, Edward Pugh, writing as David Hughson, included a short and derivative description of the Hall in his 1806 volume on London. Their descriptions have much in common, but would appear to have been written independently. Storer and Grieg and Malcolm were all antiquarian draughtsmen: Malcolm worked extensively for John Nichols, drawing and engraving architectural antiquities for the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *History of Leicestershire*, and Storer was one of the many highly skilled engravers employed by John Britton for his architectural series, including the *Cathedral antiquities* and *Beauties of England and Wales*. He also published independently under his own name, including his series of *Cathedral antiquities*, *Select views*, and the *Antiquarian and topographical cabinet*.²³ Both Storer and Grieg and Malcolm recorded the damage and depredation that had been inflicted – the insertion of additional floors; the losses to the north and south ends of the hall through fire; the injuries sustained by the plasterwork and carved woodwork. They sought also to recreate a sense of the building's original appearance by representing it without the inserted floors in the accompanying engravings (although Storer added some bales and ladders to his representation of the interior of the Hall in a blend of contemporary verisimilitude and antiquarian reconstruction: see [Figure 3](#)). Both publications provided much more precise description of the bow window – now referred to as the oriel window – noting the clustered pillars, the depressed arch, and the ornate tracery.²⁴ Equally, the carved timber roof was now the focus of detailed attention:

²¹ On extra-illustrated editions of Pennant, see Anna Maude, 'The changing image of London: a comparison of the Grace collection and the Crowle Pennant in the British Museum print room', *London Journal*, 38 (2013), pp. 110–24.

²² J. P. Malcolm, *Londinium redivivum* (4 vols. London, 1802–7), III, pp. 562–4; interestingly, Crosby Hall did not feature in J. T. Smith's near contemporaneous *Antient topography of London* (London, 1815) despite Smith's inclusion of a section on 'domestic architecture'.

²³ A summary list of the illustrations of Crosby Hall can be found in the appendix of Bernard Adams, *London illustrated, 1604–1851* (London, 1983), p. 534.

²⁴ Malcolm, *Londinium redivivum*, III, p. 564.



Fig. 3. Interior of Crosby Hall from James Storer and John Grieg, *Select views of London and its environs* (2 vols., London, 1804).

Of the Hall, the first thing which naturally attracts the eye is the roof: this is decorated with a profusion of ornament almost unparalleled, yet disposed with so much taste as not to seem crowded. It is vaulted, forming a sort of flat-pointed arch, which is divided into eight principal compartments by ribs springing from *corbels* of an octagon form. These compartments, or larger arches, are composed of four smaller ones, from the springs of which depend beautiful drops of pendants, elaborately pierced and carved in a similar manner to those of the roof of Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster. The whole of this roof is of oak, and is painted of a stone colour. It is extremely well preserved. The arching of the high slender windows has a general conformity to the roof, and in fact the same conformity is admirably observed throughout the whole building.²⁵

These publications were followed by an article in volume IV of John Britton's influential *Architectural antiquities*. Britton's account had little to add in terms of descriptive analysis although it did provide a valuable (if sometimes inaccurate) ground plan of the building, before the later alterations. The very fact, however, that the Hall was included in Britton's series is in itself indicative of its developing reputation as a particularly noteworthy example of gothic architecture, a reputation which was reflected in the increasingly detailed attention given to it in other publications on London's antiquities. In 1818, it was the subject of eight plates in Wilkinson's *Londina illustrata*, engraved from drawings by Frederick Nash. By 1825, A. C. Pugin was referencing the windows, corbels, and roof of Crosby Hall in his *Examples of gothic architecture*,²⁶ while Thomas Allen described it at some length in volume III of his *History and antiquities of London, Westminster and Southwark* published in 1828.²⁷ Crosby Hall's significance as a specimen of domestic gothic architecture was now firmly established and was already being used as a model by architects such as William Wilkins.²⁸ There were consequences, however, to this re-evaluation: the removal by Strickland Freeman (the freeholder) of the stonework and ornamental ceiling from the Council Chamber in 1816 to decorate the dairy at his seat in Buckinghamshire was a serious loss.²⁹ Further

²⁵ James Storer and John Grieg, *Select views of London and its environs* (2 vols., London, 1804), I, unpaginated.

²⁶ A. C. Pugin, *Examples of gothic architecture* (2 vols., 3rd edn, London, 1825), I, pp. 28–31. See also 'Crosby Hall' in *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts and Journal of Literature and Science* (Nov. 1833), pp. 4–5.

²⁷ Robert Wilkinson, *Londina illustrata: graphic and historic memorials of monasteries, churches, chapels, schools, charitable foundations, palaces, halls, courts, processions, places of early amusement and modern and present theatres in the cities and suburbs of London and Westminster* (London, 1819), pp. 45–6; Thomas Allen, *The history and antiquities of London, Westminster, and Southwark, and parts adjacent* (4 vols., London, 1827–9), III, pp. 153–7.

²⁸ As Charles Eastlake noted in *A history of the gothic revival* (London, 1872) details of Crosby Hall were adapted for 'many a country mansion' (pp. 89–90), notably the library at Arundel Castle. William Wilkins also modelled the roof of the new hall at King's College Cambridge upon the roof of Crosby Hall in 1824.

²⁹ Allen, *History and antiquities of London, Westminster, and Southwark*, III, p. 156. See 'Preservation of Crosby Hall' (1832), p. 1, in London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) 10189/5.

desecration was suffered as individuals helped themselves to quatrefoils and other ornaments, whose potential value had been greatly increased with the romantic fashion for gothic antiquities as objects for collection and interior decor.³⁰ Notably, ornaments from the Council Chamber ended up in the possession of the dealer, Charles Yarnold, from whom they passed into the collection of L. N. Cottingham.³¹

II

In 1829, the lease held by the packing firm Holmes and Hall fell in, and the Freeman family who owned the freehold, having stripped so many of the fittings from the Council Chamber already, advertised the property on a building lease in 1831. The assumption was that the near-derelict hall and related buildings would be demolished to make way for a new development. Unexpectedly, however, its potential destruction provoked dismay and protest: the campaigning antiquary E. J. Carlos wrote an article for the *Gentleman's Magazine* in December of that year, drawing attention to both its architectural glories and its threatened destruction.³² Concern was felt particularly acutely amongst the neighbouring families of Crosby Square and on 8 May 1832 a public meeting was held at the City of London Tavern to establish what was best to be done. The outcome was the establishment of a Preservation Committee to raise a sum sufficient to purchase the lease and to carry out essential repairs in order to save the building. At this stage, it was as yet undecided for what practical purpose it was being saved, beyond the fact that it was of national historic importance and of both aesthetic and antiquarian value.

The initial public meeting was spearheaded by the Capper family of Crosby Square and their family friends: George Capper (a merchant), his nephews Samuel James and John Capper, and Samuel James's brother-in-law, the pottery manufacturer W. T. Copeland, alderman of Bishopsgate ward and later lord mayor of London, who chaired the meeting. Absent from the public meeting, and also subsequent meetings of the committee, was the half-sister of Samuel James and John Capper, Maria Hackett, a redoubtable woman with strong religious, philanthropic, and historical interests who was a driving force behind the campaign from the very beginning and would later play a pivotal role bringing the project to completion.³³

³⁰ The introduction of the second floor in line with the point from which the spandrels of the roof sprang made it all too easy for theft and mutilation of the corbels and other ornaments to take place. On the popularity of such antiquities in private collections, see Clive Wainwright, *The romantic interior: the British collector at home, 1750–1850* (New Haven, CT, 1989).

³¹ *Catalogue of the Museum of Medieval Art, collected by the late L. N. Cottingham FSA architect* (London, 1851), p. iv.

³² E. J. Carlos, 'On the threatened destruction of Crosby Hall', *Gentleman's Magazine* (Dec. 1831), pp. 498–9.

³³ On Hackett, see William J. Gatens, 'Hackett, Maria (1783–1874)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (ODNB); K. I. Garrett, 'Miss Hackett of Crosby Square', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 1 (1974), pp. 150–62; eadem, 'Maria Hackett, Crosby Hall and Gresham

Hackett's role as a woman is unusual, particularly given the level of financial investment that she committed to the project (see below) and highlights another aspect of women's active engagement with the past in the nineteenth century, as well as the potential for their informal participation in the associations of civil society.³⁴ She had a particular interest in the antiquities of London from the Roman era to the present day, corresponding with other antiquaries on Roman, Saxon, and gothic antiquities and in the contribution of women to national life through history.³⁵ She is best known today, however, as the 'Chorister's Friend' and as a patron of music.³⁶ For much of her adult life, she campaigned for the better treatment of choirboys, doing so in terms which were based upon legal issues of rights and the proper use of charitable bequests, rather than simply benevolent sympathy for maltreated boys. Starting with St Paul's, where her nephew was a chorister, Hackett researched the endowments of cathedral choirs and the terms upon which choir schools had been established, highlighting how far cathedral chapters across the country had allowed the original intentions of the benefactors to fall into desuetude.³⁷ Hackett's religious faith was clearly the inspirational force in this activity, but hers was a faith that was also imbued with national pride and was closely identified with her own awareness of national history: her *Brief account of cathedral and collegiate schools* was presented as a contribution to the history of the 'national church', to further the ends of the 'national religion', and to promote the

College', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 3 (1977), pp. 42–54; LMA 10925 typescript biography of Maria Hackett by K. I. Garrett.

