

Greenwich Parish Church, Memorialisation and Community

c. 1700 to the Present Day

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requirements of the University of Greenwich
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DECLARATION

'I certify that the work contained in this thesis, or any part of it, has not been accepted in substance for any previous degree awarded to me or any other person, and is not concurrently being submitted for any other degree other than that of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) which has been studied at the University of Greenwich, London, UK.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between the parish church(es) of Greenwich, London, and the local communities they served in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It incorporates architectural, local and national history sources and combines these fields. An exploration of three substantial church construction projects carried out in each of those three centuries, which all transformed the local church, has uncovered evidence of the memorialisation priorities and processes which shaped these church buildings. What was forgotten, discarded or changed, where it can be detected, has provided further detailed information about how the churches were remodelled to create a new version of the parish church in each period.

The historic presence of a royal palace and the Royal Hospital for Seamen in Greenwich made the interaction of local and national authorities during these church building projects atypical for a parish church. The extent to which the local parish communities participated in the transformation of their parish church(es) illuminates that shifting relationship. Combined with the varying participation of the state (through legislation, funding and the presiding Commissions) these church building projects produced churches that were complex collages of local and national interests. Notably, tensions arose between differing local and national memorialisation processes, highlighting how meaning was generated for these parish church buildings and where it was contested.

The current, twenty-first-century, project being carried out at St Alfege Church has engaged with national concerns, through the award of a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, and issues of local memorialisation through a focus on local 'heritage' and interpretation exhibits inside the church. The 'Heart of Greenwich' project work hopes to preserve the church for future generations by making it a sustainable historic building, capable of navigating the stringent national legislation concerning the historic building fabric and uncertain funding provision. I show how, as in previous centuries, the historical associations of the church were curated to serve this cause.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service
CCT	Churches Conservation Trust
CERC	Church of England Record Centre
DSRC	Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
NADFAS	The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies
NCT	National Churches Trust
NHMF	National Heritage Memorial Fund
NLHF	National Lottery Heritage Fund
NMM	National Maritime Museum
ORNC	Old Royal Naval College
PCC	Parochial Church Council
RGHT	Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SPAB	The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
WDC	War Damage Commission
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

In England, parish churches have long held a central position, both socially and topographically, in rural and urban communities. For many centuries, these buildings were the geographical and social focus of the parish and, as such, form a key component of any area's local history. Today, local churches offer varied evidence of the local congregation and population through time, such as memorials to the deceased, commemorative plaques to certain events, and the architectural evolution of the building and its setting. As time passes, parish churches are modified by ensuing generations. Gravestones, memorial plaques, statues and dedications accumulate on and around the building fabric, each conveying information that someone, or a group of people, sought to preserve in the public realm.

This thesis explores the interaction of architecture and memorialisation with local and national communities through a case study of St. Alfege Church, the parish church of Greenwich in south east London (but historically in the county of Kent). Greenwich was the location of a royal palace from 1498 until the civil war and death of Charles I in 1649. After the restoration in 1660, Charles II commenced the construction of a new palace at Greenwich that would rival Versailles, however, his finances prevented its completion and in 1692 Queen Mary instigated the construction of the Royal Hospital for Seamen on the Greenwich palace site. The scale and 'magnificence' of this architectural project, which continued until the mid-eighteenth century, reflected 'the wealth and power of Britain as the world's dominant maritime power'.¹ As a result of this historic context, the parish church of Greenwich is not a typical example of its building type and has been subject to atypical tensions between national and local interests.

For over three hundred years this impressive building has been modified through projects generated by both local and national communities. I will argue that the manipulation of the memorialisation associated with the church, through the creation or suppression of memorials, performances of commemorative acts, and architectural decisions, has been a constitutive part of this recurring process of renewal. The survival of St Alfege Church has been achieved through reiterating and renegotiating the historical

¹ <https://ornc.org/our-story/royal-hospital/> accessed 2 March 2021.

associations between the church, its location, and communities at both local and national levels.

The physical church of St Alfege is a striking architectural presence within both Greenwich town centre and the UNESCO Maritime World Heritage site; it contributes grandeur and authority with its Portland stone and innovative classical style, created by Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736). Inside, the church is a large, high, rectangular space notable for its intricate woodcarving, the painted, fictive architecture in the chancel and its excellent acoustic properties.² The church is much valued and admired by its Church of England congregation, local residents, visiting musicians and tourists, as well as Hawksmoor scholars and architectural historians; this is a building with a complex and extensive history that has a wide audience. As an architectural historian and local resident, I am an avid member of that audience. My research draws upon specialist architectural history texts (which focus on Hawksmoor or churches as a building type) as well as the abundant local historical information to be found in guidebooks, popular history books, local archives and within the church itself.³ This combination of scholarly and contextual sources will illuminate the reciprocal relationship between the church and communities at various levels (the local parish, the Anglican church authorities, the state), while complementing the church's current renewal project, called *Heart of Greenwich, Place and People*, which received a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (renamed the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2019) in November 2017. This support indicates the connection between present day heritage practices and earlier memorialisation processes, which included the preservation of parish church buildings.

My objective is to understand the changing roles of St Alfege Church over the last three centuries, in relation to the development of the local community and the wider national contexts in which the church can be placed. Evaluating different memorialisation techniques and their meanings for the associated communities, or

² Anya Matthews and Will Palin, "A Great and Noble Design", *Sir James Thornhill's Painted Hall at Greenwich: A Catalogue of Preparatory Sketches*. (Greenwich: The Greenwich Foundation for the Old Royal Naval College, 2016), 11. Provides a description of the painted, fictive architecture techniques Thornhill also used extensively within his composition for the Painted Hall.

³ St Alfege Church published guidebooks in 1933, 1951, and often to coincide with particular fundraising projects. General texts include Clive Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999); Olive Hamilton and Nigel Hamilton, *Royal Greenwich* (Greenwich: The Greenwich Bookshop, 1969). The Greenwich Historical Society (previously the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society) have published their *Transactions* since 1907.

interest groups, shows how memories and events were valued. St Alfege Church's position, socially and topographically, has evolved within its own parish over the last three centuries, and I will explore how and why that has happened. The development history of the church building over three hundred years also relates to the status of the Church of England, at local and national levels. The relationship between the national state authority and the local parish authority, apparent during these church building projects, will also be explored. Finally, I will consider what this research contributes to the current renewal project at St Alfege Church and how it might help assess the role of English parish churches in today's urban landscape and heritage debates.

Research Strategy – Three Churches in Three Centuries.

The current St Alfege Church building in Greenwich was constructed between 1712 and 1714, during the reign of Queen Anne (1702 - 1714), and there has been a church on this site since the early twelfth century. For over a thousand years, and many generations, this piece of ground has had a specific commemorative purpose, enacted through a sequence of evolving churches. During the centuries, the church has been rebuilt several times, enlarged, extended and joined by an overflow 'chapel of ease', all the time adapting to local circumstances and adjusting the meaning of the site. In order to examine this process in detail I have chosen to focus on three transformational (re)construction projects carried out in three consecutive centuries. I will begin with the initial construction of St Alfege Church (1712-1718) by Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661 -1736) for the Commission to Build Fifty New Churches. Then I will focus on the construction (1823-1824) and demolition (1936) of the nearby chapel of ease, St Mary's Church by George Basevi (1794-1845) for the Church Commission created by the 1818 Act, and finally turn to the restoration of St Alfege Church (1946-1953) following bomb damage during the Second World War, led by Sir Albert Richardson (1880-1964) and funded largely by the War Damage Commission. All three projects responded to immediate local problems but were funded through national Acts of Parliament. All three Acts were created in the aftermath of national involvement in wars overseas, which implies some political or patriotic motivation. For the local inhabitants, and particularly those who attended the parish church, these projects all caused social upheaval of one kind or

another and challenged their customary memorial processes. Acts of memorialisation were performed within these projects, in a variety of ways and by a wide number of people. The creation of physical, inscribed memorials to the dead or to particular events, attached to the church building fabric or in the churchyard, provided a fixed record. St Alfege Church has accumulated many of these memorials, inherited others and stands as a memorial itself to St Alfege, an eleventh century archbishop of Canterbury who was murdered in Greenwich by Danish invaders in 1012. In addition to this, the architectural design of both St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church reference Roman and Greek classical styles, thereby memorialising those distant civilisations for contemporary cultural purposes and borrowing their connotations. Repeated performances of commemorative church services and events provided intangible reminders of biblical stories at specific times.

In the following chapters, the study of memorialisation within these three key construction projects first explores the national context, then the local context, before examining what was omitted or forgotten in the course of each project. At roughly one hundred-year intervals, these case studies will explore what constituted 'the local Greenwich community' at that time and how different groups of people shaped the memorialisation carried out at the parish churches. The 'local community', broadly defined as the inhabitants of Greenwich, comprised many different interest groups with varying social power and concern for the parish church. The dominant voices sought to create a church that promoted their version of Greenwich society, and I will consider how representative the churches were of the local population as a whole.

Unsurprisingly, all three church-building projects were dominated by men. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century parish vestries were comprised of male inhabitants whose wealth qualified them to pay parish rates. Any female influence on these two church-building projects would therefore only have been possible through informal channels, perhaps by social contact with a vestryman. However, Princess Sophia Matilda was a central character in the development of St Mary's Church, which suggests that her royal status outweighed her sex in the eyes of the Greenwich elite and that social status was a more prominent concern. The church's subsequent popularity with women is likely to have been enhanced by her patronage. The eighteenth-century St Alfege church

congregation also had a substantial female contingent, as demonstrated by the 1718 seating plan, which reflected traditional ideas about seating men and women separately. However, the all-male Church Commission's domination of the project allowed no local consultation. During Richardson's twentieth-century restoration, I again found no reference to any woman participating in the project design or management, although it is possible that the PCC had female members during the project. By contrast, during the most recent project carried out at St Alfege Church women were in central positions within the team from the outset. There has been a conscious effort to discover local histories of notable women and incorporate them into the new interpretation material. So, while gender politics do not form a substantial theme for this thesis, the primary evidence I have relied on for chapters 2, 3 and 4 was overwhelmingly created by the men in authority at that time and reflects their conception of the parish church of Greenwich and its associated community.

In this study, these three construction projects, presented as comparative case studies, will provide insights into how Greenwich parish church has been influenced by its surrounding local population and community groups, as well as organisations and individuals on the national stage, in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Following this analysis, we will then examine how these relationships have developed during the current church renewal project and how the public interpretation of the church's history has been extended.

St Alfege Church - 1711-1718

This first project was conceived in the tense political climate of 1710 and is often described as the catalyst for the 1711 Act to Build Fifty New Churches. The newly elected Tory government needed to demonstrate the authority of the Anglican Church following the Sacheverell Riots and the project to build fifty new churches satisfied this cause.⁴ It also continued the successful reconstruction work in the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666. The City churches and St Paul's Cathedral were complete by 1708 and the

⁴ Jerry White, *London in the Eighteenth Century: A Great and Monstrous Thing* (London: Bodley Head, 2012), 502–504. describes the riots spurred by the prosecution of Dr Henry Sacheverell after he preached a sermon 'attacking any toleration of dissent'.

Coal Duty devised to finance that ecclesiastical construction work was reallocated to the new project. Coincidentally, in 1710 the roof of the medieval St. Alfege's Church collapsed, possibly due to a storm, although the structure was probably also weakened by centuries of burials in the church floor. The parishioners of Greenwich petitioned Parliament for £6000 to rebuild their parish church and they were fortunate in their political timing.⁵ When construction work started in 1712, their church became the first to be built under the auspices of the new Church Commission.⁶

The architecture of this new church was also ground-breaking. Hawksmoor was one of three surveyors appointed by the Church Commission to build the fifty new churches and he designed the body of St. Alfege's Church, which can be seen as a prototype for both Hawksmoor (as an independent architect) and for the Church Commission, as they commenced a major project to populate London with fifty new churches.

Of the six churches created by Hawksmoor for the Commission St Alfege Church is the furthest from central London and the only one south of the River Thames.⁷ Its context was highly influential because the new church was to be built within the long-established parish of Greenwich and on the site of their previous parish church. St Mary Woolnoth was the only other Hawksmoor church to be located on such a constrained site. The orientation and location of the new church in Greenwich were restricted by the extant remains of the previous church on the site, including the 1617 church tower, and the adjacent road. The present church tower was added in 1731 by John James, who was also a surveyor to the Commission by that time and had already collaborated with Hawksmoor on St. Luke Old Street and St. John Horsleydown in Southwark.⁸ James's later

⁵ See text of the February 1710/1711 Petition in appendix 2. The date includes an 'Old Style' / 'New Style' year number because the petition was made before 1752, when the beginning of the new year moved from 25 March back to 1 January according to the *Calendar (New Style) Act 1750*.

⁶ M. H. Port, ed., *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, vol. 23 (London: London Record Society, 1986), 1–10, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol23>. See also the *Conservation Management Plan*, May 2017, by Richard Griffiths Architects to accompany the HLF Stage 2 bid. Written by Richard Hill, this document follows the design and construction of St Alfege Church through *The Minute Books*, 10-19.

⁷ Hawksmoor's six churches are St. Alfege Church, St. George in the East (1714-29), St. Anne, Limehouse (1714-30), Christ Church, Spitalfields (1714-29), St. George, Bloomsbury (1716-31), and St. Mary Woolnoth (1716-24).

⁸ Sally Jeffery, 'English Baroque Architecture: The Work of John James' (Ph.D., Birkbeck (University of London), 1986), accessed November 23, 2016, <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.289107>.

tower incorporated the remains of the previous tower but he employed a contrasting style to the body of the church. This created a duality in the church building design that did not occur elsewhere in Hawksmoor's churches, suggesting that his dramatic architectural ideas for these churches were emerging at St Alfege Church, but not fully formed.

As we will see, architectural history texts often address St Alfege Church primarily through an appreciation of Hawksmoor, seeking to learn about the man through the building. The church's rich Greenwich context is overlooked and the building is compared to Hawksmoor's other London churches. This era of St Alfege Church's existence has been studied in some depth, but without investigating the effect that the new church had on the parish it served. In 1712, this church was an unprecedented, brutal insertion into the Greenwich town landscape that eclipsed the preceding church. The local population were forced to reorganise both their churchyard and their customary uses of the preceding church building. One of the main aims of this thesis is to understand how local parish requirements interacted with contemporary national politics and theological debates. The Greenwich vestry were well organised enough to produce an eloquent petition in 1710/11 requesting financial assistance for a new church, so how did they seek to mould their new church building to local needs during its construction?

St Mary's Church - 1823-1936

The second church building project that will be examined was the construction of a 'chapel of ease' for St Alfege Church between 1823-24.⁹ The local population had increased, and the new church was required to accommodate the growing congregation. Located only a short distance from St Alfege Church, the new church building was erected adjacent to the main entrance to Greenwich Park. It was a similar size to St Alfege Church and named St Mary's. Despite being enthusiastically created by the local population in the early nineteenth century, this church was closed in 1919 and subsequently demolished in 1936. It has now been largely forgotten and so presents an

⁹ A chapel of ease is usually defined as 'a church built to accommodate those living at a distance from the parish church', Collins English Dictionary, 12th edition, HarperCollins, 2014; however, St Mary's Church was nearby the parish church of St Alfege, so the term was used in a different sense in Greenwich.

interesting contrast to its mother church, St Alfege, raising pertinent questions about the limitations of architectural memorialisation and the memorialisation of the people who were buried in St Mary's Church crypt.

St Mary's was designed by a fairly well-known architect, George Basevi (1794-1845), and was an early recipient of a substantial grant from a second Church Commission, this time serving an Act of Parliament of 1818. This legislation encompassed the whole country, rather than focusing on London as in 1710, and produced approximately six hundred churches. They are often referred to as 'Commissioners churches', or 'Waterloo churches' as this campaign of church building started shortly after the victory over Napoleon at Waterloo (1815) and also in recognition of their air of patriotic celebration.¹⁰ Similarly to the Church Commission of 1711, these churches were intended to bolster the Church of England's status and accommodate the growing urban population in London and industrial cities in the north of England. For example, at the same time as designing St Mary's in Greenwich, Basevi also designed and built St Thomas' Church in Stockport. The 1818 Act sought to provide sufficient Anglican church accommodation for parish populations, which was considered a moral duty. Anglican church attendance was the societal norm and also a requirement for government posts.¹¹ However, non-conformist chapels were gaining in popularity and perceived as a threat by the Church of England authorities. The principal need for a second church in Greenwich was attributed to the local population increase as substantiated in the 1821 census figures. This increase was related to the number of pensioners at the Royal Hospital for Seamen.¹² John Kimbell stated that although the existing parish church accommodated over 1500 persons, it was 'far too small for the increased population of the parish, which amounted, by the census of 1811, to near 17,000 souls.'¹⁵ By 1834, Henry Richardson was able to tabulate the parish population according to four consecutive censuses from

¹⁰ M. H. Port, *Six Hundred New Churches: A Study of the Church Building Commission 1818-1856 and Its Church Building Activities* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2006).

¹¹ Described by the Corporation Act 1661 and Test Act 1673; this requirement was legally removed by the Sacramental Test Act of 1828.

¹² LONDON Greenwich Parish of Greenwich, *A Statement of Facts and Arguments with Reference to the Burden Sustained by the Parish of Greenwich in Relieving and Maintaining the Wives and Families of the Pensioners of Greenwich Hospital* (N. Richardson, 1831).

¹⁵ John Kimbell, *An Account of the Legacies, Gifts, Rents, Fees, Etc Appertaining to the Church and Poor of the Parish of St Alphege, Greenwich in the County of Kent* (Greenwich, 1816), 8.

1801 onwards, which showed an increase of 6373 between 1801 and 1821, when the vestry first proposed an additional church.¹⁶

St Mary's Church was built by an authoritative and influential group of men. The Vicar of St Alfege church, Reverend George Mathews (1768-1833), campaigned energetically for the 'New Church', as St Mary's was initially known. The church building project was supported by local residents, some of whom had prominent national status, such as John Julius Angerstein (1732-1823), financier, art collector and former chairman of Lloyds, and the Rt. Hon. Nicholas Vansittart (1766-1851), Chancellor of the Exchequer and Church Commissioner. The contractors for St Mary's Church, 'Mess. Thomas Martyr & Co.', were well-known local builders whose family burial vault (opened 1796) is still in St Alfege Church crypt.¹⁸ This creation of St Mary's Church was much more of a local endeavour than the eighteenth-century development of Hawksmoor's St Alfege Church, whilst still being reliant on a national Church Commission.

Today the previous site of St Mary's Church is unmarked and has been absorbed into the National Maritime Museum adjacent to Greenwich Park; St Mary's Gate into the park retains in its name the last vestigial memory of the church.¹⁹ After the demolition of the church in 1936 the site was converted into an enclosed and landscaped memorial garden annexed to Greenwich Park. A granite statue of William IV was installed as its most prominent feature. Over three hundred people had been buried in St Mary's Church crypt and their coffins were left in situ during and after the demolition. The new garden area included a plaque acknowledging their presence, which has since disappeared. The fact that St Mary's Church had incorporated these burials and the associated memorialisation, did not protect the church building from demolition when the matter was under debate in 1935.²⁰ On the contrary, as will be explored in chapter 3 the presence of the occupied crypt had prevented the conversion of the church building to an alternative use. The history of St Mary's Church therefore raises questions

¹⁶ Henry S. Richardson, *Greenwich: Its History, Antiquities, Improvements, and Public Buildings* (London, Simpkin & Marshall; [etc., etc.], 1834), 13.

