

‘Medieval Leeds Today’: Future Directions and Outcomes

□ UNIVERSITIES

Exploring the role of medievalism in the trajectory of the University of Leeds’ infrastructure development, and the wider motivations underlying (and contemporary impacts of) medievalism in university architecture in the UK.

Questions to consider (taken from working document):

Attitudes and intention inherent in the Victorian buildings vs the 1960s buildings – were the University’s redbrick buildings consciously medieval; or was their medievalism indirect via the ‘trend’ of collegiate Gothic? What ideas they were trying to cultivate by using a particular style? Contrasted with motivation underlying Lucas and Lodge/Chamberlain and Bonn periods. Tied to wider heritage context (Victorian Society, backlash against Brutalism, cyclical attitudes etc.)

Other medieval elements in universities which have become detached from their origins – robes, and degree ceremonies etc. Mirrors conflicts of identity in universities themselves (see Arts in Universities)? Older aspects and tradition often now a selling point for universities – consider how they promote themselves. Justifies ‘Oxford-imitation’ criticism of architecture?

Potential future directions and outcomes:

Most works covering Leeds’ university architecture are either specific and largely descriptive (Wrathmell, Beresford etc.) or very broad (Whyte, Redbrick). There doesn’t seem to be any study of intentions underlying and subsequent responses to university buildings, especially with reference to heritage theory.

The Wikipedia page on ‘Colligate Gothic’ only covers North America, and has nothing on the UK.

□ HARDING and THE BLACK PRINCE

Considering the medievalism of T Walter Harding and its impacts on the built landscape and cultural identity of the city – particularly his deliberate connections between medieval pageantry, artistic beauty and constitutional continuity in legitimising Victorian civic pride and Leeds’ national status.

Questions to consider (taken from working document):

Consider Harding’s motivations and medievalism: evidence in memoirs, other sources.

Consider meanings ascribed the statue (and the Black Prince himself) now versus then – not just motivations underlying the original statute (as per memoirs, Hall article etc.). Walter Harding described him as “the hero of Crecy and Poitiers, the flower of English chivalry, the upholder of the liberties of the English people, an emblem of manly and

unselfish virtues". Consider in light of statue controversies (BLM, Cecil Rhodes, American Confederate soldiers etc.)

Has the statue become an artistic object or symbol of the city entirely removed from the intentions inherent in its creation? Compare to (a) other statues in the city (b) other examples of medievalism in the city.

Melanie Hall's article on City Square is very thorough – but it doesn't cover other aspects of Harding's medievalism, or consider his novels and plays (Abbott of Kirkstall etc).

Any more information on why Tower Works was built as it was – i.e. in memoirs?

What are responses among the public concerning the current plans for Tower Works? How do they view the towers, and what do they consider to constitute 'preservation'?

Potential future directions and outcomes:

Consider the memoirs in more detail – make notes.

The Wikipedia page for Walter Harding is still very sparse and there is nothing for Thomas Richard Harding.

□ PARISH CHURCH and STREETSCAPE

Considering the role of medievalism in the construction of the Leeds Minster – one of the earliest significant churches influenced by the principles of the ecclesiological movement. Mapping instances of medievalism in Leeds' cityscape; motivations underlying these constructions; wider patterns; and contemporary impacts on the built landscape.

Questions to consider:

Attempting to piece together the history of the new Parish Church within histories of Oxford Movement, High Church, Ecclesiology, Ritualism, Medievalism, Gothic Revival, Chantrell, Hook etc. – lots of existing material, but no one seems to have tried linking them all up?

How did contemporaries feel about replacing a Gothic church with a pseudo-Gothic church?