³⁴ On women's engagement with the past, see, for example, the essays in Lynette Felber, ed., *Clio's daughters: British women making history, 1790–1899* (Cranbury, NJ, 2007); Christine Krueger, 'Why she lived at the PRO: Mary Anne Everett Green and the profession of history', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2003), pp. 65–90; Anne Laurence, 'Women historians and documentary research: Lucy Aikin, Agnes Strickland, Mary Anne Everett Green and Lucy Toulmin Smith', in Joan Bellamy, Anne Laurence, and Gill Perry, eds., *Women, scholarship and criticism: gender and knowledge, c. 1790–1900* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 125–41.

³⁵ Letter addressed to Mr Urban, signed MH of Crosby Square, *Gentleman's Magazine* (Feb. 1826), pp. 111–12; John Rickman to Hackett, 13 May 1830, LMA 10189/3 pt 1, fo. 144. In later life (1858), she expressed her frustration that there was still no satisfactory history of London: the themes she identified as in need of particular attention reflected her interest in the Roman and Saxon city, but also her particular concern for the agency of women in the past including 'the worthy ladies who kept schools within its walls' and 'the women of the days of chivalry, and the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Englishmen who flourished in the reign of Elizabeth' followed by the women of the Commonwealth and Restoration: Maria Hackett to Thomas Hugo, 14 July 1858, British Library (BL) Add MS 30297, fos. 261, 263v. Her own notes on the history of Crosby Hall and its inhabitants, and of St Helen's and the Bishopsgate area, are in LMA 10189/5.

³⁶ Gatens, 'Hackett, Maria'.

³⁷ See her *Correspondence and evidences respecting the ancient collegiate school attached to St Paul's Cathedral* (London, 1811–32) and her *A brief account of cathedral and collegiate schools: with an abstract of their statutes and endowments* (London, 1827). She put the knowledge acquired thereby to use in her *Popular account of St Paul's Cathedral* (London, 1816) published by John Nichols which reached its twenty-first edition by 1833.

cause of ‘*national* education’ [my italics]. Her intervention in the cause of cho-risters, which originally sprang from close familial connections, was also an intervention in matters of public concern in which she claimed an interest by virtue of her English nationality rather than her sex.³⁸ Similarly, her support for Crosby Hall was inspired by personal familiarity with the building, but also her strongly held belief in its importance for the history of London in particular and the nation at large. Possibly, she saw her own activities as part of that tradition of feminine agency in London’s history of which she was herself a student.

The Crosby Hall Preservation Committee included Alderman Copeland and the Cappers, and others of their neighbours, but also numbered many leading figures from amongst the architects and antiquaries of the day, including Edward Blore, John Britton, J. C. Buckler, E. J. Carlos, William Etty, Edward Hawkins, A. J. Kempe, John Bowyer Nichols (editor of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*), John Rickman, Anthony Salvin, and William Twopeny.³⁹ Several of these individuals, notably Blore, Britton, Carlos, Kempe, and Nichols (as well as Maria Hackett), had already been involved together in recent campaigns on behalf of the restoration of Peterborough Cathedral and for the preservation of the Lady Chapel at St Saviour’s Southwark, threatened by new London Bridge, while Etty was a key figure in the preservation of the city walls at York.⁴⁰ A number of members were also regular contributors to John Bowyer Nichols’s *Gentleman’s Magazine*, the leading print forum for antiquarian information of the day. The social profile of the Preservation Committee is thus illustrative of the closely knit social and antiquarian networks of the day. Other members of the committee provided valuable ballast and credibility: Maria Hackett would later observe that the support of Sir Robert Inglis and Lord Nugent at the meeting had been crucial to its success. Their presence, she claimed, had given a sanction and éclat to the proceedings and saved the initiative to rescue ‘an old tumble down place that would be much better out of the way’ from being laughed out of court.⁴¹

A subcommittee negotiated with Williams Freeman and secured the lease of the hall and vaults for £60 with the option of taking the house in Bishopsgate and the Council Chamber in 1836 for a further £90 pa. The committee were particularly anxious to secure the lease of the Council Chamber and the houses at no. 32 and 33 Bishopsgate Street as without these properties it would have been impossible to ensure convenient access to the building. From the start, it was intended that the building should be restored for some

³⁸ Hackett, *Brief account of cathedral and collegiate schools*, pp. v–vi.

³⁹ E. J. Carlos, *Historical and antiquarian notices of Crosby Hall, London* (London, 1832), pp. 57–60, lists the sixty members of the Preservation Committee. The minute books indicate that committee meetings seldom attracted more than ten members (five were required for quoracy).

⁴⁰ (Undated) letter from E. J. Carlos inviting attendance at a public meeting to report on proceedings of the restoration of the Lady Chapel, LMA 10189/2 pt 1, fo. 75. Blore had been responsible for drawing up the designs for the restoration of Peterborough Cathedral.

⁴¹ Maria Hackett to Thomas Hugo, 18 Mar. 1857, BL Add 30297, fo. 35.

practical purpose connected with 'science, literature and the arts' and should in the longer term be self-financing. It was not an option simply to preserve the Hall as a picturesque ruin in the centre of commercial London: the restored Hall would have to generate income to cover its expenses. The initial idea was that annual expenditure might be defrayed by converting the Council Chamber to a commercial reading room or library and that the Bishopsgate property might be let as a whole to a bookseller who could use the ground floor as a warehouse, and who would, conveniently, be able to take responsibility for the Hall (which could be hired out for concerts, lectures, and other events) and the library and the collection of annual subscriptions in return for the 'certain advantages which would result to him in the way of his business'.⁴² Other uses were mooted such as devoting the Hall to a museum of national antiquities, and particularly those that were then regularly being uncovered in London as a consequence of construction work. This proposal was never seriously entertained, but is significant for highlighting the wider agenda of a number of the friends of Crosby Hall who were campaigning for better recognition and protection of domestic antiquities.⁴³

In 1833, the Preservation Committee convened in optimistic spirit, confident that the 'liberality of the public' would enable them to accomplish their undertaking. In their first report, they stated their aims and objectives:

It is by no means the intention of the Committee to inflict such a reparation on the venerable fabric, as would destroy its character, and give it the appearance of a modern building. It will be their first care to arrest the progress of innovation and decay, by the repair of the external roof, and the removal of all modern and incongruous additions, while every fragment of the original structure will be held sacred. They will afterwards replace such portions of the ornamental carving as have been removed or lost; and will glaze the windows in a style corresponding with the age and character of the edifice, should the amount of subscriptions enable them to carry their designs fully into effect.⁴⁴

The surveyor's report submitted to the Preservation Committee in 1833 must have made sobering reading. The windows and the roof in particular were in need of substantial repair, and the inserted floors and wainscot panelling had to be removed, quite apart from restoring glazing and anything else. The Council Chamber was in an even worse condition with very little of the interior furnishings left intact, the floor in a dire state, and the walls and windows in urgent need of repair and reconstruction.⁴⁵

⁴² LMA 10179/7, p. 9.

⁴³ *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1832), p. 505; the suggestion came from A.J. Kempe, who, with Charles Roach Smith, was one of the foremost antiquaries of Roman London. He and Roach Smith were long-standing advocates for the better representation of British antiquities in the British Museum.

⁴⁴ LMA 10189/7, p. 15.

⁴⁵ LMA 10189/7, pp. 19–27.