¹⁸ 'Notice', *London Gazette*, April 13, 1827, 18352 edition.

¹⁹ Ike Ijeh, 'The National Maritime Museum: Time and a Place,' *Building*, last modified July 8, 2011, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.building.co.uk/buildings/the-national-maritime-museum-time-and-a-place/5021074.article>.

²⁰ See A. R. Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect.,' *Transactions of the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society* IV, no. 1 (1936): 37-43; 'Obituaries of Buildings, No. 41, St Mary's Church, Greenwich,' *The Architect and Building News*, June 7, 1935..

regarding the permanency of graves, memorials and church buildings. The debate concerning the demolition of the church and the treatment of the bodies in the crypt is preserved in the correspondence files held at the Church of England Record Centre (CERC).²¹

St Alfege Church - 1941-1958

The twentieth-century restoration of St Alfege Church (1946-1953) after the fire damage caused by incendiary bombs, dropped during the Second World War, is the third construction project to be examined. The church interior visible today is largely the result of this project, which radically altered the Victorian interior that existed previously (and which is poorly recorded).²² The project architect, Sir Albert Richardson (1880-1964) consciously reconfigured the physical forms of memorialisation within the church to enhance its historical status by selecting architectural details and other memorials to restore or recreate. This concept was part of an ongoing debate concerning the treatment of war damaged churches in London, as well as the emerging appreciation for historic buildings and nascent national frameworks for preserving tangible heritage.

On 19 March 1941 incendiary devices landed on the church roof, starting a fire that caused the roof to collapse into the church. The church interior was ruined but the north and south porches were minimally damaged, and the masonry external walls and tower survived intact.²³ The town of Greenwich was heavily bombed; the damage was recorded on the WWII bomb map for the area and can also be clearly discerned from contemporary aerial photographs.²⁴ The area to the east and west of St Alfege Church was flattened, and the church tower appears to stand as a talisman within the ruins.

The architect Sir Albert Richardson led the restoration project for the Diocese of Southwark and it was largely funded by the War Damage Commission. Work started in 1949 with an initial contract to rebuild the roof and make the building weathertight,

²¹ CERC, File refs. 100581-1 and 100581-2.

²² A comparison of photographs of the interior taken after the restoration and the RCHM photographs taken shortly before the Second World War illustrates the point. See also the pamphlet which detailed the project carried out in the 1880s, held by Greenwich Heritage Trust.

²³ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]* (London): Henry, Richardson, 1953), 3.

²⁴ See www.Britainfromabove.org.uk ref. nos. EAW002293, EAW016223, EPW055316, accessed 17 November 2017.

which was carried out by the contractors Dove Brothers. A second contract to restore the internal joinery, finishes and fittings commenced in 1951. This contract reinterpreted the church interior for the post war era; while certain aspects were faithfully recreated, particularly the wood carving and the fictive painting in the chancel, changes were made to the materials and layout that belonged very much to the mid-twentieth century. Richardson's restoration focused on recreating a version of Hawksmoor's church interior and attracting the associated architectural acclaim, whilst making the best use of contemporary construction techniques behind the scenes.

St Alfege Church received generous and prompt attention after the Second World War, indicating its perceived architectural value at the time, when the restoration project was prioritised by both the Diocese of Southwark and the War Damage Commission. The commemorative publication that accompanied the re-dedication service described how the church's restoration served a patriotic and emblematic function.²⁵ Richardson himself emphasised the project's cultural and spiritual importance in a public talk given in 1951. He was a prestigious architect who was instrumental in the creation of the influential Georgian Group in 1937, professor of architecture at the Bartlett, UCL who published *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture* in 1949 as work was starting at St Alfege church.²⁶ During the same period, he also led the restoration of Sir Christopher Wren's St James Church, Piccadilly and these two churches represented his conservation philosophy. However, his career covered a wide breadth of projects, which was illustrated by a retrospective exhibition of his work in 1999.²⁷

Richardson appointed the expert contractors Dove Brothers for St Alfege Church. He had worked with them previously at University College London (UCL) but they had also worked on many churches and the RIBA hold an extensive archive of their drawings and papers.²⁸ The status of both the architect and contractor denote a project driven at a national level for a larger purpose, rather than for the benefit of the local parish. Some of the Vicar's letters express alarm at the parish's possible financial exposure during

²⁵ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*.

²⁶ A. E. Richardson, *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture*, Introductions to architecture (London: Art and Technics, 1949).

²⁷ Simon Houfe, Alan Powers, and John Wilton-Ely, *Sir Albert Richardson 1880-1964* (London: RIBA Heinz Gallery, 1999).

²⁸ The RIBA Library catalogues lists 434 entries for drawings under 'Dove Brothers Collection'.

negotiations with the War Damage Commission (WDC), indicating some tension. Indeed, the Parish Church Council might have favoured a new church, rather than a restoration of the ruined Hawksmoor church.²⁹ The re-dedication service for St Alfege Church took place on April 19th, 1953, with a ceremony that included the unveiling of the restored Wolfe memorial and a commemorative plaque to the restoration. Work continued after the re-dedication on the stained-glass windows and to the tower, although this was funded by the parish, rather than the WDC, because the work was not directly attributable to enemy action. The transformation of St Alfege Church for the twentieth century was finally completed in 1956 with the addition of a memorial stone to St Alfege in the floor in front of the chancel.

Unlike the previous two phases of church development, this project has left extensive correspondence records and drawings, which are held by the RIBA and the Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service, where the Richardson and Houfe Archive is located. This material has allowed a detailed insight into the architectural and political machinations of the project. However, despite this wealth of material, this phase of St Alfege Church's existence is the least well researched and, because it is the most recent, offers valuable information about the development of the church's current heritage status. Chapter 4 of this thesis is the first detailed attempt to evaluate this material.

St Alfege Church – 2016-2020

Between the end of Richardson's restoration and 2016, the appreciation of historic buildings has significantly developed. Emerging ideas about heritage have informed how these buildings are protected by legislation and how they are presented to visitors. The cultural status of churches has also undergone significant change, while their funding sources have become more uncertain. The current renewal project for St Alfege Church aimed to repair the building fabric, but also to increase public interest and improve access into the church. Developed by the Rev. Canon Chris Moody, with his wife Gill Moody and the Parochial Church Council (PCC), the project won a National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) grant in 2016. The application process was rigorous and required

²⁹ Suggested by Elizabeth Pearcey, local historian and long-standing member of the congregation.

the applicant to develop a heritage programme for their project. Construction work commenced in 2019 and ended in 2020. The architects for the project were Richard Griffiths Architects, who also carry out the church's quinquennial inspections. The external building work aimed to improve the appearance and accessibility of the church, whilst also carrying out vital repairs to the roof. Internally, the work focused on enhancing the visitor experience through additional interpretation and increased access. Again, important maintenance work was also carried out. The new interpretation material on display has sought to memorialise a wide range of people and events, to engage as many people as possible. Guided tours of the crypt and bellringing chamber will give regular access to spaces previously closed to the public. Throughout the project, the organisers have sought to involve as many people as possible, partly to satisfy NHLF policies but also to implement a project that was a communal process that has also promoted the church's local status.

St Alfege Church is within the boundary of the UNESCO Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site and the influence of this international heritage status can be discerned within the project vision for St Alfege Church. The management of the World Heritage Site has brought together local organisations and encouraged partnerships. St Alfege Church invited the University of Greenwich to be a project partner, and I have been a member of the steering committee, initially with Professor Neil Spiller, since 2016. I have had a detailed insight into the progression of the project, including the teams' interaction with the NHLF monitoring process. I am also involved in the activity programme and the guided tours planned for 2020 and 2021. My regular visits to St Alfege Church as an 'open church' volunteer have helped me understand the daily operation of the church. My research work has contributed to the related church activities, and my understanding of the three earlier projects described above has been informed by my experience of this current project.

This project is notable for its affiliation with both international and national heritage organisations, which has influenced the interpretation of the church's heritage that has emerged. Rigorous project management and specialist consultants have been required to satisfy a number of authorities, including Historic England and the Church of England. Wide public consultation has enabled the St Alfege team to identify their audiences and redefine the role of the church for the future. This process has resulted in

many new local supporters and stakeholders contributing to the project, which suggests this may be a new phase in the reframing of the parish church. The project has increased local interest and emphasised the church's connections with local communities, despite the project's reliance on the support of national and international heritage organisations.

Historiographies and concepts

The parish church of St Alfege in Greenwich features in a wide range of secondary literature that addresses the church from multiple viewpoints, which are aimed at different audiences. These include guidebooks produced by St Alfege Church, as well as publications on the history of Greenwich, Hawksmoor, London, parish churches and Georgian churches. A broad survey of this range supplied a rich and varied resource, and illustrated the many facets of the church's historiography. I initially approached St Alfege Church as an architectural historian who was familiar with the work of Nicholas Hawksmoor within London. Many eminent architectural historians have analysed Hawksmoor's work, and Georgian churches as a building type have also been the subject of erudite publications. However, as a Greenwich resident, I was also familiar with the local historic context and the popular heritage of the area. The intersection of these two interest areas raised questions about both disciplines: about the value of contextual information for architectural history and the enrichment of more general local histories with detailed information about the architectural history. This research has drawn on several distinct fields of literature, which also included English political history and the English parish structure, as well as more recent studies of memory and memorialisation. Memory studies often seek a more nuanced understanding of past events and artefacts, seeking details and behaviour that have previously been overlooked because they were not recorded in an official manner. This approach is particularly appropriate when looking at St Alfege Church; a communal building that has been the site of Christian worship for many centuries.

Architectural Historiographies

Architectural history emerged as a discrete discipline in the mid-twentieth century; in 1940 the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) was established in the USA, followed by the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (SAHGB) in 1956. Both of these organisations were successful and still publish a peer-reviewed journal annually. As a specialised sub-discipline of both architecture and history, architectural history examines buildings and spaces using a range of sometimes quite technical methods. These include focusing on an individual architect, or a particular building type, or a certain style, as well as compiling geographical surveys of notable buildings. More recently, scholars have turned towards more conceptually-informed approaches to ask how buildings have meaning and how that meaning changes over time. St Alfege Church has featured in many architectural histories, which have approached the church from all of these viewpoints.

Georgian Architecture

The architectural historiography of Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736) and eighteenth-century British architecture has been dominated by the work of Sir John Summerson and Professor Kerry Downes. Both men were crucial to the recovery of a critical appreciation of early Georgian architecture in the early and mid-twentieth century. Late Victorian architecture had favoured a Gothic style and ‘in the early years of the 20th century ‘the Georgian’ was associated with modernity, its undecorated approach seen as progressive as against neo-vernacularism and the Gothic’.³⁰ From the 1930s onwards the Georgian style gained renewed popularity because it used strong geometrical forms, but retained an historical reference.

Within this scholarship Hawksmoor was ‘rediscovered’ as a prominent early Georgian architect. Summerson’s *Georgian London*, first published in 1945, is a seminal book that was central to this emerging appreciation of Georgian architecture before and after the Second World War. The early chapters discussed ‘Taste’ and ‘Wealth’, providing

³⁰ Julian Holder and Elizabeth McKellar, eds., *Neo-Georgian Architecture 1880-1970: A Reappraisal* (Swindon: Historic England, 2016), 9.

a detailed cultural background, before chapter six turned to the 'Fifty New Churches' where he wrote:

These churches are so distinctly a group and so separate from the general trend of eighteenth-century architecture that it is rewarding to try to penetrate their individualities and discover, if one can, from what common attributes their beauty and force of character derive.³¹

The analysis of these churches then focused on the geometric patterns apparent within the church designs and their formal relationship to each other. These churches were not individually investigated or their London locations explored; Summerson assessed them according to their architectural strengths and similarities before assigning them to *Georgian London* as a whole entity. In subsequent works, Summerson's approach to architectural history focused on the qualities of the building fabric and an architect's level of expertise to create a sequential narrative for British architecture and architects. His encyclopaedic *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* was first published in 1953 and categorised three hundred years of architecture in a chronological narrative. St Alfege Church is briefly mentioned within a chapter titled 'Churches and the Universities 1702-1736'.³²

Summerson's writing was highly influential, not only due to the popularity of his books, but also because he was closely involved in the development of national policies and procedures pertaining to historic buildings after the Second World War.³³ His slightly ambiguous attitude to conservation was expressed in his essay 'The Past in the Future' written in 1947, where he wrote that preservation was 'susceptible of fatuity, hypocrisy, sentimentality of the ugliest sort and downright obstructionism' but also illustrated 'our lively curiosity about and sympathy with the long flow of human history'.³⁴

³¹ John Summerson, *Georgian London* (London: Pimlico, 1991), 59. First published in 1945, it has been through eight editions the most recent in 2003.

³² John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, 9 Rev. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). First published in 1953.

³³ Summerson was a member of the Royal Fine Arts Commission (1947-54), the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1953-74), and the Historic Buildings Council (1953-78).

³⁴ John Summerson, *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture* (New York and London: W W Norton & Company, 1963), 219–242.

The Great Architect

The first and authoritative monograph of Hawksmoor was published in 1959 and written by Professor Kerry Downes. Ten years later it was followed by a second book, with the same title.³⁶ The first is comprehensive and presents a chronological account of Hawksmoor's architectural output, including fastidious research and insightful analysis of the architectural forms Hawksmoor's work took. The second is a smaller, more accessible handbook that explores different themes within its chapter headings. Both of Downes' highly influential books included substantial sections on St Alfege Church and praised the post-war restoration, which had been completed shortly before the publication of Downes' first monograph. Indeed, Richardson's promotional photographs of the newly completed interior illustrate the text. St Alfege Church was categorised according to its architect and building type in chapters that addressed 'The Fifty New Churches'. Although Downes wrote an insightful and knowledgeable analysis of the church building and Hawksmoor's career overall, he only made minimal reference to the church's context and its relationship to the nearby, contemporaneous, Royal Naval Hospital. Downes' research was part of a resurgence of academic interest in Hawksmoor, which encouraged the particular stance that Richardson adopted for his restoration project at St Alfege Church.³⁷

In the work of these architectural history stalwarts Hawksmoor's buildings are seen as icons of a career and not places in a local landscape. Summerson and Downes positioned St Alfege Church within the architectural canon, but in doing so isolated the building from its geographic location and confined its history within the building type classification of a 'Hawksmoor church'. They identified architectural qualities and created narratives that pivoted around Hawksmoor's professional biography – a format which endured. Thus, Vaughn Hart's 2002 study of Hawksmoor's buildings continued in a similar vein, but analysed his work using a more thematic structure with many illustrations.³⁸

³⁶ Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor*, Studies in architecture v. 2 (London: Zwemmer, 1959); Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969).

³⁷ Owen Hopkins, *From the Shadows: The Architecture and Afterlife of Nicholas Hawksmoor*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), 203–210.

³⁸ Vaughn Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

More recently architectural history scholarship has moved towards a less purist and more subjective approach to the study of historic buildings and their architects. In *From the Shadows: The Architecture and Afterlife of Nicholas Hawksmoor*, published in 2015, Owen Hopkins charted the rise and fall of Hawksmoor's career and reputation.³⁹ He wrote perceptively about the architectural character of Hawksmoor's churches but also addressed Hawksmoor's cultural position from his death in 1736 up to the current day. This long history of Hawksmoor and his work focuses on the historical processes that shaped his reputation, rather than identifying the period of a building's creation as its defining moment. It is this format which inspired me to approach the study of St Alfege Church and its parish in a similar fashion, through the analysis of four separate periods in its three hundred years' existence.

The Building Type

Architectural histories of building types offer comparisons that highlight detailed variations between individual buildings with similar uses and perhaps funding sources. They enable the analysis of adaptations and refinements that suggest how a building might have been used, and changes in that function. The 'Georgian church' as a building type has been thoroughly researched by Terry Friedman in two books that concentrated on eighteenth-century parish churches.⁴⁰ He identified the architectural styles used for these parish churches and discussed how they were employed. Several parishes and the construction of their churches were examined in greater detail, providing an idea of how the church and its construction related to the surrounding parish; for example, St Paul, Sheffield (1715-72), which 'occasioned great heats and animosities' amongst local parishioners.⁴¹ Both Friedman's books referred to Hawksmoor's churches and provided a national architectural context that demonstrated how atypical Hawksmoor's church designs were for the early Georgian period. Friedman identified the 1712 St Alfege Church as the first example of an English church with 'the most common antique Roman

³⁹ Hopkins, *From the Shadows*.

⁴⁰ Terry Friedman, *The Georgian Parish Church: Monuments to Posterity* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2004); Terry Friedman, *The Eighteenth-Century Church in Britain*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

⁴¹ Friedman, *The Georgian Parish Church*, 57–77. This church was demolished in 1937, and gardens laid out on its site.

temple form' in a chapter that focused on the emergence of 'Temple-form Churches'.⁴² Nonetheless, this is a judgement that focuses solely on the exterior of the church; the internal layout of the church, or how it was used by the population, is not mentioned at all.

St Mary's Church was built during the reign of George IV (1820-1830) and was part of a group of churches built by the 1818 Church Commission, so it falls into a 'late Georgian' or 'Regency' category. M. H. Port meticulously documented this national church building project, with close reference to primary source material, in his 2006 *Six hundred new churches: a study of the Church Building Commission 1818-1856 and its church building activities*. Port had previously edited the 1986 *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*.⁴³ He analysed the 1818 Church Commission primarily from an architectural historical viewpoint, but introduced the political motivations for the Act and the main protagonists. This Commission operated countrywide and produced far more churches than the eighteenth-century Commission to Build Fifty New Churches. The enormous number of 'Commissioners' Churches' built during this period and their varying architectural styles were clearly presented in tables by Port, which provide a clear context for St Mary's Church, enabling an assessment of that church's architectural position within this enormous state sponsored church building project. Port's work here was, however, mostly documentary, concentrating on the organisation of the Commission and architectural styles, rather than analysing the parish contexts of any of the new churches.

Recently, Christopher Webster has examined this group of late Georgian churches and defended the rational approach to the mass production of churches during this period.⁴⁴ St Mary's Church fits into this category of churches, that were designed and built shortly before the Victorian era, and gained a bad reputation during Victorian theological debates that endowed Gothic and Classical architectural styles with moral qualities. Webster argues that their reputation was tarnished by the Victorian

⁴² Friedman, *The Eighteenth-Century Church in Britain*, 395.

⁴³ Port, *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, vol. 23; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*.

⁴⁴ Christopher Webster, 'Late Georgian Churches: "Absolutely Wretched" or the Triumph of Rational Pragmatism?', *Architectural History* 60 (2017): 147–181.