Armley Prison was constructed in 1847 with turrets, towers, battlements etc., to seemingly imitate a medieval castle, yet I can find little mention of it anywhere in architectural studies of Leeds, it is mentioned only briefly in reviews of British prison architecture. There are a few sources which interrogate the intentions inherent in these constructions elsewhere (Misery and Authority: The Dualities of Gothic Penitential) but only one which mentions this in connection to Leeds (as a passing example, in Handbook on Prisons edited by Yvonne Jewkes). Interesting as an attempt to evoke the negative connotations of the medieval.

Compare St Paul's House with Gothic Revival buildings in Leeds – a very different style of 'oriental' medievalism. Associations, intentions?

St John's is actually a Gothic church (Perpendicular), so is seemingly an example of Gothic Survival. Consider how it fits in the wider development of ecclesiastical and civic architecture in Leeds.

Civil, civic and ecclesiastical architecture plus Gothic – any splits?

Linking medieval survivals to medievalism. Anything interesting to say about the existence of medievalism in a city with very little medieval architecture?

*What did the Victorians who built neo-medieval buildings know about Leeds' history?
What did the major books/ studies available at the time suggest?*

□ VICTORIAN MEDIEVALISM TODAY

Considering the contemporary impacts of the above instances of medievalism and intangible medieval heritage on local identity, urban planning, and perceptions of place.

The ideas I had about Walter Harding's medievalism, civic aspirations etc., supported by the Harding memoirs, newspaper articles, the souvenir pamphlet etc. seemed to be the most profitable avenue for an essay I could write, until I read Melanie Hall's article. As I mentioned above, Melanie Hall's article on City Square is very thorough – but it doesn't cover other aspects of Harding's medievalism, or consider his novels and plays (*Abbott of Kirkstall* etc).

However, whilst her article – and much of the material I have covered – considers the motivations underlying Victorian medievalism, I haven't encountered much material relating to Leeds which considers contemporary responses to Victorian medievalism – considering and contrasting interpretations and intentions, for example. This would be a particularly pertinent topic to explore in future given the title of my project is *Medieval Leeds Today*.

Medievalism in the city has to be considered in light of this lack of tangible medieval structures, and leads to interesting questions. How does the city 'relate' to its medieval origins? Do to public view Leeds as 'medieval'? Do Leeds' neo-medieval buildings 'recall' the medieval, or the Victorian? Is this informed by their surroundings (as opposed to cities with 'layered' medieval – medieval survivals alongside neo-medieval and buildings of other eras)? Does – and if so, how – does the medieval inform how the city is marketed to the public? How has the medieval informed the projected self-image of the city in the past, or the intentions of the individuals who shaped the city's architectural landscape? Is any of that intention still inherent in the responses to those structures in the present day, or have new meanings been attached to them?

This medieval framework and its historic boundaries still shape contemporary urban flow and footfall in the city: the area enclosed with these streets – and the later Park Row, established roughly on the site of the boundary of the medieval manorial park – now comprises the commercial and retail core of the city centre.

There are, of course, intangible medieval survivals in the city centre – street names, road layouts etc. - so it may also be worth considering how these inform perceptions of the medieval in the city. Do people still follow the same routes of circulation? Does contemporary development and use still reflect old boundaries? Do any of the more obviously medieval street names (Briggate, Kirkgate etc.) inform identity or is general use reflexive?

□ SITES of INTEREST

Kirkstall Abbey

Abbey House

Stank Hall Barn

Various monuments in the Parish Church

Bar Stones

Street layout (+ place names)

Black Prince statue in City Square

Tower Works, Holbeck

St Paul's Warehouse

The Great Hall, University of Leeds and former Yorkshire College Buildings

St Anne's Cathedral

Leeds Parish Church

Leeds General Infirmary

Parkside Tavern, Merrion Street

The Priory of St Wilfred, Springfield Mount

Mill Hill Chapel

Adel Church

St George's Church

St John's Church

(All of the other churches)

Armley Prison

Mansions and private houses, including:

Weetwood Grove Mansion

St Ann's Tower

Headingley Castle

Hinsley Hall

Beech Grove House

Devonshire Hall

Adel Grange