The first stage was to repair the Great Hall and remove the temporary floors, restoring it to its original admired proportions. The architect Edward Blore agreed to provide his services gratis and Francis Ruddle, who had been employed on restorations at Westminster Abbey and Peterborough Cathedral, was engaged to oversee the building works. The Preservation Committee were fortunate to have secured Blore as architect: having started life as an antiquarian draughtsman he was, by 1832, well established as a leading specialist in gothic architecture, and one whose services were highly sought after.⁴⁶ No doubt he regarded working on Crosby Hall as an opportunity to extend his expertise through close analysis of the building as well as to enhance his own reputation through an act of public spirited benevolence. Another early fillip was received in October 1833 when the fashionable stained glass artist, Thomas Willement, who had recently worked with Blore on Goodrich Court in Herefordshire, responded to one of the fundraising circulars by offering to contribute the glass and glazing for the oriel window.⁴⁷ Clearly, as with Blore, this gave him an opportunity to raise his own profile, but Willement's generosity was also a valuable piece of publicity in its own right and constituted an additional public endorsement of the importance of the project. More prosaically, the suggestion inspired the Preservation Committee to write to the other subscribers inviting them to contribute their own armorial bearings to ornament the windows as a testimony to their own philanthropy.⁴⁸

Maria Hackett's own recollection of the restoration process provides an interesting insight into the practical problems encountered – familiar enough to anyone today who takes on the task of restoring a historic building – and the difficulties of relying upon voluntary contributions and fundraising. The Preservation Committee's efforts met with only limited success: they raised in total around £750, far less than the amounts that contemporary campaigns for buildings such as St Saviour's Southwark, York Minster, Peterborough Cathedral, or even York city walls were raising.⁴⁹ The campaigns to raise

⁴⁶ M. H. Port, 'Blore, Edward (1787–1879)', *ODNB*.

⁴⁷ LMA 10189/7, pp. 49–50.

⁴⁸ LMA 10189/7, p. 53, 4 Jan. 1834. By 1836, nineteen individuals had subscribed the cost for armorial bearings at £3 16s for a coat of arms or 5 g. to include crest, coronet, and supporter: printed notice in MS 10189/5.

⁴⁹ *The preservation of Crosby Hall* (1832) lists subscribers and their contributions. At this point, £615 had been raised from 159 donors of whom fourteen were women. Four years later, the number of subscribers had risen to 258 but the amount subscribed was only just over £850 (list of subscribers in LMA 10189/5). By contrast, in 1832, £2,100 had been raised for the restoration of the Lady Chapel at St Saviour's (admittedly a longer-standing campaign): *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1832), p. 501. The *Gentleman's Magazine* reported that £5,000 had been raised for Peterborough Cathedral through a subscription from the city and surrounding areas (Mar. 1832), p. 248; the *Penny Magazine* put the sum raised at £6,000 by 1833, see no. 71 (May 1833), p. 178, and for York Minster following the 1829 fire at £5,000 in two months (*Penny Magazine*, 53 (1833), p. 35). Geoffrey Curr, 'Who saved York walls? The roles of William Etty and the corporation of York', *York Historian*, 5 (1984), pp. 29–31,

money for St Saviour's, York Minster, and Peterborough Cathedral could draw on long traditions of charitable giving for ecclesiastical construction or refurbishment, exploiting the language of piety and religious duty to encourage donations; moreover, cathedrals were amongst the earliest buildings to be identified as part of the nation's heritage.⁵⁰ The success of the York city walls campaign, however, was principally due to the close association of the walls with the city's civic identity and growing awareness that their demolition would be detrimental both to the city's reputation and to its capacity to attract visitors, who were becoming increasingly important to the York economy.⁵¹

Despite their best endeavours (to be discussed further below), the committee failed to secure major contributions from either wealthy individuals from the City, whom they had evidently hoped might be touched by the building's connections to London's commercial history, or from the various Livery Companies to which Crosby Hall could claim a connection through its owners and tenants. This was a period of increased interest in the history of guilds and of the Livery Companies, driven in part, as their historian William Herbert noted, by anxiety around the 'Commission for Inquiring into Municipal Corporations'.⁵² This new historical awareness did not, however, extend to sympathy for Crosby Hall. Only the Grocer's Company could be prevailed upon to recognize their connection with Sir John Crosby, a former warden of the Company, with a donation of £100. Nor were the members of the Preservation Committee entirely without blame for this financial shortfall, the minutes clearly indicating that certain individuals failed to pay their own subscriptions.⁵³

Meanwhile, plans to put the Hall to more profitable use had failed to secure its long-term future. The intention, as we have seen, had been to equip the internal spaces so that they could be let as shops or as business premises while it was envisaged that the Great Hall should function as a lecture hall or concert room. In this sense, the campaign was very timely as it was the expanding world of educational, musical, and literary activities in 1830s London that made such 'repurposing' of the Hall a feasible proposition. In 1834, the Society of Choral Harmonists paid £50 for the use of the hall on six evenings in April, May, and June, but negotiations to transfer the lease of the Hall to the Society fell through, possibly because of the Preservation Committee's insistence upon a commitment from

notes that a subscription for the repair and preservation of York City Walls was opened in 1829 and by 1831, 3,000 donations had been received (despite competition from York Minster) and by 1836, a total of £3,185 had been spent.

⁵⁰ See Sweet, *Antiquaries*, pp. 287–98. John Britton's series of *Cathedral antiquities* in particular had confirmed the national importance of cathedrals as part of the nation's architectural heritage.

⁵¹ Curr, 'Who saved York walls?', pp. 25–38.

⁵² William Herbert, *The history of the twelve great Livery Companies of London* (2 vols., London 1833), 1, p. ii.

⁵³ LMA 10189/7, p. 51.

the Harmonists to maintain the Hall's 'ancient character' and to carry on with the restoration under the guidance of an architect.⁵⁴ Another sub-committee was appointed to deal with the lord mayor, the master of the Mercers Company and members of the Gresham Committee about the possibility of relocating the Gresham lectures from the Royal Exchange to Crosby Hall.⁵⁵ Given the Hall's proximity to Gresham's own house in Bishopsgate, this was thought to be a particularly appropriate solution. It was certainly always Maria Hackett's favourite option and she wrote a number of memoranda arguing the case for the relocation;⁵⁶ however, although there was clearly some interest from the Gresham Committee, no firm commitments were ever made.

The consequence was that by 1835, the committee's funds were exhausted. The exterior of the Great Hall had been repaired, the roof reinstated, and the stonework of the oriel window had been restored but the Hall was not yet ready for occupation. Moreover, nothing had been done about the Throne Room and the Council Chamber which were still in a state of 'hopeless dilapidation'.⁵⁷ The contracts for repairs had already amounted to £738, accounting for almost all the sum raised by the committee, and the entire remodelling and restoration was estimated to cost around £3,000. The committee, Hackett was to recollect, felt disappointed and disgusted at the apathy of their fellow citizens and no prospect of any 'desirable appropriation'. When they discovered that their liabilities exceeded the funds at their disposal they determined upon resigning the lease – at which point Hackett offered to assume the lease herself.⁵⁸

Hackett's account of the events to the clergyman and antiquary, Thomas Hugo, emphasized that she took on the lease of the Council Chamber and Throne Room of the property as well as the Hall and their repairs were 'my own unaided work'.⁵⁹ As a later chronicler of Crosby Hall observed, 'she aroused the sleeping energies of some of the antiquarians of that day'.⁶⁰ Indeed, Hackett's leading role in the preservation campaign was always discreetly recognized at the time (in suitably anonymized terms) by the architects, antiquaries, and other well-wishers whom she rigorously kept up to the mark. Hackett was very much hands-on in her approach to the restoration, dealing directly with the architect Edward Lushington Blackburn (who had replaced Blore) and the builder, Mr Rudder, providing Blackburn, who was succeeded in turn by John Davies, with detailed instructions and regular requests for meetings to report on progress. As well as taking on the liabilities and costs of the original Preservation Committee, which the restoration fund had failed to cover, she invested significant sums of her own money (she later estimated

⁵⁴ LMA 10189/7, pp. 55–6, 75, 78–9.

⁵⁵ LMA 10189/7, p. 75.

⁵⁶ Robert Routledge to Maria Hackett, 14 Aug. 1832, LMA 10189/2/2, fo. 165.

⁵⁷ Maria Hackett to Thomas Hugo, 18 Mar. 1857, BL Add MS 30297, fo. 35v.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ C. W. F. Goss, *Crosby Hall: a chapter in the history of London* (London, 1908), p. 114.

nearly £3,000) into converting the Hall, and restoring and adapting the Council Chamber and Throne Room into usable premises which might then be let.⁶¹ Although she did so in the expectation that there would be a future financial return from letting the space on a commercial basis to the Gresham Society or a similar body, it was nonetheless an extraordinary financial investment for a single and only moderately wealthy woman to make.⁶² She was hampered by slow workmen and by problems in gaining possession of the premises in Bishopsgate Street which involved ‘painful altercations’ with the landlord, Williams Freeman. ‘Two or three claimants’, she complained, ‘appeared for various parts of the property at every point of the compass and were met with contradictory leases, ground plans, and awards.’ This incurred additional expenses and, more seriously, delays which led to the failure of the plan to lease the property to the Gresham Committee: when the Royal Exchange, where the lectures had been held, was burned down in 1838, Crosby Hall was still not in a fit state to host them and she lost the opportunity to arrange an immediate transfer.⁶³

For all her effort and commitment, Hackett encountered considerable problems and by 1842 she had been forced to sell out her interest for financial reasons, particularly given that the collapse of her pet Gresham project meant that the future use of the Hall was still uncertain. She was not receiving any rental income, despite optimistic projections, and she was also being charged for rates. Given her other philanthropic interests, the situation was not sustainable, and the lease was acquired by a committee of proprietors.⁶⁴ Although she was able to recoup some of her investment, she estimated that she had been left out of pocket by about £1,000.⁶⁵ She retained an interest in Crosby Hall for the rest of her life, however, and continued as one of the proprietors.⁶⁶ This body chiefly comprised residents of the Bishopsgate area but

⁶¹ Maria Hackett to Thomas Hugo, 18 Mar. 1857, BL Add MS 30297, fo. 36v.