Ecclesiologists and has not been reconsidered from the viewpoint of the late Georgians.⁴⁵ He explored the 'functional requirements of worship that amply illustrate the spirit of Enlightenment thinking at its most advanced' by discussing the technical achievements associated with hearing and seeing the preacher, as well as the parallels drawn with theatres.⁴⁶ An ambivalent attitude to ornamentation and architectural style accompanied this rational planning, which resulted in a wide variety of church design styles. Although providing a useful intellectual framework in which to see these churches anew, Webster only occasionally refers to the parishes that these churches served but not in any detail.

Between the two, Port and Webster provide accounts of the 1818 Commission and its churches that explain the national motivation, the building procedures for the churches, and then the subsequent disinterest in their architecture. They show how this enormous government-sponsored project, to build new Anglican churches that served growing urban populations, required parish participation and was far more diverse than the previous 1711 'Act to Build Fifty Churches'. Although the 1818 Church Commission referred to the practical guidance of the first church commission in the 1710s, they had different theological priorities and the later commission's influence extended to the entire nation rather than focussing on London. These churches have received far less scholarly attention and my detailed investigation, which focuses on the 1823 creation of St Mary's Church in Greenwich, contributes new knowledge to this topic.

The internal layout of Anglican churches through the ages has been explored in relation to theological concerns and liturgical requirements. In a 1948 publication, the historical relationship between church architecture and Anglican liturgical organisation was traced from the Reformation to the 'present day' by George William Addleshaw (a cleric) and Frederick Etchells (an architect).⁴⁷ They applied a modernist architectural analysis to the spatial arrangements inside a church and their conclusion explained that they were motivated by the need to construct and repair parish churches after the Second World War. They carefully advised against the Victorian church model, which is

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.147.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.150.

⁴⁷ George William Outram Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship: An Inquiry into the Arrangements for Public Worship in the Church of England from the Reformation to the Present Day* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1948).

interesting because their viewpoint is contemporary to the restoration of St Alfege Church and Richardson seems to have shared their opinion. More recently in 1991, Nigel Yates' *Buildings, Faith and Worship: the Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600-1900* analysed how the perception of the church interior varied during different theological movements.⁴⁸ These detailed studies of the Anglican church interior as expressions of theological and liturgical precepts rarely name an architect and reference examples from around the country, without assuming any uniformity. They show how the internal layout of an Anglican church can retain memories of earlier liturgical priorities and aspirations.

Pierre Ruffiniere du Prey, in his book *Hawksmoor's London Churches* (2000), examined the theological climate in the early eighteenth century and the scholarly debates that surrounded the creation of the ritual setting for the Anglican Church's services.⁴⁹ He advanced the study of Hawksmoor's London churches by considering the composition of the Church Commission and the theological debates that guided the production of the Queen Anne churches. Through a detailed study of contemporary texts, with their diagrammatic church layouts, Du Prey demonstrated how Hawksmoor's strong interest in primitive Christian worship influenced his work. He discussed Hawksmoor and Wren's interest in re-imagining biblical buildings from their descriptions and recent archaeological publications following exploration in Biblical lands, which is redolent of their understanding of history and its relevance to their architecture. Hawksmoor's London churches were certainly influenced by this prevailing theological debate, not least because of political necessity. Du Prey's work also inspired the Rev. Canon Chris Moody, then vicar at St Alfege Church, to expand on the theological discussion in relation to these churches and discuss the Church of England's political position after the 1689 Act of Toleration, which enabled Dissenting Chapels to operate legally with a license.⁵⁰ Hawksmoor's architectural ideas for St Alfege Church reflected this agitated context. In each of the chosen case studies I will consider how the interiors

⁴⁸ Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴⁹ Pierre de la Ruffinière Du Prey and Nicholas Hawksmoor, *Hawksmoor's London Churches: Architecture and Theology* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁵⁰ Christopher Moody, 'The Basilica after the Primitive Christians': Liturgy, Architecture and Anglican Identity in the Building of the Fifty New Churches," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 15(1) (May 11, 2016): 37–57.

of St Alfege and St Mary's churches were occupied and used by the parish population. I will explore how the interior architecture of the churches was adapted to serve the interests of different interest groups, whilst still adhering to some Christian traditions associated with the parish church 'building type'.

How Buildings Have Meaning

English parish churches are redolent with meaning for many people and have been the subject of popular surveys, approaching them as historic buildings and worthwhile tourist destinations.⁵³ The focus is on their heritage value and the architectural and artistic qualities of the churches, including their settings, which is illustrated by the emphasis on high quality photographs. The primary factor in the creation of meaning for a church, or any building, is its association with memories and stories for its congregation, visitors and other audiences. This might be historic, aesthetic, religious or something more individual.

William Whyte has argued for the historical interpretation of buildings and architecture as a process of translation and transposition, as opposed to a fixed linguistic code.⁵⁴ This methodology is capable of detecting a greater variety of meanings for a building, which might exist at different points in time and reflect a building's changing physical and social contexts. Architectural history, as a subject, has traditionally focused on the aesthetic and technical qualities of selected buildings. The consideration of the context and use of architecture over time moves the subject closer to the wider discipline of history. More recently Whyte has explored the architectural and theological interpretation of English parish churches in his 2017 book *Unlocking the Church* where he encouraged readers to think about 'Victorian sacred space'.⁵⁶ He examined how Victorian churches evolved to become spaces intended to inspire emotional and spiritual

⁵³ Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches* (London: Allen Lane, 2012); John Goodall, *Parish Church Treasures: The Nation's Greatest Art Collection* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Graham Hutton and Edwin Smith, *English Parish Churches* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1953).

⁵⁴ William Whyte, 'How Do Buildings Mean? Some Issues of Interpretation in the History of Architecture', *History and Theory* 45, no. 2 (2006): 174–177.

⁵⁶ William Whyte, *Unlocking the Church: The Lost Secrets of Victorian Sacred Space* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

responses from the worshipper, in contrast to the more practical approach of the 1818 Church Commission.⁵⁷ The architectural taste and values of the preceding Georgian era were disliked by the Victorians but, by the early twentieth century, a similar negative reaction to Victorian church architecture had occurred. For example, the conclusion of *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, written in 1948, recommended a reassessment of the church interior that did not follow outdated Victorian principles.⁵⁸ Changing fashions in architecture have a strong influence on a building's perceived meaning and significance to a range of different audiences and users.

The process of restoring a historic building is often governed by practicalities, but a restoration project is designed and choices are made that are influenced by prevailing architectural taste. Recent adaptations might be judged ill-advised and thought to obscure an older, more valuable, incarnation of the building. Writing about the Temple Church and its restoration after bomb damage during the Second World War, Whyte expressed regret that the Victorian phases of alteration work to this church were not considered worthy of preservation. He noted the distaste for Victorian church alterations during the twentieth century, but argued that church restoration practices should carefully consider the entire period of the building's existence before prioritising one period to the disadvantage of another.⁵⁹ Sir Albert Richardson's restoration of St Alfege Church also overlooked adaptations that had been made in the 1880s. He focused on the Hawksmoor version of the church, which was more suited to twentieth-century taste, but as a result, the elaborate Victorian choir stalls were lost to posterity. Choices concerning what to restore and what to omit determine which architectural era or style is memorialised, through its retention, and which is forgotten. This study is concerned with seeking out what was overlooked or discarded when architectural, liturgical and post mortem commemorative choices were made for each building project; these decisions shaped the churches' memorial functions and their capacity for different audiences.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 41–43.

⁵⁸ Addleshaw and Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, 223–225.

⁵⁹ William Whyte, 'Restoration and Recrimination: The Temple Church in the Nineteenth Century', in David Park and Robin Griffith-Jones (eds), *The Temple Church in London* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017) pp. 195-210.

Parishes, Local History and Memory

The term 'parish' denotes both a geographical area and its population. It is a political and social entity that has structured local English communities for many centuries and has been the subject of much historical enquiry. In 1997 *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600* provided a comprehensive study of the English parish around the Reformation.⁶⁰ More recently, in the *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, J. F. Merritt examined the early modern parish between 1520 and 1662. Whilst emphasising the complexity and diversity of English parishes during this period, she described the parish as 'the lynchpin of Elizabethan religious and social policy', such was its importance to state politics and the monarch.⁶¹ But, despite this state role, the parish church retained its local importance as a site for events that enhanced community solidarity and identity. By 1710 the parish was a powerful tool of local government, ruled over by a vestry (or committee) of ratepaying inhabitants whose meetings were located in the church. The vestry's authority was integrated with the religious authority of the parish church.⁶²

In the eighteenth century, provision for the poor was an important parish obligation and rules about who belonged to the parish, termed 'settlement', were crucial. Paul Fideler's 2006 overview of social welfare in Great Britain from 1350 to 1810, explained how social welfare was provided through the parish structure from medieval times until pre-industrial times.⁶⁴ The Poor Law of 1662 first defined parish settlement and this legislation tied parishioners to their parish and church, restricting the general mobility of the population. Inhabitants were likely to be baptised, married and buried at the parish church. The parish obligation to provide poor relief was customary and 'both the poor and the non-poor were reconciled to the parish system in the eighteenth century.'⁶⁵ However, English parishes all operated slightly differently according to their population, economic activity and overall wealth, which resulted in inconsistency

⁶⁰ Beat A Kümin, Katherine L French, and Gary G Gibbs, eds., *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).

⁶¹ J. F. Merritt, 'Religion and the English Parish', in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume I: Reformation and Identity c.1520-1662*, vol. 1 (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2019), 123.

⁶² Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 360–368.

⁶⁴ Fideler, Paul A., *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England: The Old Poor Law Tradition*, Social history in perspective (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Chapter five (1690-1780) is relevant to the Parish of Greenwich during the construction of the church in 1711-1714 and chapter six (1780-1810) useful for the period leading up to the creation of the new church of St Mary.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 146.

throughout the country, and indeed London. So, the parish system in 1710, when St Alfege Church collapsed, was intensely localised and focused the inhabitants' attention onto the parish church. The church building was the identifying feature of the parish, maintained by the vestry and regularly visited by many of the inhabitants.

The social structure of parish communities has been researched by Henry French, who identified the existence of a 'Middle Sort of People' through studies of three separate parishes in Essex, Dorset and Lancashire between 1600 and 1750. He wrote:

By and large, the 'middling' seem to have conceived of themselves as 'inhabitants' not of the imagined communities of 'society' or 'the middle sort of people', but rather of a smaller fictive entity, 'the parish' or 'the town'.⁶⁶

The social hierarchy within a parish was established through day-to-day activities and transactions. However, French also showed how more general social stereotypes were emerging. Inhabitants in the parishes he studied displayed some aspirations to 'gentility', an attribute that would allow people to communicate their social status, and ascertain that of others, in social circles beyond the boundaries of the parish. The parish 'elite' of Greenwich are likely to have responded to similar social trends in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Several documents, which have not previously been analysed in the extant literature on the history of the church or Greenwich, illustrate how the Greenwich parish churches were used and occupied in 1718, 1824 and 1953, offering new insights into the relationship between the parish inhabitants and their church. The petition raised by the Parish of Greenwich in 1711, which appealed for funds to help rebuild the church, included a description of the local inhabitants and the character of the parish overall.⁶⁷ The 1718 pew list for the new church provided evidence of the size and constitution of the Greenwich congregation, but also the absolute authority with which a vestry committee arranged people according to their understanding of social propriety and

⁶⁶ Henry French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England 1600-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 24.

⁶⁷ *The Case of the Inhabitants of Greenwich, in the County of Kent, and Reasons Why They Ask Relief for Rebuilding Their Parish-Church*. (London: s.n, 1710), accessed September 16, 2020, <https://data.historicaltexts.jisc.ac.uk/view?pubId=eebo-ocm99894962e>. This petition was read by the church wardens in St Alfege Church in February 2018, to the former Member of Parliament, Nick Raynsford. This re-enactment highlighted the political nuances of the text.

hierarchies.⁶⁸ Approximately a hundred years later, the pew layouts for St Mary's Church in 1824 were colour-coded according to rental price, with the names of the owners inscribed.⁶⁹ By 1953 the allocation of pews was no longer necessary and the number of fixed pews was significantly reduced following the restoration of St Alfege Church. By this time, the church congregation was a small percentage of the local population, although the church building was still a source of civic pride.

The changing administrative influence of the parish church was related to the development of local government. In 1711 the parish of Greenwich was within the Hundred of Blackheath, part of the Lathe of Sutton and in the County of Kent, and the parish vestry had fairly autonomous responsibility for governing the parish.⁷⁰ In 1821 the parish system of local government, administered by the church, was still in force but under strain in urban areas. In Greenwich it is evident that the proximity of the Royal Naval Hospital (a national institution) was a financial burden for the local parish.⁷¹ The local population had grown significantly and the locally financed welfare system was becoming overwhelmed. The Poor Law was amended in 1834 to provide a national basis for supporting the poor, removing the responsibility for poor relief rates from the ecclesiastical parish. In Greenwich, the town's proximity to London started to affect the structure of local government, as Greenwich became absorbed into the metropolitan area. In 1855 the Greenwich District Board of Works was created by the Metropolis Local Management Act; the 'district' encompassed an area of 13.86km² and included the parish of Greenwich. Following this Act, the Greenwich parish vestry had no remaining local governance responsibilities and the parish of Greenwich became solely a Church of England ecclesiastical area.⁷² In 1889, the area governed by the Greenwich District Board of Works was wholly transferred from the County of Kent to the newly constituted

⁶⁸ LPL, MS 2715 ff. 126-7.

⁶⁹ RGHT, box of drawings and prints of St Mary's church.

⁷⁰ John Speed and Nigel Nicolson, *The Counties of Britain: A Tudor Atlas* (London: Pavilion Books, 1995).

⁷¹ Greenwich, *A Statement of Facts and Arguments with Reference to the Burden Sustained by the Parish of Greenwich in Relieving and Maintaining the Wives and Families of the Pensioners of Greenwich Hospital*.

⁷² James J. Scott, *Metropolis Local Management Act. ... With Notes: Together with the Portions of the Metropolitan Buildings Act, Conferring Extra Powers on the Metropolitan Board of Works, Etc* (London: Knight & Co., 1855), 35–78, 155–156, https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=CYxhAAAAcAAJ&pg=PR5&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed 30 July 2020.

County of London.⁷³ The Metropolitan Borough of Greenwich was created in 1900 and merged the District Boards of Greenwich and Lee, enlarging the incorporated area to 15.6km². This authority was governed from the Town Hall, which moved in 1939 to a new building, a short distance away from St Alfege Church on Greenwich High Road. In this way, the parish of Greenwich evolved from an autonomous area, with the church vestry as the source of authority and financial support, to become part of a much bigger – and secular – unit of local government, within a large city. The authority of the parish church was changed by this gradual shift of power. Because the church building was no longer associated with the practical administration of local government, its relationship with the local population, and its constituent communities, had to evolve.

The presence of the City of London and Westminster six miles away had always influenced the development of Greenwich. Over the three centuries covered in this thesis, London expanded and eventually absorbed the town of Greenwich; therefore the history of London's development during this period is an important context for Greenwich and its parish church. The secondary literature for the history of London is extensive and, although Greenwich seldom features in any detail, the nature of life in London and contemporary political concerns suggest explanations for some of the decisions made before and during the Greenwich church projects.⁷⁴

The local historiography of Greenwich is intertwined with the town's position on the river Thames, as well as the location of a royal palace and park, later the Royal Hospital for Seamen. The town is a popular tourist destination and the subject of several general history books on the area, which refer to St Alfege Church in varying levels of detail.⁷⁵ Greenwich was designated a UNESCO maritime world heritage site in 1997, confirming its international reputation. St Alfege Church is within the boundary of the

⁷³ Local Government Act 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. C.41), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/51-52/41/enacted>, accessed 14 Sept 2020.

⁷⁴ Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*, First edition . (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000); Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (London: Macmillan, 2000); Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁷⁵ Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*; Felix Barker, *Greenwich and Blackheath Past* (London: Historical Publications Ltd., 1993); Hamilton and Hamilton, *Royal Greenwich*.

world heritage site but was not mentioned in the ‘designation criteria’.⁷⁶ The focus in the designation was primarily on the national institutions of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Royal Park. John Bold’s *Greenwich* (2000) celebrated the UNESCO designation and exemplified the treatment of Greenwich as a historic site by charting the gradual development of the Royal Hospital and the Queen’s House using illustrations and diagrams.⁷⁷ Bold presented a view of Greenwich that prioritised the former site of the Royal Palace, with the local town of Greenwich on the periphery. St Alfege Church relates to both spheres of local life because it is both a national monument and a local parish church. This study has aimed to research both national and local contexts and sources of authority for the Greenwich churches. As we shall see below, a study of the treatment of the memorials and memorialisation processes at the heart of the three church construction projects, has revealed areas of contention between these local and national contexts.

Memorials, Memorialisation and Memory Studies

The recent development of memory studies within the discipline of history has opened up new avenues to explore and, in relation to the Greenwich churches, helped unlock different approaches to interpreting the histories of these churches in relation to memorial functions and practices. The journal *Memory Studies* was first published in 2008 and ‘examines the social, cultural, cognitive, political and technological shifts affecting how, what and why individuals, groups and societies remember, and forget.’⁷⁸

⁷⁶ See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/795> for the designation criteria: “(i): The public and private buildings and the Royal Park at Greenwich form an exceptional ensemble that bears witness to human artistic and creative endeavour of the highest quality. (ii): Maritime Greenwich bears witness to European architecture at an important stage of its evolution, exemplified by the work of great architects such as Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren who, inspired by developments on the continent of Europe, each shaped the architectural development of subsequent generations, while the Park exemplifies the interaction of people and nature over two centuries. (iv): The Palace, Royal Naval College and Royal Park demonstrate the power, patronage and influence of the Crown in the 17th and 18th centuries and its illustration through the ability to plan and integrate culture and nature into a harmonious whole. (vi): Greenwich is associated with outstanding architectural and artistic achievements as well as with scientific endeavour of the highest quality through the development of navigation and astronomy at the Royal Observatory, leading to the establishment of the Greenwich Meridian and Greenwich Mean Time as world standards.”

⁷⁷ John Bold, *Greenwich: An Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen’s House* (New Haven and London: Yale UP for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2000).

⁷⁸ <https://journals.sagepub.com/description/MSS> accessed 3 June 2020.

What has been lost or forgotten is an important part of understanding the process of deciding what to memorialise. In 2007, Geoffrey Cubitt's *History and Memory* provided a thorough survey and analysis of recent research into 'memory studies' by historians.⁷⁹ This theoretical work provides insights into the concept of 'memorialisation' and 'history's function as a preservative against oblivion – its role as a potential arbitrator of what is to be remembered and what can be forgotten.'⁸⁰ Cubitt here addressed the role of written history, but his comment could equally apply to the construction of a concrete and multi-layered memorial, such as a parish church. I have purposefully sought out information about what has been forgotten in the course of the three construction projects, because they represented major transformations of the parish church and therefore significant moments of 'arbitration' between what is remembered and what forgotten. How that process of arbitration was carried out during the three construction projects, and how they differed forms a vital part of this thesis.