⁶² See, for example, the letter to her step-brother S.J. Capper reproduced in *Notes and Queries*, 1 Apr. 1911, pp. 241–2, in which she analysed the available square footage of space offered by Crosby Hall and a rival location at the rebuilt Royal Exchange, 26 May 1840.

⁶³ Maria Hackett to Thomas Hugo, 18 Mar. 1857, BL Add MS 30297, fo. 36.

⁶⁴ The proprietors listed by Hammon were: Thomas Bell, New Broad St; Thomas Bax, Bishopsgate Street; Dennis Chandler, Mark Lane; F. B. Garty, Chepstow Place, Camberwell; Miss Hackett, Clapham Rise; Robert Hanbury, Stamford Hill; Joseph Hodgson, Norton Folgate; Walter Hawkins, Tower Street; Metcalf Hopgood, Bishopsgate Street; George Hall, Bishopsgate Street; Thomas Hall, Bishopsgate Street; W. Herring, Sun Street; Richard Lillwall, Lime Street; William Lyall, St Helen’s Place; Charles Mackenzie vicar of St Helen’s; Henry Oldham, Devonshire Square; Thomas Owden Scrambler, Bishopsgate Street; Samuel Read, London Wall; Robert Smith, Lombard Street; Benjamin Smith, London Wall; Henry Sterry, Bermondsey; Samuel Tompsett, Billiter Street; William Williams, Rood Lane. See Henry J. Hammon, *The architectural antiquities and present state of Crosby Place, as lately restored by John Davies Esq Architect* (London, 1844), pp. 5–7.

⁶⁵ Maria Hackett to Thomas Hugo, 18 Mar. 1857, BL Add MS 30297, fo. 36. In the same letter, she estimated the total costs of the purchase of the lease and the restoration by both the Preservation Committee and the Committee of the Metropolitan Institution at £7,000.

⁶⁶ Hammon, *Architectural antiquities and present state of Crosby Place*, p. 6.

none of the original members of the Preservation Committee were included: that body had been a metropolitan elite of antiquaries, architects, and figures of social and political distinction and, according to Hackett's own rather tart recollection, would have nothing more to do with the Hall once the initial flurry of excitement over securing its preservation was over. But the local constituency of the proprietors listed in Hammon's pamphlet suggests the extent to which the cause of Crosby Hall had taken root amongst the neighbouring residents, who had come to appreciate its historic significance and its potential value as an amenity and as a focus for philanthropic activity.

The restoration was precisely that: the hall was 'restored' to what the committee of the 1840s (advised by the architect Blackburn) believed a late fifteenth-century hall would have looked like.⁶⁷ The roof of the Great Hall was one of the few elements that was original: the oriel window aside, the other windows had been reconstructed and reglazed and ornamented with the arms of subscribers and the city companies, the floor had been relaid, the walls of the Throne Room and Council Chamber had been rebuilt, and a papier maché ceiling modelled upon the original was inserted in the Council Chamber where the second oriel window had also been reconstructed.⁶⁸ A new stone facade was erected facing the church of Great St Helens and an entirely new front was built on Bishopsgate Street in the style of 'timber houses of the period' (see [Figure 4](#)).⁶⁹ In terms of interior furnishings, Hackett had purchased the fittings that had been used at Westminster Abbey for the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837 at a knock down price of £10. This secured for her 20 yards of 'Crimson Drugget with a deep yellow fringe and many yards of hemp matting'.⁷⁰ A minstrel's gallery, a raised dais, and a service screen were introduced into the Great Hall, in keeping with the accepted model of fifteenth-century halls, but with the very nineteenth-century addition of an arched recess for an organ and raised seating, installed for musical performances. The completed restoration was formally opened on 27 July 1842 by Alderman Copeland with a public dinner 'served in the old English style'.⁷¹

⁶⁷ For an analysis of how much of the original building was left intact, see Walter Godfrey, 'Crosby Hall (re-erected)', *Survey of London, iv: Chelsea, pt II* (London, 1913), pp. 15–17.

⁶⁸ Mackenzie, *Crosby Place described*, p. 11.

⁶⁹ Summarized in Hammon, *Architectural antiquities and present state of Crosby Place*; the architect John Davies oversaw the final stages, but most of the rebuilding was completed according to designs drawn up by Blackburn.

⁷⁰ Richard Clark to Maria Hackett, 29 Aug. 1838, LMA 10189/2/1, fo. 73; see also Richard Clark to Maria Hackett, 9 Aug. 1838, LMA 10189/2/2, fo. 274.

⁷¹ Goss, *Crosby Hall*, p. 117. The interior view of the Hall, complete with organ, was depicted in the account of the 1842 ceremony published in the *Illustrated London News*, 27 Aug. 1842, p. 249.



Fig. 4. The Bishopsgate Street facade, reproduced by kind permission of Historic England.

III

From the very start, Crosby Hall was presented as a building which concerned the national interest, on behalf of which it behove the public, particularly the public of London, to exert themselves, reflecting as it did on such important

aspects of the city's history and the mercantile success that lay behind its current prosperity. Interest in London's past and its historical appearance was, moreover, becoming more widespread and disseminated through a range of media: historical novels, historical maps, periodical articles, topographical and antiquarian texts, panoramas, theatre and history paintings.⁷² The city's rapid growth and the disappearance of so much of its earlier fabric meant that rare pre-Fire survivals, such as Crosby Hall, were the more to be appreciated, both as a visible index of the progress of modern urban society and as historical curiosities. Nonetheless, the case for preserving an ancient and decayed building, which was serving no practical function, presented considerable challenges. Unlike the campaigns to save or restore churches, where supporters could take the inherent value of the building for granted and draw upon reserves of piety and the language of the alliance of church and state in order to bolster their arguments for the preservation of the physical fabric of the church, a secular building such as Crosby Hall could claim no such special purpose and had no automatic right to consideration.⁷³

The significance of Crosby Hall for national history and its inherent public interest underpinned the publicity campaign that the committee launched within weeks of being first established. Its supporters identified it as yet another monument imperilled due to the absence of appropriate legislation: Alfred Kempe appealed to the generosity of the public, made necessary, he said, by the government's continued failure to contribute to the preservation of 'public national monuments'.⁷⁴ E. J. Carlos, the most forthright critic of modern depredations on architectural antiquities of the day, wrote a series of articles for the *Gentleman's Magazine* which were later gathered together as a small octavo volume, with undeniably poor quality woodcuts, published by John Bowyer Nichols and sold at the relatively modest price of one shilling. Carlos described Crosby Hall as 'A building so distinguished, though locally situated in the metropolis, belongs to the kingdom at large, and not only to the kingdom but to the world.'⁷⁵

Articles on Crosby Hall soon started to appear in the new range of cheap periodicals which were emerging in the 1830s aimed at a different more popular market, such as the *Penny Magazine*, *Saturday Magazine*, and the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, whose weekly numbers sold for 2d.⁷⁶ The rhetoric of national importance and the Hall's role in England's history was

⁷² Billie Melman, *The culture of history: English uses of the past, 1800–1953* (Oxford, 2006).

⁷³ *Gentleman's Magazine* (May 1832), p. 424.

⁷⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1832), p. 507.

⁷⁵ Carlos, *Historical and antiquarian notices*, p. 15.

⁷⁶ *Saturday Magazine*, 8 Sept. 1832, pp. 89–90; *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, 5 Jan. 1833, pp. 14–15. See Patricia Anderson, *The printed image and the transformation of popular culture, 1790–1860* (Oxford, 1991), and Rosemary Mitchell, *Picturing the past: English history in text and image, 1830–1870* (Oxford, 2000), especially pp. 111–39 on the publishing background and readership of these periodicals.

repeated, but with a different nuance that endowed it with relevance to the wider community of Londoners: thus, the *Penny Magazine* represented it not as the private property of single wealthy landowner, but as part of the ‘public inheritance’ of the population at large, as tangible evidence of the diversified wealth generated by the labours of successive generations.⁷⁷

Further histories and architectural studies followed in the 1830s and 1840s and the Preservation Committee itself published regular summaries of the history of the building and its significance in its appeals for further subscriptions. In 1836, Maria Hackett launched a competition for the best historical and graphic illustrations of the Priory Church of St Helen, Gresham College, and Crosby Hall for which praemia to the value of 100 guineas were to be awarded. This competition was not so much an exercise in raising funds as raising the profile of the building and demonstrating its historical importance.⁷⁸ Committee members such as the antiquary John Britton, the writer Charles Crowden Clarke, and the musician Vincent Novello were pressed by Maria Hackett into giving public lectures at the Hall.⁷⁹ Whilst the intended audience and readership varied, these ventures all insisted on the national importance of Crosby Hall and the inherent interest of its historical associations: these may be summarized as the Hall as an example of medieval domestic architecture, illustrative of ‘olden time’; the Hall’s associations with historical characters, particularly Richard III and Shakespeare; and the Hall’s significance as a symbol London’s commercial history and the success of its mercantile class.

The descriptions of Crosby Hall did not simply identify it as a specimen of gothic architecture: as John Britton noted in *Architectural antiquities*, buildings like Crosby Hall were generally inferior to cathedrals in terms of the quality of the gothic architecture that they displayed, but they were of rather more interest in terms of their historical associations and as being illustrative of the domestic economy and the manners and customs of earlier periods.⁸⁰ The telling point is that Crosby Hall was being applauded as a specimen of *domestic* architecture, a category that only began to be conceptualized from a historical

⁷⁷ *Penny Magazine*, 48 (Dec. 1832), p. 385.

⁷⁸ The suggested themes, reflecting Hackett’s own interests, included: the Empress Helena and London in the time of Constantine; English nunneries of the Benedictine Order; the history of St Helen’s priory prior to dissolution; Sir John Crosby and the commercial and literary history of London in the reigns of Edward IV and Henry VI; the personal history of Richard III and an inquiry into the truth of charges brought against him in the following reign; and memoirs of Sir Bartholomew Rede, Margaret Roper, and Sir Thomas More. For full details of the competition, see *Gentleman’s Magazine* (Feb. 1836), pp. 192–3. The prize was eventually awarded to J. W. Burgon for an essay on Thomas Gresham, later published as *The life and times of Sir Thomas Gresham* (London, 1839).

⁷⁹ Flier entitled ‘Illustrations of Crosby Hall’, 1 Feb. 1839, in LMA 10189/5. Crowden Clarke was to speak on the poets of the Elizabethan era (and particularly Edmund Spenser) and Britton on the ‘Old mansions of England’ (particularly the most distinguished baronial halls).

⁸⁰ John Britton, *The architectural antiquities of Great Britain* (5 vols., 1807–26), IV, p. 359.

perspective in the early nineteenth century. Indeed, ‘domestic architecture’ was not a term that was used by eighteenth-century antiquaries: their focus was rather upon ecclesiastical and military structures and little, if any, attention was devoted to traditions of vernacular architecture.⁸¹ By 1804, however, Storer and Grieg had identified Crosby Hall as one of London’s ‘most elegant specimens of ancient domestic architecture’ and J. P. Malcolm discussed it in his historical sketch of ‘domestic architecture’ in the second edition of *Anecdotes of London* of 1810.⁸²

Smith, Storer, and Malcolm and their peers had identified a type of architecture which was otherwise almost entirely disregarded, chiefly as a result of their interest as antiquarian draughtsmen in the picturesque qualities of half-timbered buildings. Antiquaries and architects followed their lead some twenty years later: more widespread appreciation of domestic antiquities and domestic architecture became evident from the late 1820s and 1830s, with greater attention being given to the social, economic, and political contexts in which these buildings were erected. This development coincided with and contributed to the Victorian celebration of ‘olden time’ and of domesticity in general. The term ‘domestic’ became ubiquitous in antiquarian publications: histories of domesticity and domestic life appeared alongside studies of domestic architecture, which was valued precisely because it was illustrative of domestic manners and customs, or the ‘domestic economy’ of olden times.⁸³ The term ‘olden times’ was protean and non-specific and could be deployed with reference to any period from Roman Britain to the early eighteenth century: in the context of towns, it was generally associated with the late fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, given that few buildings survived from earlier periods. Its architectural style was assumed to be gothic, but could encompass the Italianate influences of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries too. More generally, its usage carried connotations of nostalgia for a simpler era, in which there was greater social harmony: hence the constant association of olden time with communal activities engendering social harmony such as pageantry and feasting.⁸⁴

⁸¹ This is not to say that there was no antiquarian interest in historic houses: they were widely illustrated in county histories and in series such as Francis Grose’s *Antiquities of England and Wales* (1773–6) but the category of ‘domestic architecture’ or even ‘domestic antiquities’ was not explicitly used. Edward King anticipated some of the subject matter of ‘domestic architecture’ and the interests of the nineteenth-century antiquaries in his ‘Sequel to the observations on ancient castles’, *Archaeologia*, 6 (1782), pp. 231–375, see in particular the discussion of Eltham Hall, pp. 365–74.

⁸² Storer and Grieg, *Select views*, 1, unpaginated; J. P. Malcolm, *Anecdotes of the manners and customs of London in the eighteenth century* (2 vols., 2nd edn., London, 1810), II, pp. 363–4.

⁸³ See, for example, the discussion of the importance of illustrating the ‘domestic economy’ of the Romans in William Gell’s *Pompeiana* in Rosemary Sweet, ‘William Gell and Pompeiana (1817–19 and 1832)’, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 83 (2015), pp. 245–81.

⁸⁴ On ‘olden time’ and ‘merrie England’, see Peter Mandler, “‘In the olden time’”: romantic history and English national identity”, in Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood, eds., *A union*

Amongst modern architectural historians, the Victorians' interest in domestic architecture has generally been associated with a rediscovery of Elizabethan style and its deployment in country house architecture by such doyennes of the tudorbethan (or jacobethan) style as Edward Blore, William Burn, or Anthony Salvin.⁸⁵ This is not without reason, both in terms of the designs that were executed and the original buildings that the architects studied and sought to emulate. Publications such as Nash's *Mansions of England in the olden time* (1839) or Clarke's *The domestic architecture of the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James the First* (1833) focused on gentry seats and houses of the nobility, chiefly from the late fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries. However, it is important to remember that these architects also drew on *urban* examples for their designs and, just as there was an emerging canon of Elizabethan gentry houses featuring in antiquarian studies and architectural designs, there was equally a list of *urban* structures, such as Crosby Hall, the New Inn at Gloucester, or St Mary's Guildhall Coventry, which were regularly cited in discussions of domestic architecture of the late medieval and sixteenth-century style.⁸⁶ Antiquaries with an interest in urban history attached particular importance to these buildings, not only because they were illustrative of the manners and customs of past ages in their respective towns, but more specifically because the self-evident wealth and magnificence which they embodied were a testimony to the power, prosperity, and influence of towns and the mercantile elites of the past. According to the dominant whiggish narratives of the day, the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the dissolution of the power of the feudal nobility, the establishment of domestic peace and stability, and the growth of commerce and manufactures: happy developments of which the domestic and civic architecture of the nation's historic towns was the visible

of multiple identities: the British Isles, c. 1750–1850 (Manchester, 1997), pp. 78–92; idem, *The fall and rise of the stately home* (New Haven, CT, 1997), especially pp. 21–51; idem, 'Revisiting the olden time: popular Tudorism in the time of Victoria', in Tatiana C. String and Marcus Bull, eds., *Tudorism: historical imagination and the appropriation of the sixteenth century* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 13–35. See also Rebecca Jeffrey Easy, 'The myth of merrie England in Victorian painting', in Florence S. Boos, ed., *History and community: essays in Victorian medievalism* (New York, NY, and London, 1992), pp. 59–80; Andrew Sanders, *In the olden time: Victorians and the British past* (New Haven, CT, 2013), pp. 21–32.

⁸⁵ Anthony Salvin, William Tite, and the historian of domestic architecture, William Twopeny, as well as Edward Blore, were subscribers and members of the Preservation Committee. Sir Jeffrey Wyatville subscribed, but declined to join the Committee.