History and Memory is a cornerstone for Judith Pollmann's 2017 *Memory in Early Modern Europe*, which argues that memory studies have so far focused on the modern era, with an assumption that the 'age of revolutions' (circa 1800) is an intellectual boundary, which she believes to be flawed.⁸¹ She aims to stimulate a conversation between historians of the early modern and modern eras to research further the changes that occurred in the way people recorded and used their memories. She discusses the early modern understanding of the self, the relationship between the past and the present, the creation of communities through shared beliefs and stories, the development of myths and legends, healing society by deliberately forgetting, and processing the memory of atrocities. She makes wide reference to previous work on 'memory', illustrating her argument with physical examples taken mostly from northern Europe and her native Netherlands. Her work is specific to a certain time period and anchored by key examples that are carefully analysed, which suggested a parallel with my study of the Greenwich parish churches. However, on the opening page Pollmann states:

there were many practices through which memories of the past could become 'public knowledge' – through rituals, storytelling and singing, through images and

⁷⁹ Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸¹ Judith Pollmann, *Memory in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

street-signs, through annual processions, and sermons and prints, and the performance of plays and eating of commemorative dishes.⁸²

Throughout her book, there is no reference to the physical setting for these activities or the use of public buildings as a vehicle for memory transfer or curation. The church, despite being present in almost every settlement in Europe, is not viewed as part of this landscape of memory making and sustaining.

Both Pollmann and Cubitt cite John R. Gillis's 1996 essay concerning memory and identity.⁸³ In his introductory essay for a volume containing essays presented at a conference titled 'Public Memory and Collective Identity', Gillis wrote: 'we need to be reminded that memories and identities are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena.'⁸⁴ Though Gillis was not referring to a physical construction, his metaphor was about the process of building. Memories (and memorials) contribute to a communal understanding of reality, which is continually being revised and remade to form a community identity. In this thesis I argue that in England the parish church is a place where this process has been enacted for centuries. Gillis also discussed the implications for national identities and commemorative practices, contrasting elite memory and popular memory. St Alfege Church was a building where national and local concerns collided on occasion, which can be detected in the primary sources. I consider these interactions of national and local memorialisation ideas at St Alfege Church in the light of the 'politics of national identity' discussed by Gillis et al and identify how each church building project contributed to the changing configuration of both local and national identities.

My starting point when considering St Alfege church and memorialisation was Adrian Forty's *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, and particularly the chapters on 'Memory' and 'History'.⁸⁵ Forty analysed the uses of both these words, in relation to buildings and architectural theory, from the early nineteenth-

⁸² Ibid., 1.

⁸³ John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, New Ed edition. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3–24., see Introduction "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship".

⁸⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁵ Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 196–219.

century onwards. He observed that ‘objects and buildings preserved from the past are offered as “history” itself, while the partiality and interestedness of the procedures that has rendered them as history is obscured’.⁸⁶ So, the process of building restoration is a memorialising action that manipulates the historic architecture for its own aims, but risks concealing this curatorship. Forty described the nineteenth-century perception of history as a scientific endeavour with an ‘excess of archaeological knowledge’ and the twentieth-century modernist desire to eliminate any reference to the past.⁸⁷ The emergence in the late twentieth century of a new architectural perception of ‘history’ focused on the context of a building and its position within an urban environment. Forty quotes Aldo Rossi, who wrote ‘persistencies are revealed through monuments, the physical signs of the past, as well as through the persistence of the city’s basic layout and plans’.⁸⁸ Rossi referred to the concept of ‘collective memory’ and how architecture contributes to the unique character of a town or city. Forty concluded this chapter with a discussion of heritage and advocated a treatment of historic buildings that acknowledges the passage of time, rather than prioritising one historic period. The three historic projects and the current project, which are discussed in this study, all exhibit contrasting approaches to the passage of time and the idea of heritage has grown increasingly prominent.

Forty addresses ‘memory’ in the following chapter and highlights how the ‘creation of buildings for commemoration is one of the oldest purposes of architecture’. However, he questions how effectively built monuments prolong memories of an event or person, despite their physical ability to endure beyond the lifetime of an individual. To survive, such monuments (or church buildings) need to adapt to changing modes of interpretation. For example, in the early eighteenth century, John Locke and Joseph Addison developed a theory of architectural appreciation that focussed on the individual’s imagination and the memories or associations inspired by a particular work of architecture.⁸⁹ In the nineteenth century, John Ruskin transformed these eighteenth century theories by proposing that architecture articulated memories of human work,

⁸⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 198.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 201. A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (1966), trans. D. Ghirardo and J. Ockman, (Cambridge MA and London: MIT Press, 1982).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 207. Forty describes the contribution of John Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690) and Joseph Addison’s series of articles in the *Spectator* titled ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’ (1712).

both manual and mental.⁹⁰ Ruskin's writing inspired William Morris, who established the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1877, the first organisation of its kind. So, the interrogation of buildings, in search of meaning, was reliant on shifting ideas about memory and memorialisation.

Forty also discusses the proliferation of war memorials during the twentieth century and modern society's confidence in the ability of these 'physical objects to preserve memory', detecting a modern anxiety about loss and forgetting.⁹¹ He identifies a discrepancy between the extensive research into the topic of 'memory' within other disciplines and the slightly simplistic way it was been incorporated into post-modern architectural theory. The assumption that buildings 'provide a satisfactory analogue in the material world for the aleatory world of memory' is flawed and Forty concludes that commemorative ceremonies and activities, which are participatory, sustain memories more effectively than fixed, inscribed memorials.⁹² This suggests that interactions between visitors and a building, whether they are choreographed or spontaneous, are more memorable because an active process of interpretation occurs.

The word 'memorialisation' denotes the creation of a memorial, which is an aid to memory that protects and preserves that memory in some tangible or intangible way. Memorialisation is most commonly understood as a way to remember the dead; perhaps to assist mourning. In his 2015 *The Work of the Dead; A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* Thomas Laqueur investigates how the dead have been memorialised in literature, through the treatment of the dead body, the development of church graveyards, and the nineteenth-century development of cemeteries.⁹³ He shows how the dead have been imagined and accommodated by the living, and for what purpose, over a long timescale. However, the memory studies described above have also shown how memorialisation occurs in other ways, serving purposes other than the need to remember the dead. They demonstrate the eloquence of decisions about what is to be remembered and what is forgotten in any cultural project. I have investigated what was

⁹⁰ Ibid., 211. p.211, John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849).

⁹¹ Ibid., 215.

⁹² Ibid., 218–219. Forty references Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (1989).

⁹³ Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

forgotten, or omitted, during each of the three construction projects in order to understand the ideals that each project represented.

In addition to the monumental Christian function of the church building as a whole, churches and churchyards contain a collection of memorials to the dead in the form of individual inscribed memorial tablets and plaques. My study of these memorials at St Alfege Church has revealed changing attitudes to this locally focused memorial function and the unreliability of such fixed memorials is apparent. Many inscribed memorials survive at the church, but these memorials were severely edited and rearranged during the first three construction projects included in my study. I have drawn upon written records of monuments and memorials within the Greenwich churches to demonstrate how monuments and memorials have been curated, moved and omitted over the last three hundred years. During this period the church also accommodated a range of participatory church services and civic ceremonies, and nowadays it hosts a variety of events that invite public participation. Forty observed that outside the world of architectural history the subject of memory has received much more scholarly attention, but this literature rarely addresses the built environment or individual buildings. So, the parish church building presents a good place to study the interaction between different modes of memorialisation – the physical and the intangible – and discuss their potency.

Heritage

The analysis of historic buildings and memory studies coincide most closely when considering heritage values and the decision-making processes for agreeing appropriate treatment of any aged building. The emergence of the heritage industry as a cultural phenomenon started in the 1970s, and academic discussion of the ‘social values’ expressed through heritage projects, have influenced the development of St Alfege Church.⁹⁴ This is not least because in recent years it has received funding from a number

⁹⁴ In 1972, UNESCO adopted the ‘Convention Concerning the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage’, which inaugurated the World Heritage Site designation process. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, 2nd Revised edition. (London ; New York: Verso Books, 2012), 242.

of charitable sources, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), indicating that it is considered a significant heritage asset. Furthermore, the church is protected by both national and international heritage conservation authorities and legal frameworks, as a Grade I listed building within a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Raphael Samuel explored the relationship between memory and history, and the related development of heritage activities in *Theatres of Memory* (1994). In part III, focused on 'Heritage', he considered the semantic development of the use of the word 'heritage', particularly during and after the Second World War, observing that 'metaphorically, heritage has been subject to vast inflation'.⁹⁶ Richardson's restoration was conceived amidst a cultural climate, described by Samuel, where 'heritage' was used to help define a new national identity and linked to national destiny. In the twenty-first century, the emphasis on national identity has become less pronounced, which has freed heritage projects and conservation to address more diverse subjects and territory. The contrast between Richardson's restoration and the current reinterpretation of St Alfege Church illustrates Samuel's discussion of the transformation of 'heritage' in the intervening period. As he commented, '[i]n any given period, conservation, and with it ideas of 'heritage', will reflect the ruling aesthetics of the day'.⁹⁷

In his 1985 *The Past is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal also examined the uses of the past in the present, in the light of both the preservation of the built environment and the role of memory.⁹⁸ He showed how a building's function and its more pragmatic aspects are often overshadowed by the present-day interpretation of its past history. This is particularly true of present-day English parish churches, some of which are redundant but retain their social value because of their historic status. Current heritage priorities guide value judgements, which influence decisions about projects and their funding. Samuel used changing perceptions of church architecture as an example of how architectural styles mean different things to different generations. It was the opinion of:

... the church restorationists of the 1840s, and indeed it was the view of the Cambridge ecclesiologists, their public architectural voice, that 'from the

⁹⁶ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 208.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 384–399, 212–214.

beginning of the reign of George I to the year 1820, not one satisfactory church was built.⁹⁹

However, by the time the Georgian Group was founded in 1937, the architectural reputation of Georgian architecture was in the ascendant and Victoriana was unpopular. The fluctuating appreciation of particular eras is evident in the three projects that I have studied and indicates the aspirations of the church builders. For example, the mid-twentieth-century restoration of St Alfege Church by Sir Albert Richardson purged the church of its Victorian additions and Hawksmoor's early Georgian church architecture was celebrated and therefore memorialised. I have sought to identify the effect of these contrasting aesthetic values on the three church projects, and question what was being celebrated and what was suppressed.

The post-war development of ideas about heritage were reflected by the development of government departments and national legislation concerning the preservation of buildings. Richardson's restoration and the current project occurred within this changing national framework. Simon Thurley's *Men from the Ministry* charts the evolution of the Ancient Monument Department and chapter 14 focuses on the aftermath of the second world war.¹⁰¹ It was only at this point, amidst the survey of war-damaged historic buildings, that post-medieval buildings such as St Alfege Church were included in the government's conservation activities.¹⁰² Thurley describes the endeavour to create a national collection of buildings that were curated to express England's rich history. Whilst the Ancient Monuments Department had been compiling schedules of historic monuments since 1913, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1944 introduced the current listing convention and statutory framework. John Summerson advised on the selection of buildings for listing. He outlined his personal criteria for this selection process in his often-cited essay 'The Past in the Future', where he addressed the issue of churches and discussed the conflict between declining congregations and rising appreciation for historic buildings.¹⁰³ This is still an important heritage issue and the

⁹⁹ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 212–213. Quote from *The Ecclesiologist*; Samuel's note cites Basil F. Clarke, *Church Builders of the Nineteenth Century, A Study of the Gothic Revival in England*, Newton Abbot, 1969, 78.

¹⁰¹ Simon Thurley, *Men from the Ministry: How Britain Saved Its Heritage* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 196–215.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁰³ Summerson, *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture*, 232–235.

challenge is to maintain churches as relevant and meaningful buildings, something that St Alfege Church has endeavoured to do throughout their current project discussed in chapter 5.

The Church of England has a weighty responsibility to manage the heritage of its church buildings, and the preservation of historic churches can be an expensive and contested business. The Town and Country Planning legislation contains exemptions for buildings owned by the Church of England relating to statutory oversight. Consequently, the church authorities have more responsibility for the upkeep and protection of their listed buildings than other owners of listed buildings. The Church of England owns over 4000 Grade I listed buildings, making this responsibility onerous and costly, as Whyte outlined in 2015.¹⁰⁴ He also highlighted the tension between the historic appreciation of a parish church building and its spiritual importance as a place of worship, and wrote ‘it is hard not to feel that there is something theologically impoverished about those churches which have embraced the approach first developed by the heritage industry.’¹⁰⁵ During the development of the current project at St Alfege Church, the Rev. Chris Moody emphasised the need to maintain the church interior primarily as a space for worship, and to balance the theological and heritage functions. These two aspects of the church building were not opposites before the current project; the major church services and the Thomas Tallis Society concerts have a lot in common. So, the intention is that the broad range of events, services and activities associated with the church will have a symbiotic relationship that encourages communal use of the church building.

The St Alfege Church team have successfully completed a bid for an NLHF grant, but the two-stage application process required detailed project development with specialist help.¹⁰⁶ The NLHF is a key arbiter of ‘heritage’ in the UK they describe their objective on their website: ‘From the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks we love, from precious memories to rare wildlife ... we use money raised by National Lottery

¹⁰⁴ William Whyte, 'The Ethics of the Empty Church: Anglicanism's Need for a Theology of Architecture', *Journal of Anglican Studies* 13, no. 2 (November 2015): 172–188.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁰⁶ See the St Alfege Church HLF application documents, in particular the emphasis given to identifying a diverse audience for the building and the participation of volunteers. The application process has spawned a consultant industry focused on the management of grant applications.

players to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about.¹⁰⁷ Their remit is wide ranging and celebratory; profits from a state sponsored lottery are directed into projects that celebrate the nation's history, but which are often created by local community initiatives. The NLHF's focus on the public enjoyment of heritage has, as we will see, influenced the current St Alfege project and its provisions for casual visitors.

Recent scholars of heritage studies have explored how the values associated with heritage are established, and question the authority with which international and national heritage organisations, such as UNESCO and NLHF, have developed their concepts of heritage. Australian heritage scholar Laurajane Smith has argued that UNESCO prioritises a 'western' viewpoint that focuses on the physical objects, rather than more intangible heritage processes.¹⁰⁸ Political and asymmetrical power relationships influence what is considered 'heritage' and therefore worthy of preservation. Another scholar of cultural heritage, Siân Jones, has written about the problems associated with defining authenticity and 'social value' in heritage projects.¹⁰⁹ Both writers emphasise the importance of understanding heritage as an opportunity for different experiences, rather than an inherent quality found at a particular site. Jones has described specific archaeological projects where the design of the project recognised that the programme of work and public activities, were as important a constituent of the heritage value as the final outcome. Following these methods, they show how heritage projects can be designed to engender community cohesion and identity through activities that create more intangible heritage experiences.

While the church-building projects in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries negotiated issues around national and local identity and its commemorative functions,

¹⁰⁷ HLF claim to be the largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK, a leading advocate for the value of heritage, and to have awarded £7.9 billion to over 43,000 projects since 1994. See <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us> . Accessed 11 December 2018

¹⁰⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). Smith writes from an Australian point of view, with a particular focus on aboriginal heritage, so the UNESCO system is geographically and culturally distant from her topic.

¹⁰⁹ Siân Jones, 'Unlocking Essences and Exploring Networks: Experiencing Authenticity in Heritage Education Settings,' in *Sensitive Pasts: Questioning Heritage in Education, Making Sense of History* 27 (Oxford: Berghan Books, 2016); Siân Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities,' *Journal of Community Archeology & Heritage* 4, no. 1 (February 2017): 21–37.

the heritage concerns for a historic church building first influenced St Alfege Church during Richardson's post-war restoration, and in the twenty-first century project they have played a major role. Today, historic parish churches must contend with being sites of, and agents in, heritage processes as well as places of worship. In chapter 5, I discuss current ideas about heritage and how they relate to acts of memorialisation when applied to a historic church such as St Alfege Church.

PRIMARY SOURCES

In the course of researching the three church building projects carried out in Greenwich, I have explored many archives and specialist libraries, both digitally and in person. Recovering the church's past at local and national level has been a process of discovering selective memorialisation, governed by the archiving choices made by different institutions and individuals. I have referred to collections that are managed by the Church of England, local authorities, private charities or trusts and national heritage organisations such as English Heritage. All manage their archives differently and comprise different compilations of private and official records. The types of primary material available for each project has also varied according to the different methods and techniques employed, during the three eras, for recording building projects. For example, photographs exist of St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church from the early twentieth century but not for the earlier church building work. Hawksmoor's eighteenth-century St Alfege church project has left four drawings and two engravings; in contrast, Richardson's post-war restoration has left hundreds of drawings.

The historical records for these three architectural projects vary in depth and emphasis. For Hawksmoor's 1711-18 St Alfege Church there is a relatively small amount of primary material that has been thoroughly examined by scholars to produce extensive secondary literature, but new material has come to light in the course of this dissertation, and will be discussed in chapter 2. For Basevi's St Mary's Church the surviving primary material has not been previously analysed and the associated secondary literature is sparse, occurring in local history publications or in relation to the architect, so chapter 3 of this thesis makes a major contribution to recovering the history of this local building.

There is ample primary information concerning Richardson's restoration of St Alfege Church in 1946-53 and the project was well publicised in 1953. However, since then, the surviving material has not been analysed in detail and the project's contribution to the larger debate concerning the preservation of historic churches after the second world war has not been acknowledged. The following section describes my varied sources under three headings: ecclesiastical records, architectural records and local history records.

Ecclesiastical Records

The Church of England records are held at Lambeth Palace Library (LPL) and the Church of England Record Centre (CERC). The records of the 1711 Commission to Build Fifty New Churches were deposited in Lambeth Palace Library in 1759, where they have remained ever since. A thorough catalogue was published in 1975 and the material has been scrutinised by many scholars, including Howard Colvin and Kerry Downes. These documents include Minute Books for both the Commission's meetings and the Building Committee's meetings. The records associated with Greenwich Church (as it was always referred to) include building contracts, warrants for payments to contractors, building accounts, and surveyors' reports, which document the building process.¹¹⁰ In 1986, M. H. Port published *The Commission for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, which has subsequently been published online: however, this document does not include the full text of the minutes and is limited to just one of the LPL manuscripts.¹¹¹ I have made use of another collection of documents held by LPL pasted into MS 2715 'Miscellaneous papers', which contains papers concerning eight individual parishes including Greenwich. These letters and petitions are the original eighteenth-century documents, which have not been analysed in detail before.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ E G W Bill, *The Queen Anne Churches: A Catalogue of the Papers in Lambeth Palace Library of the Commission for Building Fifty New Churches in London and Westminster, 1711-1759* (London: Mansell, 1979).

¹¹¹ Port, *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, 23:64-74.

¹¹² Bill, *The Queen Anne Churches*, 63-64.