⁸⁶ T. H. Clarke, *The domestic architecture of the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James the First* (London, 1833); Edward Buckton Lamb, *Studies of ancient domestic architecture* (London, 1846); Francis Dollman, *Examples of ancient domestic architecture* (London, 1858); M. Habershon, *The ancient half-timbered houses of England* (London, 1836); Thomas F. Hunt, *Exemplars of Tudor architecture adapted to modern habitations with illustrative details selected from ancient edifices* (London, 1841); Thomas Hudson Turner, *Some account of domestic architecture in England from the conquest to the end of the thirteenth century* (London, 1851); Henry Parker, *Some account of domestic architecture in England from Richard II to Henry VIII* (London, 1859); William Twopeny, *Some observations on the domestic architecture of the middle ages* (London, 1843).

evidence. Sir John Crosby's success as a wool merchant was a harbinger of London's nineteenth-century commercial prosperity and Crosby Hall, therefore, exemplified not only his personal riches, but also the increasing wealth and prosperity of London that derived from expanding trade and greater domestic stability. 'Surely', wrote the anonymous author writing on behalf of the Preservation Committee in 1832, 'the affluent and high-minded citizens of the metropolis of the British empire, will not permit so proud a monument of civic splendour to fall to decay.'⁸⁷

As a rare exemplar of urban domestic architecture in London preceding the fire, Crosby Hall also offered an indication of what other palaces of the nobility and wealthy gentry might have looked like. The survival of the vaults allowed architectural antiquaries to reconstruct the original plan of the building. The architect Edward Blackburn suggested that it had originally been built as a double courted mansion, a style which was typical of the transition from houses built for defensive purposes to houses built for domestic comfort and display of wealth and status and which was characteristic of the later fifteenth century.⁸⁸ Crosby Hall was placed in a typology of halls or noble residences such as Penshurst, Eltham, and Haddon Hall, all of which conformed to a basic type of house built around a great hall, with a service passage covered by a minstrel's gallery and domestic offices at one end and private chambers at the other. Beyond this, Crosby's principal architectural attractions were the oriel window and the richly carved roof which had survived more or less intact. Architectural antiquaries were also fascinated by the fact that the Great Hall boasted both a louvre in the roof and an elaborate fireplace: it had been originally assumed that the introduction of the technology of chimneys and mural fireplaces obviated the need for the central fireplace and louvre of early great halls. The evidence of Crosby Hall indicated that both mural and central fireplaces existed simultaneously and was therefore of considerable interest for historians of domestic architecture.⁸⁹

Thus, Crosby Hall was promoted as an exemplar of domestic architecture, of 'scientific' value for the modern architect and a specimen of the 'pure and refined' taste of earlier times from which the public at large could benefit.⁹⁰ It was for this reason that architects such as Blore, Salvin, Blackburn, and Davies were willing to be involved in its restoration and why the recently

⁸⁷ Anon., 'Preservation of Crosby Hall' (1832), p. 2, in LMA 10189/5.

⁸⁸ Edward Lushington Blackburn, *An architectural and historical account of Crosby Place, London* (London, 1834); see also John Woody Papworth, 'Memoir of Crosby Place' (1841), Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Pa Fam/1/3. Papworth drew on new evidence deriving from the subsequent discovery of additional vaults in a rather more fanciful reconstruction of the original building. On the relationship between the two texts, see Norman and Caroe, 'The records of the buildings', in *Crosby Place*, pp. 33–54.

⁸⁹ Carlos, *Historical and antiquarian notices*, p. 35; Clarke, *Domestic architecture*, p. xi; Mackenzie, *Crosby Place described*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Anon., 'Preservation of Crosby Hall' (1832), p. 2, in LMA 10189/5.

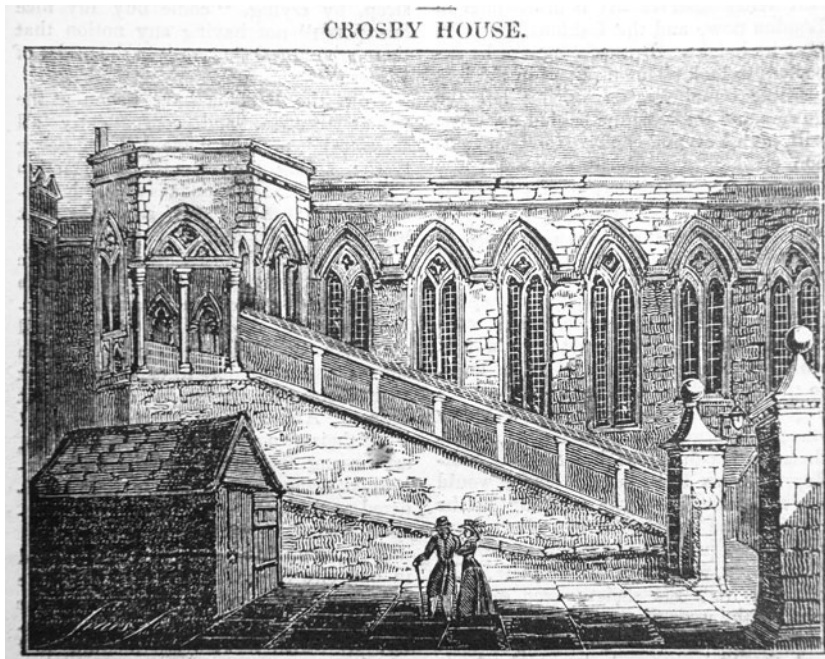


Fig. 5. Crosby Hall from *Mirror of Literature Amusement and Instruction*, 19 May 1829, p. 234, reproduced by kind permission of Special Collections, University of Leicester.

established Royal Institute of British Architects offered the Soane medallion for an essay on the reconstruction of Crosby Place in 1841: a competition that was won by John Woody Papworth's 'Memoir of Crosby Place'.⁹¹

But it was also rich in other historical associations, and particularly in connection with Shakespeare and Richard III. Following Crosby's death in 1475, his widow had sold the leasehold of the property to Richard duke of Gloucester, and, according to Shakespeare, it was at Crosby Hall that as Richard III he had conspired to murder the princes in the Tower. In 1790, Thomas Pennant had been reticent on the subject, simply noting that Richard III had lodged at Crosby Hall, as Stow had also noted in the *Survey of London*: at this point, momentum had yet to build up behind the celebration of its Shakespearean connections. In the nineteenth century, it became an increasingly important aspect of the narrative that was being constructed around the Hall, overshadowing its origins as a merchant residence. By 1829, even before the Preservation Committee had begun its campaign, the Hall featured in the *Mirror* as number 11 in the series 'Illustrations of Shakespeare', accompanied by a small and rather crude woodcut (see Figure 5).⁹² One of the early promotional pamphlets suggested that the Hall

⁹¹ Papworth 'Memoir of Crosby Place', RIBA Pa/Fa/1/3.

⁹² *Mirror*, 19 May 1829, p. 234.

had even been the location for some of the earliest performances of Shakespeare's plays.⁹³ As a later writer on Crosby Hall explained, its 'special attraction' derived not simply from the fact that it had been a royal residence, but, 'from the notice which it has on this account received from one, who has only to make a place the scene of his matchless impersonations in order to confer on it an immortality of interest'.⁹⁴ Carlos, writing in 1832, was sceptical about how much could really be known about Richard III's residence at Crosby Hall or of the Hall's role as a backdrop to the violent events of his reign,⁹⁵ but he was taken to task by the *Penny Magazine* for such pedantry, the latter citing the supposedly unequivocal authority of Thomas More that Richard really did plot the murderous deed in the Council Chamber.⁹⁶ For the Victorians, Crosby Hall seemed to offer a tangible point of contact with Shakespeare, which was all the more valuable as only sketchy details otherwise survived of his time in London. As John Wykeham Archer lamented in *Vestiges of old London*, 'we have not a vestige whereby to distinguish the locality which produced the wondrous creations of Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear'.⁹⁷ Great, then, was the satisfaction when the antiquary Joseph Hunter finally established that Shakespeare had indeed lived in the parish, having identified his name in a 1598 subsidy roll, where Shakespeare paid a levy that was indicative of a substantial property.⁹⁸ Could he even have lived next door to Crosby Hall?

Richard III was far from being the only illustrious occupant of the Hall, however, and as the nineteenth century progressed, the property history of the Hall was gradually filled in and the roll call of distinguished personages associated with Crosby Hall expanded to include a number of other characters regarded by the Victorians as distinguished in the annals of history. In a splendid piece of historical irony, Thomas More, arch calumniator of Richard's posthumous reputation, was also associated with Crosby Hall. In the nineteenth century, it was believed that More might have acquired the lease as early as 1509 and held it until 1523 when he leased it in turn to his friend, the merchant Antonio Bonvisi.⁹⁹ More, it was assumed, retreated to Crosby Hall for leisure and study, entertaining Erasmus and other humanists – even the king – and

⁹³ LMA 10189/5 pamphlet inviting subscriptions (no date).

⁹⁴ Thomas Hugo, 'A memoir of Crosby Place', *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 1 (1856), p. 41. See also Charles Knight, *London* (6 vols., London, 1841), 1, p. 319: 'This passage is of great importance; for the preservation of Crosby Hall, through all the vicissitudes of its fortunes, is attributable to the popularity it derived from it. What its own intrinsic beauty and historical character might not have accomplished for it, has been done by a mere incidental notice in the great poet's writings.'

⁹⁵ Carlos, *Historical and antiquarian notices*, p. 14.

⁹⁶ *Penny Magazine*, 48 (31 Dec. 1832), p. 386.

⁹⁷ J. W. Archer, *Vestiges of old London: a series of etchings from original drawings, illustrative of the monuments and architecture of London in the first, fourth, twelfth and six succeeding centuries, with descriptions and historical notices* (London, 1851), p. 2.

⁹⁸ Hammon, *Architectural antiquities and present state of Crosby Hall*, p. 9, quoting Joseph Hunter, *New illustrations of the life, studies and writings of Shakespeare* (2 vols., London, 1845).

⁹⁹ Norman and Caroe, *Crosby Place*, pp. 21–2, pointed out that there is no evidence that More ever dwelt at Crosby Hall as he sold the lease to Bonvisi only six months later.

he featured ever more prominently in historical notices.¹⁰⁰ At the ceremony to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone of the Council Chamber in 1836, the Hall was decorated with a picture depicting the interior in 1520 ‘when inhabited by Thomas More’, with More introducing Holbein to Henry VIII,¹⁰¹ while the Council Chamber was hung with painted ‘tapestries’ depicting historical scenes, including More at work on the manuscript of *Utopia*.¹⁰² It is questionable, however, whether More ever actually occupied the building himself: he never purchased the lease until 1523 from John Rest, who had in turned purchased it from Sir Bartholomew Reed (both of whom were prominent merchants and city men serving as mayor in 1523 and 1502–3 respectively). Six months later the lease had passed to Bonvisi.

Subsequent occupants included the merchants Germaine Cioll and George Bond, while Sir Thomas Gresham, who enjoyed a far higher reputation as merchant, a patron of the arts and sciences, and founder of the Royal Exchange, had lived in the same ward of Bishopsgate and was buried, like Sir John Crosby, in St Helen’s Church which neighboured Crosby Hall. Gresham, suggested Charles Mackenzie, must have discussed his original idea for an Exchange (the source of so much of London’s commercial wealth) based on the Amsterdam Bourse with Bonvisi, Cioll, and Bond at Crosby Hall.¹⁰³ A personal link with Crosby Hall was even established when it was realized that Gresham’s niece had married Cioll later in the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁴ The Hall was being ever more closely entwined with the mercantile success of early modern London. In the early seventeenth century, Crosby Place (as it was then known) was the residence of foreign ambassadors, including the duc de Sully, which allowed its historians to claim for it a role as the backdrop to scenes of international diplomacy. Ownership of the lease had by this time passed to Sir John Spencer in 1594 who used Crosby Place as his mansion house during his mayoralty; from Spencer it descended to the Compton family and thence to the earls of Northampton. Whilst owned by the Spencer Comptons, it was the residence for a short period of time of the dowager countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney, sister of Sir Philip Sidney, who

¹⁰⁰ Alexander Andrews, ‘Relics of London no VI Crosby Hall’, *Mirror*, 21 Jan. 1843, pp. 34–5; Hugo, ‘A memoir of Crosby Place’, p. 44. See also Anon., ‘Sir Thomas More and his residences’, *Saturday Magazine*, 7 (June 1834), p. 222.

¹⁰¹ Account in *Gentleman’s Magazine* (Sept. 1836), p. 243; the scene was reproduced in a plate in Hammon’s, *Architectural antiquities and present state of Crosby Hall*.

¹⁰² Mackenzie, *Crosby Hall described*, p. 11. The other scenes depicted Richard III affecting to refuse the crown and Sir John Crosby himself in consultation with an architect. The association with Thomas More was made even more emphatically in the twentieth century (evidence that More had only owned the lease for six months notwithstanding) not least because of the new connection with Thomas More forged by the removal of the building to Chelsea under the auspices of Patrick Geddes, who was planning a visionary new ‘More’s College’ on the Thames embankment: Andrew Saint, ‘Ashby, Geddes, Lethaby and the rebuilding of Crosby Hall’, *Architectural History*, 34 (1991), pp. 206–23. See below, pp. 00.

¹⁰³ Mackenzie, *Crosby Place described*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴ Hugo, ‘A memoir of Crosby Place’, p. 46.

was, as Thomas Hugo put it, ‘immortalised by Ben Jonson’. A tenuous link was thereby engineered not only with Mary Sidney herself, but also with her brother, renowned as the flower of English chivalry, and the Jacobean dramatist, whose reputation was also rising.¹⁰⁵ The Spencer Compton connection proved fruitful in another dimension too, as the Preservation Committee had secured the agreement of the marquess of Northampton, the descendant of the original Sir John, to join the Preservation Committee. Mackenzie, in his lecture given at the celebrations in 1836, was able to pay graceful tribute to the hospitality of Sir John Spencer as well as Sir John Crosby.¹⁰⁶

In addition to exploiting Crosby Hall’s connections with familiar characters of English history, the supporters of Crosby Hall were also able to assimilate it into the narratives of merrie England and olden time as a scene of civic pageantry, mercantile hospitality, and good cheer. At a time of considerable debate over political reform and the social and political contribution of the middle classes, the narrative around Crosby Hall offered a riposte to those who, like Pugin or Disraeli, associated such charity and benevolent social relations with a rural, landowning class and with the traditions of the Roman Catholic church. It was of a piece with the liberal, whiggish historiography of the day that emphasized the specifically urban origins of modern Britain.¹⁰⁷ The very scale on which the house was built, argued Charles Mackenzie, afforded sufficient evidence that it had been designed for hospitality and that ‘[Crosby] possessed the spirit which in every age has actuated the merchant princes of this land’, that is the provision of hospitality and charity. The dimensions of the Great Hall bespoke ‘wealth, liberality, a frank spirit and a joyous heart’.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Papworth described it as a monument of the ‘affluence and easy hospitality of the English merchant’,¹⁰⁹ while the *Penny Magazine*, with its distinctly middling readership, referred to the Great Hall as the ‘banqueting hall’, emphasizing its function as the site of communal feasting.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43. Hackett, who had herself compiled extensive notes on the history of Crosby Hall and its owners (see LMA 10189/5), pointed out the possible connection in a letter to Mackenzie and Hugo; the connection was presumed on the basis that the Spencers leased the Hall to Mary Sidney’s kinsman William Russell from 1615 to 1636, and was confidently asserted in the promotional literature of the 1830s LMA 10189/5 collection of fliers. The link with the countess of Spencer and Jonson was given even more prominence in the 1868 account of Crosby Hall, the frontispiece of which included portraits of Richard III, Thomas More, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson. Jonson did not command the same regard as Shakespeare, but was nonetheless widely admired as a leading Jacobean poet and dramatist: Knight, *London*, 1, p. 365, for example, included a section devoted to ‘Ben Jonson’s London’ (rather than Shakespeare’s).

¹⁰⁶ Mackenzie, *Crosby Place described*, pp. 35–7.

¹⁰⁷ J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal descent: Victorian historians and the English past* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 155–92, and Dellheim, *Face of the past*.

¹⁰⁸ Mackenzie, *Crosby Place described*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ Papworth, ‘Memoir of Crosby Place’, p. iv, RIBA Pa Fam/1/3.

¹¹⁰ *Penny Magazine*, 48 (31 Dec. 1832), p. 35; see also Carlos, *Historical and antiquarian notices*, p. 35, where he drew attention to the distinctive pattern of the Hall’s paving, which he suggested had been designed specifically to facilitate the positioning of tables when preparing for great feasts.

IV

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of Crosby Hall's significance as the most important specimen of domestic architecture in the metropolis, its continued existence could not be taken for granted and there were no legal measures in place to ensure its preservation. The Crosby Hall Literary and Scientific Institution gave way to the Metropolitan Evening Classes in 1848. In 1857, there were rumours again that the proprietors intended to raze the property and redevelop the site into offices (it was at this point that Hackett corresponded with Thomas Hugo, the principal of the Metropolitan Evening Classes, to fill him in on the background history of Crosby Hall). While this threat never materialized, the lease was sold shortly afterwards and the Hall was converted, first into a wine merchant's warehouse, and later into a restaurant in 1868. As the promotional literature was at pains to point out, the banqueting hall had at last been restored to its 'original purpose'.¹¹¹ The Freeman family sold the freehold of the Hall in 1871, having disposed of the rest of the Bishopsgate property by auction, to Messrs Gordon and Co., who continued to operate it as a restaurant. In 1907, it faced destruction once more as the property was sold to the Bank of India for demolition: the redevelopment of the area around Liverpool Street Station into a business district of offices and commercial premises could not accommodate such historical curiosities any longer. But the building's historical significance had by now been firmly established and its demolition could not go unchallenged. There were vociferous protests against the proposal from architects, antiquaries, and members of the civic elite. Even the king made it known that he hoped that the building could be saved.¹¹² In the end, it was dismantled and moved to its current location on Cheyne Walk where it was to become a hall of residence in Patrick Geddes's scheme for a revival of learning based around Thomas More's Chelsea residence.¹¹³ With a 1920s Arts and Crafts addition, Crosby Hall enjoyed a new phase of its existence as part of the University of London, until

¹¹¹ Anon., *Crosby Hall: the ancient city palace, Bishopsgate* (London, 1868), p. 5, and Anon., *Crosby Hall: the ancient palace and great banqueting hall, its history and restoration* (London, 1879).