The LPL records of the Commission to Build Fifty New Churches convey the national, governmental administration of the project. The complementary Greenwich parish vestry minutes have not survived, so it is, to some extent, a one-sided account. Nevertheless, the collection of ‘miscellaneous papers’ includes twelve petitions from the Greenwich parish vestry sent to the Commissioners between 1715 and 1737.¹¹³ Whilst these petitions have been mentioned by Downes and Colvin, my close examination of the texts in Chapter 2 reveals new information about the relationship between the Commission and the Greenwich parish vestry, and the impact of the new church on the town.

Two drawings of the new Greenwich Church are referred to in the Commission minutes, which depict comparative pew layouts that were drawn to analyse the capacity of the church.¹¹⁴ The Commissioners’ minutes also refer to models; though none have survived, drawings of the models were made in 1876 by T. L. Donaldson and are held by the RIBA.¹¹⁵ Richard Hill has analysed these drawings, with specific reference to St Alfege Church, connecting them with comments in the Commission Minutes.¹¹⁶ Lambeth Palace Library also hold Hawksmoor’s 1711 proposal drawing for St. Dunstan Stepney (Bethnal Green), entitled ‘The Basilica after the Primitive Christians’, which has been the subject of much scholarly conjecture and will be discussed in chapter 2.¹¹⁷

The 1818 Church Commission records are deposited at the Church of England Record Centre (CERC), which is affiliated to Lambeth Palace Library. They include sixty-seven Minute Books of the Commission from 1818 – 1851, Minute Books for the Building Committee, Annual Reports from 1821 until 1856, the Commission’s Accounts and seven Surveyor’s Report Books.¹¹⁸ These Commission records have been researched by architectural historians before, particularly by Port for his definitive account of the 1818

¹¹³ LPL, MS 2715.

¹¹⁴ LPL, MS 2715, f.126 and f.127 are these two drawings.

¹¹⁵ Sir Howard Colvin, ‘Fifty New Churches’, *Architectural Review* (March 1950): 189–196. T. L. Donaldson (1796-1885), *Lecture diagrams made from models of the Queen Anne Commissioners’ Churches for London and Westminster*, RIBA PB156 (1-7).

¹¹⁶ Richard Griffiths Architects, *Conservation Management Plan for St Alfege Church*, 2017, p. 12 and p. 15.

¹¹⁷ LPL MS 2750.16, high resolution image available at <http://images.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/luna/servlet>.

¹¹⁸ CERC, all documents (195 in total) are listed in the CBC catalogue; the Minute Books are CBC/2/1/1-59; the Building Committee Minute Books are CBC/2/2/1-6; Annual Reports are CBC/3/1/1-36; Accounts and Parliamentary Returns are CBC/3/2/1-39; Surveyor’s Report Books are CBC/7/1/1-6

Church Commission, but the detailed information concerning St Mary's Church has not previously been analysed in conjunction with the Greenwich vestry minutes. The exchanges between the Commission and the Greenwich parish vestry, concerning the new church, are recorded in the minutes. There are no drawings of St Mary's Church within this archive.

The closure and eventual demolition of St Mary's Church is documented in two correspondence files (1919-1937) in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners archive, which is also held at CERC.¹²⁰ The two files contain remarkable exchanges of letters and drawings, between the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Vicar of Greenwich, the government Office of Works and more. These documents are a primary source that has not previously been examined, and my analysis of the decisions and processes they describe, in chapter 3, is wholly original.

The parish records of Greenwich are more dispersed, and not all survive. For example, the baptism, marriage and death registers for the parish of Greenwich, which were once kept in the church itself, were transferred to the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) in February 1994, where they are now available to view on microfiche. The LMA also have some information relating to the demolition of St Mary's Church in 1936 and the site's subsequent conversion into a garden area.¹²¹ Records retained by St Alfege Church are stored in a small room to the south of the chancel, which is called the archive, and includes various documents, books, parish magazines, photographs, newspaper cuttings and maps. In 2016 my guide to the contents of this room was a typed inventory, compiled in 2006 by a church volunteer, which listed the items according to their location in the room. In here I found old photographs of St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church, two copies of a revised copy of Edward Hasted's *History of Kent, The Hundred of Blackheath*, unbound copies of Kimbell's *Account*, newspaper cuttings and general correspondence.¹²² As part of the current project the archive has now been reorganised

¹²⁰ CERC, files 100581-1 and 2.

¹²¹ LMA, Saint Alfege, Greenwich: Greenwich Church Street, Greenwich, reference code P78/ALF, date 1615-1992, extent 3.77 linear metres. The LMA material on St Mary's Church is in the Barnes collection reference Q/BRN/4-7 [these four documents are also in the CERC files noted above].

¹²² Kimbell, *An Account of the Legacies, Gifts, Rents, Fees, Etc Appertaining to the Church and Poor of the Parish of St Alphege, Greenwich in the County of Kent*.

and scheduled by the church's Heritage and Interpretation Manager, Rebecca Parrant (appointed as part of the NLHF project). Within the church interior itself there are many artefacts that contribute to the history of the church and parish. These have been recorded in a *Record of Church Furnishings*, prepared by The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS), dated 1984.¹²³

In addition to this collection, ten archive boxes of material on St Alfege Church were held, on loan, by the Greenwich Heritage Trust but which have now returned to the church. The documents in these boxes were mixed and not in date order, although they are now being catalogued.¹²⁴ Within these boxes I found many interesting letters, drawings and other documents. One was the 1718 pew list, with names and the pew location, which had an accompanying letter addressed to the Lord Bishop of Rochester explaining how the pew list was compiled.¹²⁵ Unfortunately, the accompanying plans referred to in the letter were missing. Rebecca Parrant and I made another exciting discovery in these archive boxes in May 2018, which was a drawing of the St Alfege Church chancel by Sir James Thornhill, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. These two items alone contributed new information concerning the 1718 St Alfege Church relevant to the themes of this research project – the appropriate decoration of a new Anglican chancel (a national consideration) and the arrangement of the parishioners within the new, larger church (a local consideration).

Thus, while the centralised Church of England archives are well organised and thorough, the records and documentary material retained by the parish church were stored inconsistently and their survival seems more *ad hoc*. As part of the current project, the material previously on loan to the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust is being catalogued and searched for historic information that might be of interest to casual visitors, family historians and scholars.

¹²³ Richard Hill kindly gave me a photocopy of this document. It contains nine sections: 'Memorials, Metalwork, Stonework, Woodwork, Textiles, Paintings etc., Library, Windows and Miscellaneous.'

¹²⁴ When I started searching these records in 2017 at the Greenwich Heritage Centre (now closed) they were uncatalogued and referenced simply as numbers Boxes 1-10. The contents are in the process of being catalogued by volunteers at St Alfege Church, but retain the Box number reference.

¹²⁵ St Alfege, Box no. 6

Architectural Records

Architectural history depends on some specific classes of documentation, notably architectural drawings, plans and specifications, and some architectural expertise helps to retrieve and interpret the evidence available. Collections of architectural drawings, which include drawings of Greenwich and its parish church, are held by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Sir John Soane's Museum and within the Richardson and Houfe archive held by the Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service.

Founded in 1834, the RIBA has amassed a large collection of architectural publications, photographs and drawings.¹²⁷ The RIBA Drawings and Archive Collection includes Hawksmoor drawings of the Royal Hospital, one of which is a 'Design for the Royal Naval Hospital, Greenwich, second scheme' dated 1711, which is contemporaneous with the creation of Hawksmoor's St Alfege Church.¹²⁸ Another is a later drawing of the Royal Naval Hospital, from 1728, which includes the new St Alfege Church in the overall layout.¹²⁹ Sir John Soane (1753-1837) collected drawings by Hawksmoor and his museum still holds a large Hawksmoor collection, with a detailed online catalogue. The collection includes two Hawksmoor drawings that show the east and west elevations of St Alfege Church, previously thought to be the only surviving Hawksmoor drawings of St Alfege Church. They are simple line drawings that suggest Hawksmoor was exploring the composition of the east and west porticos.¹³⁰ The focus on the two porticos implies that they were an important element and Hawksmoor was considering how to connect the body of the church to the existing tower. A third drawing showing the north elevation was discovered in the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust collection in 2017 by Richard Hill (see below). The Soane collection also includes eighty-nine drawings for the Royal Naval Hospital in Greenwich, which provide eighteenth-century context for the construction of St Alfege Church.¹³¹ These drawings, and others in the RIBA Collection and at Worcester

¹²⁷ <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/RIBA-Library/RIBA-Collections-2019-guide.pdf>, accessed 14 September 2020.

¹²⁸ RIBA Library, ref. no. SD64/6.

¹²⁹ RIBA Library, ref. no. SA70/6.

¹³⁰ Sir John Soane's Museum, Hawksmoor, *Finished design for east elevation, SM 43/9/8 and LONDON: Church of St Alphege, Greenwich, Studies, W Elevation, Vol 9/65 (40)*..

¹³¹ Sir John Soane's Museum, a comprehensive online catalogue for *Greenwich Royal Hospital* was written by Dr Gordon Higgott, published online in 2007 and revised in 2016, see: http://collections.soane.org/drawings?ci_search_type=ARCI&mi_search_type=adv&sort=7&tn=Drawings&t=SCHEME136

College, illustrate the expanding master plan for the Royal Hospital for Seamen and show how the western hospital boundary was being gradually shifted westwards into the town.

Further Hawksmoor material can be found in Wilton House archive held by Wiltshire County Record Office. Wilton House is the ancestral home of the Herbert family and their archive includes drawings from the collection of Henry Herbert, 9th Earl of Pembroke (1689-1750). He was an architectural enthusiast and, when Hawksmoor's possessions were sold at auction after his death in 1736, Henry Herbert purchased several items. The Wilton House and Estate Archive includes a 'Strip drawing of the houses along streets in Greenwich, London'.¹³² These are line drawings of Greenwich street frontages, which were discovered in 2007 and subsequently analysed by Neil Rhind and Julian Watson.¹³³ Although these drawings have previously been thoroughly investigated by Rhind and Watson, they provide important contextual information that contributes to Chapter 2.¹³⁴

The RIBA Drawings and Archive Collection hold an extensive Dove Brothers archive. They were the contractors for the post-war restoration of St Alfege Church and the RIBA's retention of their drawing records indicates their strong reputation.¹³⁵ Two large rolls of construction drawings relating to the restoration of St Alfege Church, dated between 1949 and 1953, are included. They comprise over a hundred drawings, both prints and negatives, which are in quite poor condition. These are available to view by appointment at their off-site store in Fulham. There is some duplication both within these two rolls of drawings and with the drawings in the Richardson and Houfe archive held by the Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service, deposited by Simon Houfe, grandson of Sir Albert Richardson.¹³⁶ The archive comprises the architectural drawings and correspondence files accumulated by the architectural practice that Richardson

¹³² Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, 2057 Wilton House and Estate Archives, F6/25, F6/25A, <https://calmview.wiltshire.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=2057%2f11%2f21&pos=2> (accessed 6 July 2020)

¹³³ Neil Rhind and Julian Watson, *Greenwich Revealed: An Investigation into Some Early 18th Century Line Drawings of Greenwich* (The Blackheath Society, 2013).

¹³⁴ The Wilton House archive contains four other drawings attributed to Hawksmoor, including 'Sketches of the Royal Hospital and the Queen's House at Greenwich 1723/25', ref. 2057/F6/9.

¹³⁵ RIBA Drawings & Archives Collection, London (Greenwich): Church of Saint Alphege, design for alterations & additions [Dove, Shelf VIII/63-65].

¹³⁶ Richard Hill kindly put me in contact with Pamela Birch, service manager at the Bedfordshire Archives and Record Office, who was extremely helpful.

shared with his son-in-law, and architectural partner from 1945, Eric A. S. Houfe (1911-c.1995). Within this collection can be found the correspondence files and construction drawings for the restoration of St Alfege Church between 1946 and 1956.¹³⁷ These provide a unique insight into the administration of the project and the priorities of the participants. There are separate correspondence files for written communication with the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee, Dove Brothers, the War Damage Commission, the Vicar of St Alfege Church, and several specialist sub-contractors, which have enabled me to compile a timeline and understand the sequence of the works (chapter 4).

The Richardson archive also contains approximately 140 construction drawings and a set of presentation drawings for the restoration of St Alfege Church. The construction drawings are drawn in a range of scales, from depictions of the whole church to full size joinery details. They give an impression of both the immense attention to detail and the overall strategy for the church interior. The presentation drawings are in a different style and are reinforced with a canvas backing. They resemble the work of C. Lovett Gill, Richardson's architectural partner from 1906 until 1939, and show the pre-war church layout.¹³⁸ This professional archive is still owned by Richardson's grandson and, although public access is permitted, Houfe placed an embargo on Richardson's journals because he was planning an architectural biography. Nevertheless, the Richardson and Houfe archive provided a large quantity of original material for Chapter 4 which has not previously been studied.

Trade and specialist periodicals are also important resources, especially for nineteenth and twentieth-century architectural history. Articles concerning both St Mary's Church and the post-war restoration of St Alfege Church were published in the architectural periodicals *The Architect*, *The Builder* and *The Architect and Building News* (all held by the RIBA Library). In particular, I found illustrated articles contemporary with

¹³⁷ The drawings have been catalogued by Pamela Birch and are referenced Bedfordshire Archives and Record Office (hereafter BA): RGH2/356/1-142 and RGH2/356B/1-6; a total of 153 drawings. The correspondence files are all numbered RGH4/120 and are labelled Contractors (2), Consultants, Diocese, Vicar, War Damage Commission, Various and Miscellaneous (8 files in total).

¹³⁸ Olivia Horsfall Turner, 'Collections in Focus: "A Piece of Good Fortune for the Museum"' *The Architectural Historian*, March 2019. included an illustration of a drawing of St James, Piccadilly, dated 1910, by C Lovett Gill, held by the Victoria and Albert Museum.

the demolition of St Mary's Church in 1936 that provided information not found elsewhere, including architectural drawings of the church building. Other articles discussed the treatment of bomb-damaged churches after the Second World War, including some written by Richardson himself stating his position within that debate, prior to his restoration of St Alfege Church. *The Builder* published an article in 1952 that reviewed the construction work carried out at St Alfege Church to date.

Local History

In 1972 the London Borough of Greenwich purchased 'Woodlands', a house built in the late eighteenth century for John Julius Angerstein, which became the local history library and art gallery. This local history archive amassed a varied collection of books, pamphlets, photographs, postcards, maps, posters, handbills, prints, and drawings related to Greenwich and the county of Kent.¹³⁹ Much of the material was bequeathed to the local history library by local residents, but they also had limited funds for acquisitions. This rich source of material has been used to produce several popular books of historic photographs and studies of the locale.¹⁴⁰ In 2003 the library moved to the Greenwich Heritage Centre in Woolwich and was accessible to the public in their Search Room. The ownership of the collection was transferred to the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust in 2014.¹⁴¹ The collection is diverse and has been catalogued manually over time, so visitors are reliant on the archivists' knowledge of the archive's organisation and storage arrangements. However, there are treasures to be found.

The Minute Books of the Greenwich vestry from 1814 onwards are also deposited with the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust. They include the vestry's discussion of the project to build the new St Mary's Church, which started in 1821.¹⁴² These Minute Books

¹³⁹ Sally Jenkinson, *Woodlands and John Julius Angerstein* (Eltham: Gordon Teachers' Centre, 1986), 40.

¹⁴⁰ For example: Barbara Ludlow, *Greenwich*, The old photographs series (Bath: Chalford, 1994). This book has been reprinted six times, most recently in 2010. This book is where I first saw a photograph of the lost St Mary's Church.

¹⁴¹ The Greenwich Heritage Centre was closed in 2018 and the archive has been relocated by the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust. <https://www.greenwichheritage.org/visit/museum-collection-archive/archive-and-research-facilities>

¹⁴² Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust archive, Parish of Greenwich, Vestry Minute Books 1814-1824, 1824-1931, 1831-1839.

carefully record the development of the church building project from the vestry's point of view, which can be read alongside the Commission record of the project. They also show how vestry meetings were carefully documented in a precise format, with the participants named and their signatures inserted. The archive contains boxes of historic photographs and prints of many local notable buildings, including both St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church. In 2017 a drawing of the north elevation of St Alfege Church was discovered in their box of prints by Richard Hill of Richard Griffiths Architects while he was preparing the HLF Conservation Management Plan to accompany the church's bid for a NLHF grant.¹⁴³ This drawing was subsequently attributed to Hawksmoor by Professor Kerry Downes, and Richard Hill has published his analysis, which concluded that the drawing was created to support Hawksmoor's justification of the projections he added to the north and south elevations without the Commission's prior consent.¹⁴⁴ The image archive boxes contain many other fascinating images, including photographs taken of buildings in south east London by the antiquarian and local architectural historian, A. R. Martin.¹⁴⁵ I found photographs taken by a local press photographer during the demolition of St Mary's Church (discussed in chapter 3), and photographs of St Alfege Church in ruins after the 1941 bomb damage (discussed in chapter 4).¹⁴⁶ Both sets reveal the construction of the two churches and illustrate two different kinds of destruction.

Greenwich still has an active local history society. First established in 1905 as the Greenwich Antiquarian Society, renamed the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society from 1919, it became the Greenwich Historical Society in 1991.¹⁴⁷ The Society has published a journal from 1905, with copies held by the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust. Covering a wide range of topics, the journal articles are thoroughly researched and provide the researcher with a valuable local perspective throughout the twentieth century.¹⁴⁸ The continued popularity of local history in Greenwich illustrates how local

¹⁴³ Richard Griffiths Architects and Richard Hill, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich: Conservation Management Plan', May 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Richard Hill, 'Nicholas Hawksmoor and the Drawings for St Alfege Church, Greenwich', *Transactions of the Ancient Monument Society* (April 2018): 32–52.

¹⁴⁵ Ludlow, *Greenwich*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust archive, image archive boxes for St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church.

¹⁴⁷ See <https://www.ghsoc.co.uk/about-us/> for information about the society.

¹⁴⁸ For example: Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect.'; William Clarke, 'William IV and the Coffins of St Mary's', *Journal of the Greenwich Historical Society* 2, no. 1 (1998): 1–10; Stephen Nason,

history practices contribute rich detail through their connection to a specific geographic area. This local archive has provided invaluable primary source material for Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Local history sources can also be found in national collections. The National Maritime Museum (NMM) Collection and Caird Library are national institutions located in Greenwich, which hold extensive archival records relevant to the local history of Greenwich and the Royal Hospital for Seamen. Their collection includes several local nineteenth-century publications that provided important context and information on local attitudes towards St Mary's Church.¹⁴⁹ The NMM has an extensive fine art collection that offers a wealth of visual information. In their archive are several eighteenth-century plan drawings of the Royal Hospital, which extend beyond the perimeter of the Hospital and include detail of surrounding area, the road layout of Greenwich and St Alfege Church.¹⁵⁰ Their fine art collection includes several large seventeenth and eighteenth-century paintings that portray the view from One Tree Hill in Greenwich Park, looking westwards towards the City of London, with Greenwich in the middle distance and St Alfege Church tower featured prominently.¹⁵¹ Three early twentieth-century drawings by William Lionel Wyllie (1851-1931) depict a similar view, but evocatively include St Mary's Church tower as well as St Alfege church tower.¹⁵² This material is locally accessible because the buildings that the museum occupies in Greenwich, which had been the Royal Hospital School until 1933, were thought appropriate for a national maritime museum in 1934.¹⁵³

'St Alfege Church, Greenwich (An Account of the Restoration) By the Vicar of St Alfege's', *Transactions of the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society* IV, no. 6 (1954): 308–309.