¹¹² Alderman Vezey Strong led a campaign for the corporation to purchase the Hall for the use of the smaller London Companies which did not have their own halls. The king's letter to Mr Gomme of London County Council was reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Aug. 1907, p. 6.

¹¹³ Godfrey, 'Crosby Hall (re-erected)'; see also *Times*, 13 Apr. 1908, p. 3; 13 Apr. 1910, p. 4; 26 May 1910, p. 6; 30 Jan. 1911, p. 12. The fate of Crosby Hall was covered in great detail and on a regular basis in the pages of the *City Press* (which strongly opposed the proposed demolition on the grounds of the importance of the building to the history of the City of London): see the collection of newspaper cuttings made by John Bumpus in LMA 10189/6. On Geddes's plans for Crosby Hall, see Saint, 'Ashbee, Geddes and Lethaby and the rebuilding of Crosby Hall'. See also W. Emil Godfrey, 'Crosby Hall and its re-erection', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 26 (1982), pp. 227–43; W. Emil Godfrey was the son of Walter Godfrey the architect (who had worked on Crosby Hall for the *Survey of London* with Norman and Caroe) and who was commissioned by Patrick Geddes in 1908 to 'rebuild' Crosby Hall.

it was purchased by its current owner, Christopher Moran, from the freeholder, Greater London Council, in 1988.¹¹⁴ Moran has transformed it into a composite Tudor building, borrowing from favourite examples of sixteenth-century architecture such as Kirby Hall Northamptonshire, while the 1920s extension has been given a Jacobean makeover.

V

Crosby Hall exemplifies the qualities needed for a building to acquire sufficient value for it to be preserved in the face of urban improvement: aesthetic and age value were important, but the decay into which it had fallen by the turn of the century, and which first attracted antiquarian attention, was not essential for its continued appreciation as a picturesque structure. Rather, the crucial factors were the historical associations it provoked and the potential it offered to forge connections with the famous characters and events of national history. A comparison with another building in Bishopsgate, Sir Paul Pindar's house, sets Crosby Hall's unique combination of aesthetic and historic value into relief. Having largely escaped the fire, there were a number of other structures in the vicinity still surviving of a comparable age to Crosby Hall, of which Sir Paul Pindar's house came closest in terms of architectural merit.¹¹⁵ Like Crosby Hall, it could also claim connection with a prominent merchant: Pindar had been successful in the Italian trade and in the eastern Mediterranean, serving as James I's ambassador to Constantinople.¹¹⁶ J. T. Smith illustrated the house as an example of domestic architecture in the *Antient topography of London* (1815); Archer depicted it in a series of plates in *Vestiges of old London* and Thomas Hugo featured it in the first of his 'Walks in the City' for the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.¹¹⁷ However, despite Pindar's mercantile wealth and political importance, it was impossible to construct a narrative comparable to Crosby Hall's story: it lacked the density of associations with the monarchy and the civic elite of London and with famous historical figures with whom the nation as a whole could identify. As the *Mirror* noted, 'Unlike the shattered bulwarks of an ancient fortress or the crumbling walls of some olden convent, this relic is interesting from its antiquity *only*; it has no striking events connected with its history to awaken any stronger feeling.'¹¹⁸ It steadily deteriorated in condition and was demolished in 1890.

¹¹⁴ Thurley, 'Crosby Hall', pp. 72–5.

¹¹⁵ The facade was preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum following demolition of the house in 1890. A reproduction of some of the internal plasterwork can be seen in the former library of Leeds Castle, Kent.

¹¹⁶ Robert Ashton, 'Pindar, Sir Paul (1565/6–1650)', *ODNB*.

¹¹⁷ Smith, *Antient topography*, pp. 50–1; Archer, *Vestiges of old London*, pp. 1–4; Thomas Hugo, 'Walks in the City. No 1 Bishopsgate Ward', *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 1 (1856–8), pp. 149–82.

¹¹⁸ *Mirror*, 20 May 1843, 'Relics of London no. XIII old houses', p. 310. The house was also of particular interest for the quality of the internal plasterwork.

More broadly, the Crosby Hall campaign seems to have served as an inspiration for other ventures to save historic buildings: the publicity for the campaign to save St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, in 1845 (badly dilapidated and threatened by the Metropolitan Building Act) suggested that once restored it too might be used as a literary and scientific institution for the benefit of the inhabitants of Clerkenwell.¹¹⁹ Around the same time, there was also a suggestion that members of the British Archaeological Association (BAA) should club together to buy Burgh Castle in Norfolk according to a model reminiscent of the committee of proprietors at Crosby Hall.¹²⁰ The antiquary and founder member of the BAA, Thomas Wright, seems to have been similarly inspired by the example of Crosby Hall as he drew attention to the 'few interesting specimens of the ancient architecture of ancient London' still in existence, but in danger of disappearance 'unless rescued from the hands of the destroyer for some public object. Might they not', he suggested, 'be bought by the government, or by the city authorities, for museums, or for the meetings of learned societies?'¹²¹

Overall, it could be argued that Crosby Hall survived only because of the determination of a single woman, Maria Hackett, who intervened once the enthusiasm of less committed architects and antiquaries had dissipated after the first flush of publicity and interest. This in itself constitutes a remarkable story of female endeavour in a domain that is generally depicted as an overwhelmingly masculine one in this period. But although Hackett and the other supporters of Crosby Hall were disappointed by their failure to win financial support and recognition from London's mercantile elite, through their constant efforts to celebrate and illustrate the history and importance of Crosby Hall they were successful in inscribing it in the wider perception of the metropolis' and the nation's past.¹²² This was essential for its long-term survival. Crosby Hall was saved because it was possible to elevate it above the local and particular so that it became the embodiment of a national narrative that combined the history of the monarchy and the capital's rise to commercial dominance with a celebration of the nation's literary heritage represented by Shakespeare and Jonson, and the traditions of Christian humanism represented by Thomas More.

¹¹⁹ *Morning Post*, 10 Feb. 1845, p. 3. The campaign did not raise as much as was hoped for: the *Morning Post*, 6 Oct. 1846, p. 5, reported that only £200 of the £500–£600 needed had been donated, but the building was stabilized and repaired. Maria Hackett herself donated £1: *Gentleman's Magazine* (Oct. 1845), p. 330.

¹²⁰ Unsigned letter addressed to Charles Roach Smith, 13 Aug. 1846, Society of Antiquaries of London MS 877/1.

¹²¹ Thomas Wright, *The archaeological album; or, Museum of National Antiquities* (London, 1845), p. 57.

¹²² For a discussion of the congruence between London's history and the national past in popular histories and novels of the nineteenth century, see Billie Melman, 'Claiming the nation's past: the invention of an Anglo-Saxon tradition', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26 (1991), pp. 575–95.

Crucially, the history of Hackett and the Crosby Hall campaign itself became a part of that heritage. The fact that the lease had initially been taken by a committee and was reliant on the generosity of the public for the furtherance of its aims, rather than being dependent upon an individual benefactor or the obligations enjoined by religious faith, meant that by necessity a more inclusive language of public interest was adopted to promote its aims, and that the future use to which it would be put had to be justified in terms of wider social benefits as well as economic realities. The role played by Miss Hackett, who had 'aroused the citizens' to the enormity of the sacrilege, offered the additional attraction of a very particular brand of female heroism.¹²³ The protests of 1907/8 against the proposed demolition of the Hall emphasized the fact that it had originally been saved through *public* subscription and that there was therefore now an obligation to the public to ensure its future.¹²⁴ By this point, the memory of the recent campaign of the 1830s and 1840s meant that the same arguments that had been successfully rehearsed then could be prevailed upon again, but with added cogency, given that the Hall now also embodied the civic feeling and public spirit of that earlier generation. In terms of the longer history of the heritage movement, this successful harnessing of the philanthropic potential of civil society on behalf of architectural preservation is a noteworthy development as is the recognition of the building's increased public significance as a consequence of such communal engagement. These additional layers of meaning and value were, in 1908, critical factors in ensuring the building's (partial) physical survival in its new location in Chelsea.

¹²³ 'The passing of Crosby Hall', *Journal of the Society of Architects* (Dec. 1907), pp. 75–9.

¹²⁴ See, for example, *Manchester Guardian*, 1 June 1907, p. 7; *Observer*, 24 Nov. 1907, p. 7; *Journal of the Society of Architects* (Dec. 1907), p. 79. The City Livery Companies, despite the leadership of Alderman Strong, remained reluctant to contribute to the costs of preserving the Hall: see 'The Crosby Hall impasse', *The Saturday Review*, 7 Dec. 1907, p. 690.