¹⁴⁹ Richardson, *Greenwich*; Kimbell, *An Account of the Legacies, Gifts, Rents, Fees, Etc Appertaining to the Church and Poor of the Parish of St Alphege, Greenwich in the County of Kent*; William Howarth, *Some Particulars Relating to the Ancient and Royal Borough of Greenwich* (Greenwich: Edward George Berryman, 1882).

¹⁵⁰ [Royal Museums Greenwich Archive, Art and Architecture – volumes, ART/1-3, Greenwich Hospital. Copies of prints, plans and other drawings. Viewed in Caird library 12 March 2019.](https://collections.rmg.co.uk/archive/objects/492064.html)
<https://collections.rmg.co.uk/archive/objects/492064.html> (accessed 6 July 2020)

¹⁵¹ For example: NMM, Johannes Vorsterman, *Greenwich and London from One Tree Hill*, c. 1680, BHC1808.
<https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/13288.html> (accessed 7 March 2019)

¹⁵² NMM, *The Thames from Greenwich Park, looking north-west*, c.1924, PAF0715; *Greenwich and the Thames (Deptford Reach)*, PAF0960; *Spires and Chimneys of Greenwich*, c.1924, PAE1995.
[https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections.html#!csearch;searchTerm=Wyllie%252C Greenwich](https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections.html#!csearch;searchTerm=Wyllie%252C%20Greenwich) (accessed 7 September 2016)

¹⁵³ Pieter van der Merwe, *The Queen's House, Greenwich* (London: Scala, 2012), 94–112.

Finally, I have referred to several collections of historic photographs, and found images that have informed my analysis of St Mary's Church and the restoration of St Alfege Church. Many of these were found in the excellent collection of the Greenwich Heritage Trust and some were found in the St Alfege Church archive. However, I have also referred to original photographs in the Historic England Archive which are accessible via their website.¹⁵⁴ Their collection of aerial photographs contains interesting images of Greenwich taken shortly after the Second World War. The Architectural Red Box Collection includes historic photographs of both St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church, taken during the early twentieth century. The online 'Collage' picture archive of the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) and Guildhall Art Gallery also contains historic images of both St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church that provided additional information for Chapters 2 and 3.¹⁵⁵

The source material found in this range of archive collections is mixed and contributes both visual and written information about the local parish and its church buildings, alongside the surviving physical evidence of and from both St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church. St Alfege Church itself is a valuable source or evidence and I have examined the contents of the church interior and, to some extent, the building fabric itself to uncover remnants of St Mary's Church and the earlier versions of St Alfege's. The parish archive material was previously disorganised and difficult to search, but, as part of the current NLHF project, this material is being catalogued to assist future research. The current renovation project is very thoroughly documented, through the architect's drawings, specifications, and the NLHF documentation, including the lengthy Activity Plan. A new range of records has thus been created for future scholars and local historians.

¹⁵⁴ Historic England Archive, Architectural Red Box Collection, Churches, Greater London: Greenwich, Churches, Box A- ST.AL, (20 cards for St Alfege Church), Box ST.L-ST.M, (3 cards for St Mary's Church) <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/>

¹⁵⁵ Collage; The London Picture Archive, <https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>

Conclusion

This research project has been inspired by the recent construction project to repair and reinterpret St Alfege Church in the twenty first century. The methodology adopted for this research project focuses on comparable projects, which were carried out in each of the three preceding centuries. Across the following four chapters, I will examine how memorialisation practices have evolved in Greenwich and how the parish church building has been adapted to serve changing local and national interests. Each chapter is arranged into sections that examine the national, political and architectural context, the local context of Greenwich, and, finally, what was lost or forgotten during these three transformative construction projects. This structure provides different levels of contextual information and highlights the projects' differing priorities. Finally, I turn to the current project at St Alfege Church and consider the project priorities and how it differs from its predecessors. I ask what this project conveys about memorialisation in the twenty-first century and how the present-day perception of St Alfege Church has been modified to sustain both the church building and a local sense of community that is associated with the church.

Since the eighteenth century, there has been a substantial transformation in the character of the local Greenwich population and their relationship with the parish church. The social history of the parish as a settlement type and social group is a story of a gradual shift of power. Population growth and local government reform, in and around London, transformed the status of Greenwich. The capacity of the parish church to make independent decisions that applied to the domain of the parish was gradually reduced, while the legal and social power of the parish church vestry all but disappeared. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards the parish church had to attract loyalty through other means and in competition with other churches. Today, parish churches often engage with the heritage industry to gain attention as historic buildings. But historic parish churches are complex structures, which defy reduction to either architectural masterpieces or places for religious activity.

Memory studies and memorialisation offer alternative viewpoints from which to analyse and interpret the parish church, during these transformative projects. Ideas about buildings of the past have significantly influenced architectural design and this is

particularly apparent in the work of Hawksmoor, Basevi and Richardson. Although memory studies and concepts of memorialisation have been well developed by history scholars, the implications for the built environment and architecture have not been fully explored. I have endeavoured to apply ideas concerning the interaction of memory and identity, and their subjectivity, to a prominent parish church that is a community building which has been repeatedly reworked and used for a variety of memorial activities. Modifications to the church's memorial functions, and their apparent motivations, are investigated through the tensions between national and local forms of memorialisation. For example, the tension between an overarching architectural strategy that memorialises a past building type versus the insertion of smaller scale, individual memorials within and around an existing church building.

Architectural heritage looms large in Greenwich and many historians have shown that perceptions of heritage are created by each generation according to their values. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, national policies and legislation regarding the preservation of historic buildings have developed apace. The systematic assessment of the historic value of the country's building stock, and its legal protection, protects the physical structure but does not generate a social use for the building, and the place of churches in this story is complex. St Alfege Church is grade I listed and valued for its striking architecture, but also for the stories associated with the site.¹⁵⁶ This study above all seeks to understand how St Alfege Church has been sustained by the successful promotion of its historical associations and memorial activities, and by whom, whilst St Mary's Church has disappeared almost completely from view and local memory.

¹⁵⁶ Historic England, Church of St Alfege Listing. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1358970>, accessed 6 December 2019.

CHAPTER 2 - St Alfege Church 1711-1718:

The Local History of a National Church

The design and construction of the new Greenwich parish church in 1712-18 constituted a major transition for the identity of the parish and its population. This chapter will demonstrate how the construction of the new church, following the collapse of the previous church building in November 1710, confirmed the parish of Greenwich as an urban settlement closely allied with national political and religious life. This transition was stimulated by the expansion of London and local population growth, as well as the largescale development of a prominent national monument, the Royal Hospital for Seamen, in Greenwich.

The interactions between the local vestry, parliament and the state-appointed Church Commission, as documented during the creation of the new church, illustrated the new formal relationship and the tensions it created. I will argue that, initially, the local parish vestry and vicar had little influence over the architecture of their new church; however, once in possession they re-claimed control of the church building and adapted the 'national' church to express a more local identity. This adaptation was achieved through the creation of memorials to their dead, but also through the way the local inhabitants occupied the church in their allocated pew seats, which expressed local social hierarchies, to participate in regular church services. Contrasting approaches to memorialisation, and attitudes to history, were expressed by the local parishioners, vestry members and the Church Commissioners, through the same church building. Tensions between local and national interests arose particularly around burial customs and the church tower, which will also be examined in this chapter.

Firstly, I will consider the instigation of the church building project in Greenwich and the ways in which the creation of the new parish church was orchestrated at a national level, by the Commission to Build Fifty Churches. An analysis of the 'Act for Granting to Her Majesty several Duties upon Coals for Building Fifty New Churches in and about the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, and Suburbs thereof, and other Purposes therein mentioned' passed in 1711, as well as the nature of the associated Commission

and its architectural principles, clearly positions St Alfege Church within this national context.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, Greenwich Church was expressly named in the text of the Act and became the first church to be built by the associated Commission.¹⁵⁸ As such it was a prominent and prototypical building within this important project, which was supported by Queen Anne and designed to enhance the status of the established church, the Church of England, in a period when the authority of that church (and therefore the head of state) was being challenged by dissenters and unbelievers in London's growing suburbs.

The Commission included the well-known architects Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) and Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), who gave contrasting advice on the design of the proposed churches. Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736) was appointed Surveyor to the Commission and designed the new Greenwich Church, although the tower was not completed until 1732 by John James (1673-1746). In 1712, a list of general design principles to guide the future production of churches was agreed by the Commissioners and the specialist Building Committee that they had appointed. The minutes show that these principles were developed while the design of their first church (Greenwich Church) was under discussion. So, Greenwich Church was used as a model to test and finalise the Commission's architectural policies.

The closest architectural precedent at this time was the recently completed St Paul's Cathedral, a project that Wren and Hawksmoor had directed over the previous thirty-five years. At the same time as the new Greenwich Church was underway, Wren and Hawksmoor were also working on the design and construction of the nearby Royal Hospital for Seamen. Architecturally, Greenwich Church can almost be seen as a fragment of these two grand national projects and I will examine the implications of this for the local parish. The architectural style developed by Wren and Hawksmoor for these projects is generally known as 'English Baroque'. In his influential 1953 *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, John Summerson proclaimed that:

¹⁵⁷ England, *An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Several Duties upon Coals for Building Fifty New Churches in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, and Suburbs Thereof, and Other Purposes Therein Mentioned*. (London: Thomas Newcomb and Henry Hills, 1711).

¹⁵⁸ The Commission and the Act consistently refer to St Alfege Church as 'Greenwich Church' so I have also used that name when writing about the 1711 Act or Commission.

... the English Baroque school emerged from Wren's work and flowered into such splendid achievements as Blenheim Palace and the London Churches of Queen Anne's and George I's reigns is one of the most interesting and also one of the most difficult episodes in English architectural history.¹⁵⁹

Summerson felt that the London churches built by the Commission to Build Fifty Churches deserved a prominent position in the scholarly narrative of British architectural history, and it is significant that he grouped them with the most remarkable national buildings of that period. The architectural historiography of Hawksmoor and his London churches is therefore important to the story of St Alfege Church and Greenwich. Architectural historians have often focussed on St Alfege Church because it is one of Hawksmoor's London churches and evidence of his architectural excellence. Indeed, during the period of this research project, new drawings have been discovered that add to our understanding of the building in this light. However, what is also important for this thesis is how this scholarly work intersects with the extensive local history and heritage of Greenwich. In this chapter, these two areas of study are used to complement each other and evaluate the transformation of the parish between 1711 and 1718.

Therefore, secondly, this chapter will look at the significance of local engagement with the construction of the new parish church and the Commission to Build Fifty New Churches. In February 1710/11, a petition entitled 'The Case of the Inhabitants of Greenwich in the County of Kent, and Reasons why they ask Relief for Rebuilding their Parish-Church' was submitted by the parishioners of Greenwich to Parliament, which appealed for £6000 to rebuild the parish church, citing various reasons for the grant.¹⁶⁰ The text of the petition provided a social depiction of Greenwich, which conveyed the character of the local town and population at that time. Although the petition text had a political agenda and should be treated with caution, the *Journals of the House of Commons* show that it was verified by a parliamentary committee at the time, suggesting it was broadly accurate. Ned Ward's earlier description of Greenwich, published in 1700, also supports the petition's claims of deprivation within the parish.¹⁶¹ Its path through

¹⁵⁹ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, 163.

¹⁶⁰ *The Case of the Inhabitants of Greenwich, in the County of Kent, and Reasons Why They Ask Relief for Rebuilding Their Parish-Church*.

¹⁶¹ Edward Ward, *A Frolick to Horn-Fair with a Walk from Cuckold's Point Thro' Deptford and Greenwich* (London: J How, 1700), 15.

parliament shows how the petition became a catalyst for the much larger project described by the Act.¹⁶² In this way, a local appeal for funds was amplified into a large-scale state-sponsored project: the consequences for Greenwich were profound. St Alfege Church became the mascot for a centrally driven campaign that sought to strengthen the established Church of England.

The surviving records of the interaction between the Greenwich vestry and the Commission to Build Fifty Churches consists of twelve petitions and letters, submitted by the Parish between 1714 and 1737, and the minutes of the Commissioners' meetings.¹⁶³ These address the subjects of the burial ground, burial in the crypt, a pew for the King, and the completion of the steeple. The exchanges expose tensions between the parish vestry and the Commission, highlighting where prominent local inhabitants resisted the authority of the Commission. The steeple is particularly interesting because the seventeenth-century tower survived the collapse of the church in 1710 and remained unaltered until 1730, despite being immediately adjacent to Hawksmoor's new Greenwich Church. The exchanges concerning burials at the church convey differing contemporaneous views on the memorialisation of the dead, and the role that memorialisation played within the parish community. Similarly, the short dispute in September 1718 concerning the provision of a royal pew was arguably also a symptom of the vicar and parish vestry trying to establish full ownership of the church, and possibly a local distaste for the newly arrived Hanoverian king.

The name of Greenwich parish church was another area of tension. The church had been dedicated to St Alfege since the eleventh century; legend has it that the church is built on the site of St Alfege's death. Indeed, this story is the parish church's primary feature according to several early accounts. As noted above, the Commission chose to refer to St Alfege Church as 'Greenwich Church' throughout its proceedings, which suggests some disapproval of the dedication. Similarly, when the artist Sir James Thornhill was preparing his proposal for mural paintings inside the church, he researched

¹⁶² Great Britain Parliament House of Commons, *Journals of the House of Commons. From November the 16th 1708, to October the 9th 1711* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1803), 495, 568, 569, 574, 580, 643, 672, 681.

¹⁶³ LPL, MS 2715, f.116, f.121, f.122, f.128, f.136, f.138, f.140, f.142, ff.144-5, f.149, f.150, f.152 are petitions from the Parish to the Commissioners between 1714 and 1737.

the life of St Alfege and drew two scenes from the saint's life story, which were not used. The decoration of the chancel that he executed made no reference to St Alfege, but instead comprised a clever architectural composition that omitted any figures.¹⁶⁴ The Commission ignored the Church's longstanding dedication to St Alfege, and in so doing demoted an important local memorial purpose for the church.

For the site in Greenwich, the Commissioners selected a church design that was a stark contrast to its predecessor, both in terms of its architecture and scale. They wanted a church that was transformative, rather than a restoration of the previous church. The local vicar, church wardens and parishioners played no part in this decision-making process. Furthermore, none of the earlier memorial tablets or statues were retained and installed in the new church.¹⁶⁵ So, when the new church interior was complete in 1718, the local population would have found the space anonymous and unfamiliar. I will examine this architectural and memorial shift from one church to another through a comparison between the old and new churches, referring to written accounts, drawings and paintings.

When the new church was consecrated in 1719, the local parish community took possession of the building. The pew layout for the church had previously been discussed by the Commissioners in 1716, when two plan drawings were prepared to analyse the capacity achieved with different styles of pew. Again, the parish vestry were not consulted on this choice. However, in 1718 the parish vestry appointed a committee to allocate the pew seating in the new church to named individuals. A pew list was compiled and survives, which details the resulting arrangement of the Greenwich congregation in 1718.¹⁶⁶ A letter addressed to the Bishop of Rochester concludes this significant document and makes clear how important the author felt the seating arrangement was for the local inhabitants. This relocation of the congregation into a much larger church, after worshipping for several years at the temporary church mocked

¹⁶⁴ Comparison between the existing chancel decoration and a drawing by Sir James Thornhill with scenes entitled 'Fettering & Tormenting St Elphage' and 'Death of st Elphage', c.1718, St Alfege Church archive.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, second., vol. 1, 12 vols. (Canterbury: W Bristow, 1797); Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV; Herts, Kent and Essex*, First., vol. 4, 4 vols. (London: A Strahan for T Cadell in The Strand, 1792).

¹⁶⁶ St Alfege Church archive, Box 6.

up in the courtyard of the Queen Anne building at the Royal Naval Hospital, was a carefully choreographed move.

The interment and monumental memorialisation of the dead, which had long been associated with the parish church, was challenged by the rationalization of burial procedures enforced by the Commission. The burial of corpses within the church, including the crypt, had been prohibited by a second Act of Parliament passed in December 1711 which extended the 1710 Act to Build Fifty Churches.¹⁶⁷ The Greenwich parish vestry were instructed to purchase land to enlarge their burial ground and to ensure that no burials occurred within six feet of the church walls. As the parish congregation settled into their new church, they nevertheless sought to bury their dead in or near the church, according to customary practices. This process added local significance to the building and re-started the record of deceased parishioners at the church. Indeed, as early as 1714 the Commission accused the Greenwich parish vestry of burying corpses in the new church crypt and threatened action. There was also a strong financial incentive for the parish to allow burials within the crypt, which accompanied the desire to continue customary burial practices. This issue was a major point of contention between the Commission and the parish in the years following the consecration. It was finally resolved in 1752 when a further Act of Parliament enabled the parishioners to use the crypt for burials, with certain conditions.

These two viewpoints, that of the ‘stakeholders’ in the national project and that of the local parish, illuminate the competing ideological and economic forces at play during the planning and construction of St Alfege Church. Some traditional memorialisation processes were forgotten or overlaid with new, scholarly theological and architectural references that memorialised cultures far beyond the local parish. So, while the story of the Act to Build Fifty New Churches is well-known, this chapter adds detail to the account of the development of Greenwich parish church that shows how its creation was, at times, contentious and its transformation into an iconic ‘Hawksmoor Church’

¹⁶⁷ England, *Begin. Anne, by the Grace of God ... to the most Reverend Fathers in God ... Thomas ... Archbishop of Canterbury ... and John ... Archbishop of York [and others] ... Whereas, in pursuance of an Act ... passed in the ninth year of our reign, intituled, An Act for granting ... duties upon coals, for building fifty new churches in and about the cities of London and Westminster ... we did ... nominate ... you ... to be our commissioners, etc.* (London: printed by John Barber, 1712), 162.

attempted to suppress the church's local memorial purpose as a site for remembering St Alfege and the local dead.

National Context - Who Instigated the Church Building Project?

National politics in the early eighteenth century were vigorously pursued, with frequent elections and a ruling class that supported either the emergent Whig or Tory parties. In 1707, the Act of Union had united England, Scotland and Wales, and in 1710 a Tory government came to power and ruled, under Queen Anne, for four years.¹⁶⁸ Their success had been achieved partly through their commitment to ending British involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession and partly in response to a public outcry concerning religious practice. In 1710, the high church cleric Doctor Henry Sacheverell made a prominent sermon at St Pauls Cathedral criticising the toleration of Protestant dissent and questioning the principles of the 1688 revolution. His prosecution led to a highly-publicised state trial, which infuriated many of the general public and prompted riots in London.¹⁶⁹ The Church of England was feared to be under threat from non-conformist worship, which diminished Anglican congregations and pursued unregulated preaching.

From the inception of the Church of England the reigning monarch had been its head and the Established Church promoted national unity. The resolutely Protestant form of worship was intended to be uniform throughout the country and was choreographed by the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, the parish church represented not only religious authority but also state authority at a local level. Local government administration was located in the parish church through the operations of the vestry.¹⁷¹ Church congregations often had allotted pew seating within the church, in an arrangement that usually reflected the social structure and hierarchy of the parish in

¹⁶⁸ Mark A. Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain, 1603-1714*, The Penguin history of Britain; 6 (London: Allen Lane, 1996), 313–315. In 1713 the Tory government negotiated the Treaty of Utrecht, which allowed Great Britain to exit the War of Spanish Succession.

¹⁶⁹ White, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, 502–504; Mark Knights, 'Introduction: The View from 1710', *Parliamentary History* 31, no. 1 (February 2012): 1.

¹⁷⁰ In 1718 the 1662 Prayer Book, published shortly after the Restoration, would still have been current. It was not revised until 1928.

¹⁷¹ Fideler, Paul A., *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England*.

early modern England.¹⁷² Therefore, the issue of non-conformity, or dissenting from the Anglican faith, brought into sharp focus questions of social cohesion and the patriotic loyalty of the population. These matters were inseparable from national politics and enabled the high-church Tory party to campaign successfully under the inflammatory slogan 'Church in Danger'. National instability was also influenced by doubt surrounding Queen Anne's successor as monarch and head of the Church of England. The Queen was in poor health and had no surviving children, so this concern was becoming urgent. In the early eighteenth century, only men who held freeholds over a certain value, which included the clergy by virtue of their ecclesiastical benefices, were entitled to vote.¹⁷³ General elections were therefore decided by wealthy men. The election of October 1710, a mere month before the collapse of St Alfege Church, resulted in a landslide victory that transferred power from the Whig to the Tory Party.¹⁷⁴

Patriotism and Anglicanism were closely related attributes, which came to the fore during wartime and could be expressed in church architecture, according to Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). In May 1711, while the Act to Build Fifty Churches was being finalised by Parliament, Swift commented positively on the change in the relationship between the Church and the Houses of Commons, whilst also bemoaning the previous lack of investment in the Church of England clergy and church buildings. He described how the House of Commons directly linked the war effort with the investment in new churches:

And it appears by the address by the commons to her majesty upon this occasion, (wherein they discovered a true spirit of religion) that applying the money granted to accomplish so excellent a design, would, in their opinion, be the most effectual way of carrying on the war; that it would (to use their own words) be a means of drawing down blessings on her majesty's undertakings, as it adds to the number of those places, where the prayers of her devout and faithful subjects will be daily offered up to God, for the prosperity of her government at home, and the success of her arms abroad.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 135.

¹⁷³ 'Constituencies and Elections | History of Parliament Online,' accessed February 10, 2021, <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/survey/constituencies-and-elections>.

¹⁷⁴ Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 47–49.

¹⁷⁵ Jonathan Swift, 'News', *Examiner or Remarks upon Papers and Occurrences*, no. 43 (May 17, 1711): 1–2.

The elision of a person who is a devout Anglican with a person who is a faithful subject praying for the country's military success makes clear the close association of patriotism and Anglicanism. Swift also introduced a comparison with the Romans who 'upon a great victory or escape from publick danger, frequently built a temple in honour of some god', suggesting that the British should behave likewise. He lamented the lack of celebratory edifices 'after all our victories' implying that the new churches could fulfil that role. On a practical note, Swift estimated that there were at least 300,000 inhabitants of London parishes 'whom the churches would not be able to contain', illustrating how much London had grown.¹⁷⁶

In this context, the 1711 Act to Build Fifty New Churches was evidently a political and ecclesiastical response to the public protest following Sacheverell's prosecution and a gesture that reinforced the national status of the Church of England.¹⁷⁷ It was a celebration of Tory values that survived after the Tories fell from power in 1714 and the new king, George I formed a Whig government. The political persuasions of the men serving on the Commission to Build Fifty Churches changed but the project continued.¹⁷⁸ Hawksmoor's churches were an architectural expression of a state-driven ambition to attract greater allegiance to the Church of England in London, which ultimately transcended party allegiances. Greenwich Church was positioned at the vanguard of this politically charged state project.

The parish first approached the government for assistance in February 1710/11 when their petition, written by the vestry, was submitted to parliament (see Appendix 1).¹⁷⁹ They claimed that 'by the Judgement of skillful Workmen that made a View thereof, the said Church cannot be Repaired but must be Rebuilt: The Charge whereof, by a moderate Computation, will amount to the Sum of 6000 l. and upwards.' The inhabitants of Greenwich were appealing for financial assistance to enable them to rebuild their church, but they did not dispute their ultimate responsibility for rebuilding

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Moody, 'The Basilica after the Primitive Christians': Liturgy, Architecture and Anglican Identity in the Building of the Fifty New Churches', 38–40.

¹⁷⁸ Bill, *The Queen Anne Churches*, xxiii–xxiv.

¹⁷⁹ *The Case of the Inhabitants of Greenwich, in the County of Kent, and Reasons Why They Ask Relief for Rebuilding Their Parish-Church.*

the church. Their petition was justified by demonstrating that the causes of their inability to pay for a new church had national origins. The text comprised six numbered points that described the financial status of the parish, referring to the reduced population of the 'Richer Sort' and the reliance on maritime wages which are 'in long Arrears of Pay', of the majority of the population. In addition, the parish had '3000 and upwards' widows and children who were a 'Charge on the Parish' following the loss of their menfolk in the service of the Navy. Furthermore, the point was made that the parishioners had been contributing to the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral and City churches for forty years, and 'the greatest Number of the Inhabitants (and upon whom the insupportable Burden of Building the Parish-Church must lie) being Persons that Daily venture their Lives in Her Majesty's Service, and for the Defence of their Country'. All these considerations led the parish to feel entitled to appeal for assistance from the state. The text positions the parish of Greenwich as both of national importance – in terms of the manpower it contributed to the Navy and its support structures – and as financially stretched and deserving of support. Finally, it was noted that 'the Town hath hitherto been without Dissenting Meeting House' and the parish hoped to frustrate the ambitions of 'such who (taking Advantage of the want of a fit Place for the Service of God) endeavour to reduce the Inhabitants from their former zeal for the Church of *England*'.¹⁸¹ The inhabitants' loyalty to the Church of England was emphasised, but the text hinted that parish circumstances could create a receptive audience for a dissenting chapel. This eloquent petition effectively presented the parish inhabitants as a loyal population who were deserving of support and Greenwich as a place with national status. It is likely that the parish vestry were hoping for a Local Act in response to their petition, but were ultimately caught up in a bigger political manoeuvre.¹⁸³

On 14 February 1710/11, a parliamentary committee comprising thirty-six named men plus 'all the members for the counties of Kent and Middlesex, and the Universities' was promptly appointed to investigate the case. In early April, petitions from nine other churches requesting financial assistance were held in abeyance, awaiting the committee's

¹⁸¹ *The Case of the Inhabitants of Greenwich, in the County of Kent, and Reasons Why They Ask Relief for Rebuilding Their Parish-Church*. See Appendix 1.

¹⁸³ Joanna Innes, 'The Local Acts of a National Parliament: Parliament's Role in Sanctioning Local Action in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Parliamentary History* 17, no. 1 (1998): 23–47.

report into the Greenwich petition. On 6 April, the committee reported favourably, noting that the Parish had presented ‘plans of their intended new Church, signed by proper Workmen, with an Estimate of the Charge thereof, amounting to the Sum of £6,260. 4s. 2d.’¹⁸⁴ (These plans, it should be noted, have not survived.) The precision of this sum suggests that the Greenwich parish vestry had developed their plans for the new church and its projected construction to a very detailed level: however, there is no mention of a pre-existing scheme for the new church in the Church Commissioners’ minutes and Hawksmoor’s ambitious design proposals for Greenwich Church suggest that he did not refer to the parishioners’ scheme.¹⁸⁵ The government proceeded to use this financial appeal for Greenwich Church to generate a much larger venture that addressed the more complex political and ecclesiastical issues at a national scale.

The Act began its course through parliament as a Bill in the House of Commons on 18 May 1711 and was passed unanimously on 28 May 1711.¹⁸⁶ It was then referred to the House of Lords for ‘Concurrence’. The Act seems to have encountered little political resistance and continued the state memorialisation of the Anglican Church; it continued both the work that had started in 1667 after the Fire of London, with Wren’s monumental reconstruction of St Paul’s Cathedral, and the method of fundraising deployed in that project. ‘An Act for Granting to Her Majesty several Duties upon Coals for Building Fifty New Churches’ described the funding method for the project and imposed certain criteria for the design of the new church buildings.¹⁸⁷ Broadly speaking, the Coal Duty initially raised to fund St Paul’s Cathedral and the City Churches after the Fire of London was reallocated

for the Building of Fifty New Churches of Stone, and other proper materials, with Steeples to each of them; and for Purchasing of Scites (sic) of Churches and Church Yards, and Burying Places in or near the Cities of London and Westminster, or the Suburbs thereof; and for making such Chapels Churches as are already

¹⁸⁴ These plans have not survived.

¹⁸⁵ The passage of the Greenwich Parishioners’ petition and the Bill to Build Fifty New Churches through the House of Commons is recorded in: Commons, *Journals of the House of Commons. From November the 16th 1708, to October the 9th 1711*, 495–681.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 672, 681.

¹⁸⁷ England, *An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Several Duties upon Coals for Building Fifty New Churches in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, and Suburbs Thereof, and Other Purposes Therein Mentioned*.

Built, and capable thereof, Parishes Churches, And for Purchasing houses for the habitation of the Ministers of the said Churches.¹⁸⁸

Furthermore, the Act stated that 'One shall be Erected in the Parish of East Greenwich in the County of Kent.' In addition, the Act provided for Greenwich Hospital to receive £6000 per annum, to enable its completion, and declared that St Paul's Cathedral was finished, which released Wren's suspended salary. These are the only three buildings specifically granted funding by the Act, a grouping that appears to elevate the status of Greenwich Church to that of a national monument.

A primary purpose of the Act to Build Fifty New Churches was the creation of new parishes within populous areas of London. The Commissioners were instructed to:

enquire and inform themselves in what Parishes the said New Churches, except that for Greenwich, are most necessary to be Built, and of proper Places for the Scites of the said respective New Churches, and also a Cemetery, or Church-Yard, for each of the said Churches, for the Burial of Christian People, to be Purchased; and also which of the said Chapels are fit to be made Parish-Churches; and shall Ascertain the several houses, Lands, Tenements, and hereditaments, and Bounds and Limits which in their Judgement or Opinion may be fit to be made distinct Parishes.¹⁸⁹

In some areas of London, the existing parishes had become so populous that the parish church and vestry were unable to cope. Swift gave an example of a parish where the population grew because houses were built upon fields and 'the care of about thirty thousand souls has been sometimes committed to one minister, whose church would hardly contain the twentieth part of his flock'.¹⁹⁰ Swift may have been referring to Stepney, where the Commissioners initially focussed their attention. The high churchmen were anxious that inhabitants who were not accommodated within a parish structure might be susceptible to the appeal of non-conformist worship within dissenting chapels. Similarly, London's growing population put ancient burial grounds under pressure and the Act required that proposed sites for new churches included land for a churchyard. Greenwich Church was thus unusual, in the wider context of the Act, because the site,

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 448.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 449–450.

¹⁹⁰ Swift, 'No. 42.'

churchyard and local parish community were all well established. The church incumbent and parish inhabitants were already organised into the customary parish structure. Greenwich church was included in the Act to Build Fifty Churches because the parishioners' petition to parliament had provided the protagonists of the Act with a worthy church building project that could attract parliamentary support to their wider cause.

The Act to Build Fifty Churches was promoted in the House of Commons by the high church cleric Francis Atterbury (1662-1732). After the Act was passed, he became a Church Commissioner and the reinvention of St Alfege Church exemplified his vision for the Church of England.¹⁹² Atterbury, a charismatic man, was close friends with William Bromley, MP for Oxford University and Speaker of the House of Commons.¹⁹³ He had been an active political voice in the House of Commons since 1701, when he gained an *ex officio* seat as Archdeacon of Totnes. His contribution to political debates in parliament concerning the church, particularly during the trial of Henry Sacheverell in 1710, led to his becoming the high church champion and spokesman in the Tory administration who advocated a uniform national church. In 1710, he was appointed Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation and was instrumental in elevating the Greenwich parishioners' petition into a larger church building project to strengthen the Church of England. Atterbury was appointed Bishop of Rochester in 1713 and, because Greenwich was in the diocese of Rochester at that time, he performed the consecration service at St Alfege Church on 29 September 1719. An account of the ceremony described how he also consecrated the new churchyard extension.¹⁹⁴

The interaction between ecclesiastical, political and architectural interests, evident in the makeup of the Commission and the development of the Act itself, connects the architectural history of the churches built by the Commission to Build Fifty New Churches with wider national concerns of the time. The Commissioners to serve the Act

¹⁹² Christopher Moody, 'Francis Atterbury and St Alfege Church', April 2018. Unpublished public lecture that discussed the parallel trajectory of Atterbury and St Alfege Church between 1710-1720.

¹⁹³ Du Prey and Hawksmoor, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 50–52.

¹⁹⁴ Francis Atterbury, *The Epistolary Correspondence, Visitation Charges, Speeches, and Miscellanies, of ... Francis Atterbury, ...*, vol. 4 (London: printed by and for J. Nichols: and sold by C. Dilly, 1783), 3–5. This consecration date is reported as 1718 in some later publications, but the Commissioners' Minutes support the 1719 date; the dispute concerning the provision of a Royal pew occurred in September 1718.

were appointed by a separate Act of Parliament.¹⁹⁵ The political importance of this project can be judged by the size of the Commission and the calibre of its Commissioners, to which we will now turn.

The Commission to Build Fifty New Churches and Greenwich Church

In Sept 1711, fifty-one men were appointed to the Commission, of whom the sixteen members of the Church included two archbishops, five bishops and Atterbury. Twelve men were appointed from the government, including four earls, the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Of the remaining seventeen men, several represented the City of London; Sir Christopher Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh and Thomas Archer were included for their architectural expertise. A further 23 men were added to this (already large) Commission in Sept 1712, including Sir Isaac Newton and the Royal Astronomer Edmund Halley, bring the total membership to 74.

The Commission's minutes started on 3 October 1711 and on 10 October Nicholas Hawksmoor and William Dickinson were appointed Surveyors.¹⁹⁶ At the same meeting the Building Committee was nominated, which included Hawksmoor's close associates Wren and Vanbrugh, as well as Thomas Archer (1668-1743). Their role was to instruct the Surveyors and assess the proposed sites and designs supplied by the Surveyors. So, for the construction of their fifty churches, the Commission had assembled a design team comprising the most expert and prestigious architects in Britain at that time. The result was always going to be monumental, rather than parochial.

Wren and Vanbrugh, as Commissioners and members of the Building Committee, both wrote open letters offering advice on the design of the new churches. Wren's and Vanbrugh's letters to the Commission have been carefully analysed by scholars, as both

¹⁹⁵ England, *Begin. Anne, by the Grace of God ... to the most Reverend Fathers in God ... Thomas ... Archbishop of Canterbury ... and John ... Archbishop of York [and others] ... Whereas, in pursuance of an Act ... passed in the ninth year of our reign, intituled, An Act for granting ... duties upon coals, for building fifty new churches in and about the cities of London and Westminster ... we did ... nominate ... you ... to be our commissioners, etc.*

¹⁹⁶ LPL, MS 2690; Port, *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, 23:2.

influenced the design principles for the new churches.¹⁹⁷ Their points have much in common, but they emphasise different aspects. Wren's letter to his fellow Commissioners listed eight recommendations for the new churches.¹⁹⁸ These related to the location of the church within the town, the avoidance of burials within the church, support for out-of-town cemeteries, the external appearance of the church in relation to the surrounding town, suitable building materials, the capacity and dimensions of the church interior and pulpit positioning to get the full benefit of the preacher's voice. His final suggestion related to the size of the new churches: 'the new Church should be at least 60 Feet broad, and 90 Feet long, besides a Chancel at one End, and the Bellfrey and Portico at the other.' As an exemplar, he offered up his own design for the parish of St James, Westminster, writing 'I think it may be found beautiful and convenient, and as such, the cheapest of any Form I could invent.' He offered technical advice and considered the setting in terms of the churches' convenience and place within the townscape. Vanbrugh's letter to the Commissioners covered many of the same topics as Wren's letter, but he advocated a more dramatic and impressive response to the challenge. He thought the new churches should have 'the most Solemn & Awfull Appearance both without and within, that is possible'.¹⁹⁹ He also developed the idea of independent cemeteries, separated from the churches, but to a greater extent, including a sketch of a cemetery he had seen in India. Wren and Vanbrugh were both close colleagues of Hawksmoor's; he would have responded to their advice.²⁰⁰

The Commissioners' minutes also record the difficulties they experienced whilst trying to define new parishes in London and their search for suitable sites.²⁰¹ The spatial requirements for the new church sites were under discussion. A well-known drawing

¹⁹⁷ Du Prey and Hawksmoor, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 55–59; Friedman, *The Georgian Parish Church*, 2–4; Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 160–161.

¹⁹⁸ Christopher Wren, ed., *Parentalia Or Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens Viz. of Mathew Bishop of Ely, Christopher Dean of Windsor ... But Chiefly of --- Surveyor-General of the Royal Buildings ... Now Published by Stephen Wren* (London: Osborn, 1750), 318–321.

¹⁹⁹ Vanbrugh, 'Mr Van-Brugg's Proposal about Building ye New Churches', 1711, (Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Rawl.B 376, ff.351-52). Also see Downes, *Vanbrugh*, Appendix E, 257-58.

²⁰⁰ Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor were working together on the construction of Castle Howard (commenced 1701) and Blenheim Palace (commenced 1705) while the Commission were developing their approach to the design of their churches. Hawksmoor had worked for Wren from a young age and been central to Wren's projects for St Paul's Cathedral and the City Churches.

²⁰¹ Port, *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, 23:ix–xxxiii. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol23> [accessed 9 Jan 2019]

made by Hawksmoor in 1711 shows his spatial analysis of a proposed site in Bethnal Green. He titled his drawing 'The Basilica After the Primitive Christians', which indicates his use of early Christian temples as a reference point. The scheme in Bethnal Green was not pursued, perhaps because the site was constrained by surrounding buildings and streets, but the drawing is the earliest surviving expression of Hawksmoor's (and probably the Commissioners') intentions for the layout of the new churches.²⁰² The layout depicted was labelled and annotated with sixteen points. Of these the following are worth noting, in relation to the 1711 design for St Alfege Church. Hawksmoor's first note read 'Manner of Building the Church – as it was in the fourth century in ye purest times of Christianity'. So, he venerated and sought to memorialise a form of Christian worship from fourteen centuries earlier. Hawksmoor's drawing shows the church building surrounded by 'F' and 'L' which are 'The septum or Enclosures of ye Church, to keep off filth – Nastyness & Brutes' and 'The open place rounde ye Church 30 fo' wide'. Hawksmoor emphatically separated or detached the church from the surrounding urban development and placed it in a protected precinct. A narrow opening in the church enclosure connected to a large 'Cemetery, Sleeping place or place of Sepulture – Or The said Burying place', which had two additional entrances off the street. The spatial relationship between the burial ground, the church building and the surrounding city was thus carefully controlled and separated.

This drawing was created shortly before Hawksmoor turned his mind to Greenwich church and was a precursor to the Commission's adoption of its 'Resolutions', or design principles, for the Fifty New Churches. On 16 July 1712 the Commission agreed eleven special resolutions to govern the appearance and form of the new churches.²⁰³ The first resolution stated that 'one general design or Forme be agreed upon for all the fifty New intended Churches, where the Scites shall admit thereof; The Steeples or

²⁰² Du Prey and Hawksmoor, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 61–65; Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 162–163. The drawing is held by Lambeth Palace Library and catalogued as 'St. Dunstan Stepney (Bethnal Green)' LPL MS2750.16: See the excellent high resolution online image at: <http://images.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/luna/servlet/detail/LPLIBLPL~17~17~30823~106857?qvg=q:Ha wksmoor;lc:LPLIBLPL~9~9,LPLIBLPL~31~31,LPLIBLPL~32~32,LPLIBLPL~12~12,LPLIBLPL~34~34,LPLIBLPL~24~24,LPLIBLPL~17~17,LPLIBLPL~19~19,LPLIBLPL~20~20,LPLIBLPL~29~29,LPLIBLPL~21~21,LPLIBLPL~23~23&mi=2&trs=3> (accessed 7 Sept 2020).

²⁰³ Du Prey and Hawksmoor, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 143–44. See also LPL, MS 2690, 42–43.

Towers excepted.²⁰⁴ The discussion and creation of the design for Greenwich Church was concurrent with the development of the Commissions' general design principles; the exception made for church towers could have been intended to accommodate the surviving tower at Greenwich. The Commissioners' intention was to create a group of churches that followed the same architectural programme and Greenwich Church was the first example. The Surveyors were urged to proceed with the church building design for Greenwich, because the site and parish were already well established, and less than a month after the Commissions' general design principles had been agreed, Hawksmoor presented his designs for Greenwich church to the Commission. On the 6 August 1712 the minutes record that:

The Commission took into consideration the Designs laid before them for the new Church to be erected in the parish of East Greenwich. Resolved that the smallest of the Designs produced by Mr Hawksmoor be fixed upon for the said Church. That the pillars thereof support the gallery only. That there be only one portico at the east end of the said Church. That the same be 37 foot high within 90 foot long, and 65 foot wide. That the same be built with stone, the ashlar to be 9 inches thick one part with the other. That the building thereof be proceeded upon with all convenient speed. Ordered that the committee meet at the Secretary's house on Tuesday next at 4 clock in the afternoon and receive proposals for building the said Church, from masons and bricklayers.²⁰⁵

These design decisions were made with the assistance of models, which have sadly not survived. However, these models were still in existence in the late nineteenth century, and were drawn by Professor T. L. Donaldson in 1876 to accompany his architectural lectures. Two of these plans have been identified as proposals for St Alfege Church.²⁰⁶ The drawings of the model floor plans suggest that Hawksmoor proposed different options for Greenwich Church, which varied in size and their treatment of the surviving church tower. The extant tower, which had been built by the parish in 1617 and had survived the building collapse in 1710, limited Hawksmoor's design for the new church. The 'smallest design', selected by the Commission, opted to build the new church next to

²⁰⁴ LPL, MS 2690, 42-43 and see Du Prey, *London Churches*, Appendix 4.

²⁰⁵ LPL, MS 2690, 50.

²⁰⁶ Colvin, 'Fifty New Churches.' See also Richard Hill's analysis of these drawings in Richard Griffiths Architects and Hill, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich: Conservation Management Plan', 12-15. T.L. Donaldson's drawings are now in the RIBA drawing collection.

the old church tower, rather than incorporate it into a larger building. Donaldson's plan drawings also depict a rectangular boundary wall around the church, which suggests that the model included not just the church building, but a demarcation of protected precinct around the church, similar to that shown on Hawksmoor's earlier drawing, 'The Basilica After the Primitive Christians'. This boundary wall controlled the threshold between the sacred space of the church and the urban context of the town. However, the rectangular plot adopted for the church proposal was unrelated to the irregular boundary outline of the existing site for the church. This suggests that, at a planning stage as least, the setting of the new Greenwich church within the town was a low priority.

Greenwich Church was created while the Commission was establishing its own working practices and developing design principles to apply to all their intended churches. Their objective was to produce a recognizable group of churches spaced throughout London that expressed a common message. This policy suggests that Greenwich Church was a prototype and a reference point for both the Commission and Hawksmoor as they continued to design and build further churches. Hawksmoor's sophisticated architecture employed an academic memorialisation that referred back to early Christianity and biblical history. The history of the specific location of the church was less important, though in Greenwich the surviving church tower and constrained town centre site exerted limitations on Hawksmoor's proposed new church. Before we turn to the design of St Alfege Church itself, it is important to consider the broader architectural context within which the Commissions' blueprint for their new churches emerged, so as to appreciate their ambition and identify the architectural precedents they used as reference points.

Architectural Antecedents and the Shaping of St Alfege Church

The 1670 'Act for the rebuilding of the City of London, uniting of Parishes and rebuilding of the Cathedral and Parochial Churches within the said City' was passed following the devastation caused by the Great Fire of London.²⁰⁷ The City Churches were an important precedent for the 1711 Commissioners to Build Fifty Churches. Wren and

²⁰⁷ 22 Car II: c. 11

Hawksmoor had both worked on the rebuilding of the fifty-one City Churches and St Paul's Cathedral for many years, so these projects had also shaped their expertise. These churches were often built on the constrained sites – and sometimes the foundations – of their predecessors, within the dense medieval road network of the City. Most were built of brick, with Portland stone details, and porticoes were rare. The exterior architecture of the City Churches was generally quite restrained at ground level, while architectural attention was focused on the church spires, which had varied and inventive compositions. The spires advertised the position and status of the churches within the City and created an impressive skyline when viewed from further afield.²⁰⁸ For this large-scale Anglican church-building project, Wren had devised an internal church layout thought appropriate for the Church of England and its Protestant worship.²⁰⁹

The 1711 Act to Build Fifty Churches inherited this knowledge and extended the state-sponsored construction of churches in London beyond the City boundary. They sought spacious sites for their new churches, which allowed the whole building to be separated from the surrounding urban fabric and viewed from middle-distance. So, in contrast to the City Churches, the new church buildings could have regular geometric-shaped floor plans and were not constrained by the surrounding buildings. As a result, the 1711 churches had a regular external appearance that contrasted with their immediate surroundings and was highly visible both from street level and further afield. These characteristics made the 1711 churches more like small cathedrals rather than urban parish churches, and the ashlar Portland stone walls further reinforced this impression.

For this reason, Greenwich Church's closest architectural precedents in 1712 were St Paul's Cathedral (1675-1710) and the nearby Royal Hospital for Seamen (1694-1751). Both were ambitious, state-sponsored projects that were intended to impress visitors and inspire national pride. There was also continuity in the team of men who worked on all three projects. The first stone in the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral after the 1666

²⁰⁸ Christine Stevenson, *The City and the King: Architecture and Politics in Restoration London* (New Haven and London: Yale UP for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2013), 265–269.

²⁰⁹ Wren, *Parentalia Or Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens Viz. of Mathew Bishop of Ely, Christopher Dean of Windsor ... But Chiefly of --- Surveyor-General of the Royal Buildings ... Now Published by Stephen Wren*, 309–318. Provides a brief description of all fifty-one City Churches.

fire was laid in 1675 and the cathedral was completed thirty-five years later in 1710. From 1684 Hawksmoor was Wren's principal assistant, preparing many of the design drawings. Hawksmoor drew upon the skills and experience he had gained whilst working on St Paul's to produce the new Greenwich church. The many years of cathedral construction also generated a group of crafts people who were expert in producing this type of building. For example, the master mason, Edward Strong, worked with his son (also called Edward Strong) on St Paul's Cathedral, the Royal Hospital and on Greenwich Church.²¹⁰

All three buildings were clad in monolithic Portland stone, with bold classical details. The composition of the east portico of St Alfege Church has been compared to preparatory architectural drawings for St Paul's Cathedral.²¹¹ In this regard, the exterior of St Alfege Church can be seen as a fragment of the much larger edifice, which suggests a greater visual and conceptual relationship between the two buildings. Hawksmoor, as Summerson pointed out, was 'a passionate student of the antique, a reconstructor of lost monuments;' and he applied this knowledge to his London churches.²¹² The use of the orders and principles of Roman architecture for St Paul's Cathedral and Greenwich Church represented a break with British ecclesiastical building patterns; it also signalled an association – or competition – with Paris and Rome.²¹³ Wren had sought to create a cathedral that represented the supreme authority of the Church of England, and by inference, the nation's power. This architectural memorialisation of the Roman empire, intent on nation-building, was also embodied in the designs for Greenwich Church.

The Royal Hospital for Seamen was under construction in Greenwich at the same time as Greenwich Church; their sites were located about five hundred metres apart. The two projects shared a surveyor (Hawksmoor) and many specialist contractors. Greenwich Church benefited from this shared architectural expertise and logistical management. As a result, its construction methods were of a calibre rarely seen in parish-sponsored

²¹⁰ Arthur T. Bolton and H. Duncan Hendry, eds., *The Wren Society*, vol. VI (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).

²¹¹ Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 168.

²¹² Summerson, *Georgian London*, 61.

²¹³ John Bold, 'Comparable Institutions: The Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Hotel Des Invalides', *Architectural History* 44 (2001): 136–144.

church building. In addition, the architectural similarities between the church and the Royal Hospital, such as the use of Portland stone, Roman classical details and a symmetrical composition, created a visual affinity between the church and the Royal Hospital for Seamen that implied a common source and identity.²¹⁴ However, this close alliance between the two projects reinforced the monumentality and state sponsorship of the parish church, possibly making the new church quite intimidating to the local inhabitants it was intended to serve.

Professionally, Hawksmoor had much more at stake in Greenwich than just one church. He was Clerk of Works for the Royal Hospital for Seamen between 1698-1735 and Deputy Surveyor, to Wren and then Vanbrugh, 1705-1729. The Royal Hospital had also received additional state funding in 1711 (from the Act to Build Fifty Churches) which had re-energised the project. Samuel Travers' 1695 survey of Greenwich, reproduced by Kimbell, defined the initial grant of land for the Royal Hospital for Seamen and comparison with the later layout drawings show the gradual enlargement of the site.²¹⁵ As John Bold's analysis of the progress of the Royal Hospital development indicates, Hawksmoor would have been considering new work at the Royal Hospital while working on Greenwich Church.²¹⁶ Surviving drawings show that Hawksmoor was imagining additional buildings to expand the Hospital complex whilst also designing the new church.²¹⁷ Between 1711 and 1714 Hawksmoor developed four options to enlarge the Hospital complex, extending beyond the south and west boundary of the land granted in 1695.²¹⁸ In 1712 he was asked by the Royal Hospital Commission to investigate what ground could be purchased to the west of the Hospital, which meant which parts of Greenwich might be for sale.²¹⁹ So, Hawksmoor was thinking about the design of the

²¹⁴ Bolton and Hendry, *The Wren Society*, VI:95–102.

²¹⁵ Kimbell, *An Account of the Legacies, Gifts, Rents, Fees, Etc Appertaining to the Church and Poor of the Parish of St Alphege, Greenwich in the County of Kent*. Fold out map at the front of the book.

²¹⁶ Bold, *Greenwich*, 137–183.

²¹⁷ Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 88; Hopkins, *From the Shadows*, 41–43.

²¹⁸ Dr Gordon Higgott catalogued the 89 drawings of Greenwich Royal Hospital held by Sir John Soane's Museum in 2007, rev. 2013. He classified twelve schemes for the development of the Hospital; schemes numbered 7-10 are dated between 1711 and 1714, while the design and construction of St Alfege Church was in progress.

http://collections.soane.org/drawings?ci_search_type=ARCI&mi_search_type=adv&sort=7&tn=Drawings&t=SCHEME136 (accessed 12 March 2018).

²¹⁹ Dr Higgott indicated, in relation to his scheme 8, that 'The drawings that Hawksmoor prepared for this meeting are probably the two site plans at Worcester College (*Wren Society*, VI, pl.14)'.

Royal Hospital, its boundary with the town of Greenwich and the design of the new Greenwich Church at the same time, during the years 1711 to 1714.

Later, in 1727, with the accession of George II, a new Commission was appointed to complete the Royal Hospital and in 1728 Hawksmoor envisioned and drew the overall town plan in relation to the Royal Hospital, including Greenwich Church as a monument within that masterplan.²²⁰ 'The New Road' running east-west created a connection to St Alfege Church and extended the Hospital's influence further west into Greenwich (Figure 1). Two 1728 layout drawings of the Royal Hospital held by Sir John Soane's Museum include the layout of Greenwich to the west, including the Church. The first was a survey drawing and the second showed proposed additional work around the Royal Hospital site, overlaid onto the Greenwich town plan.²²¹ The proposals clearly intended significant demolition of existing town buildings. The construction of the Royal Hospital was a long term and expanding project, which Downes described as follows:

... the disposition of masses is fused with the shaping and direction of the space which the masses surround and which in turn surrounds them, until the whole area from the Observatory to the River Thames and from the eastern gates to the new parish church is caught up in the design.²²²

²²⁰ In 1728 Hawksmoor published his *Remarks on the Founding and Carrying on of the Buildings of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich*, which included an annotated engraved masterplan that showed a 'Via Regia' leading directly to the 'New Church' (or St Alfege Church), RIBA Library SC175/26, and NMM, ART/1-3.

Hawksmoor's drawing 'A Plan of the Royall Hospitall at Greenwich anno 1728', RIBA Drawings Collection SA70/6, (Bold, *Greenwich*, 106), showed a similar layout in more detail.

²²¹ Sir John Soane's Museum, SM volume 109/5, 'A Plan of the Buildings and foundations of Greenwich Hospital, as they are now carrying on ... Anno 1728'; SM volume 109/6, 'Draft block plan of the Greenwich Hospital Buildings and site, c.1728. showing proposals for alterations to the roads and approaches around the Hospital'.

²²² Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 98.

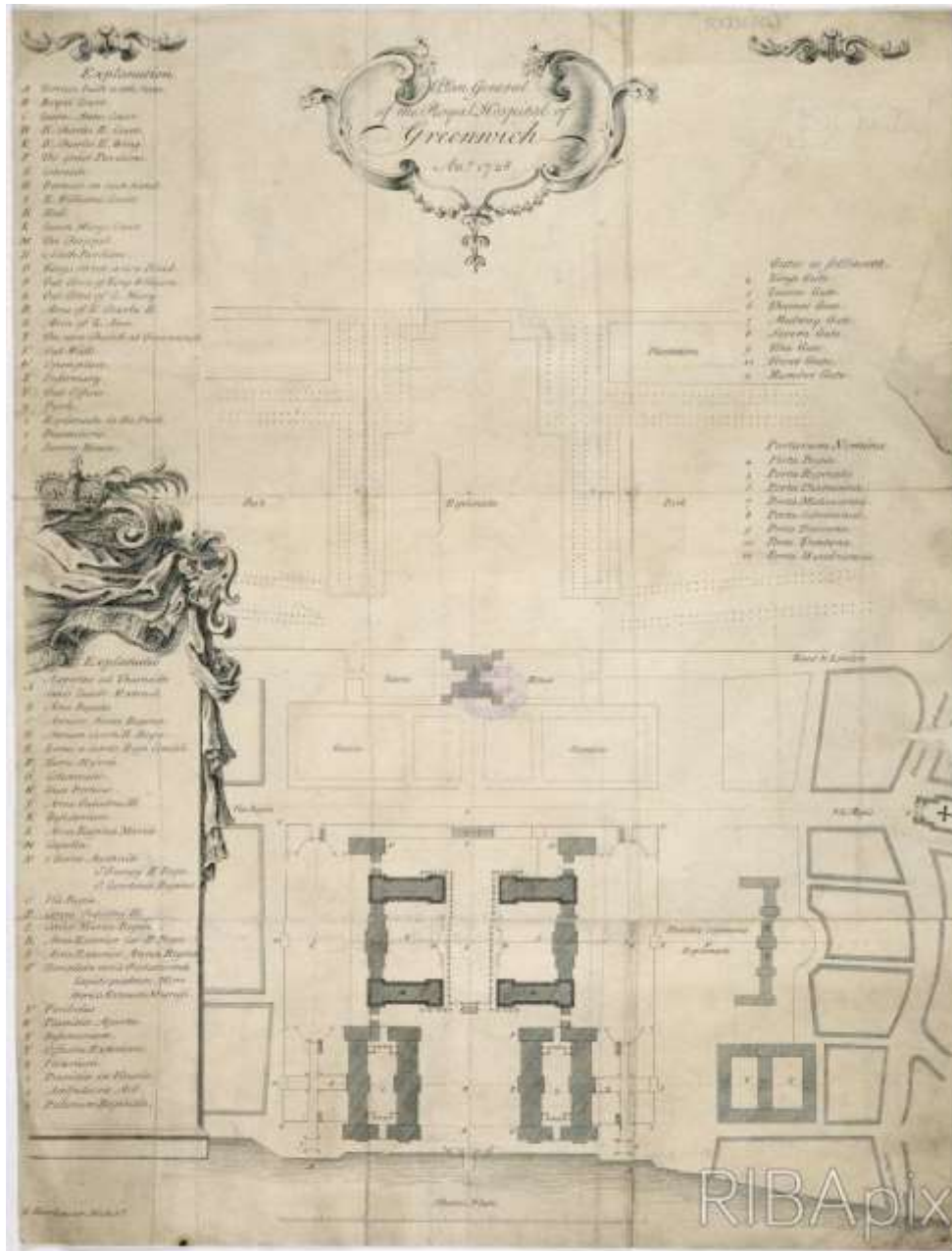


Figure 1. Plan General of the Royal Hospital of Greenwich Anno 1728, in Remarks on the Founding and Carrying on of the Buildings of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich, Nicholas Hawksmoor. [RIBA Library SC175/26, and NMM, ART/1-3]

Hawksmoor's spatial planning for this project gradually encompassed more and more of the surrounding Greenwich neighbourhood. The boundary between the town and the Hospital was under strain; Greenwich's irregular medieval street plan contrasted the large scale, orthogonal layout of the Hospital, which is illustrated by this early eighteenth century site plan of the area (Figure 2), but the 'New Church' or St Alfege Church became a reference point for both.²²⁵

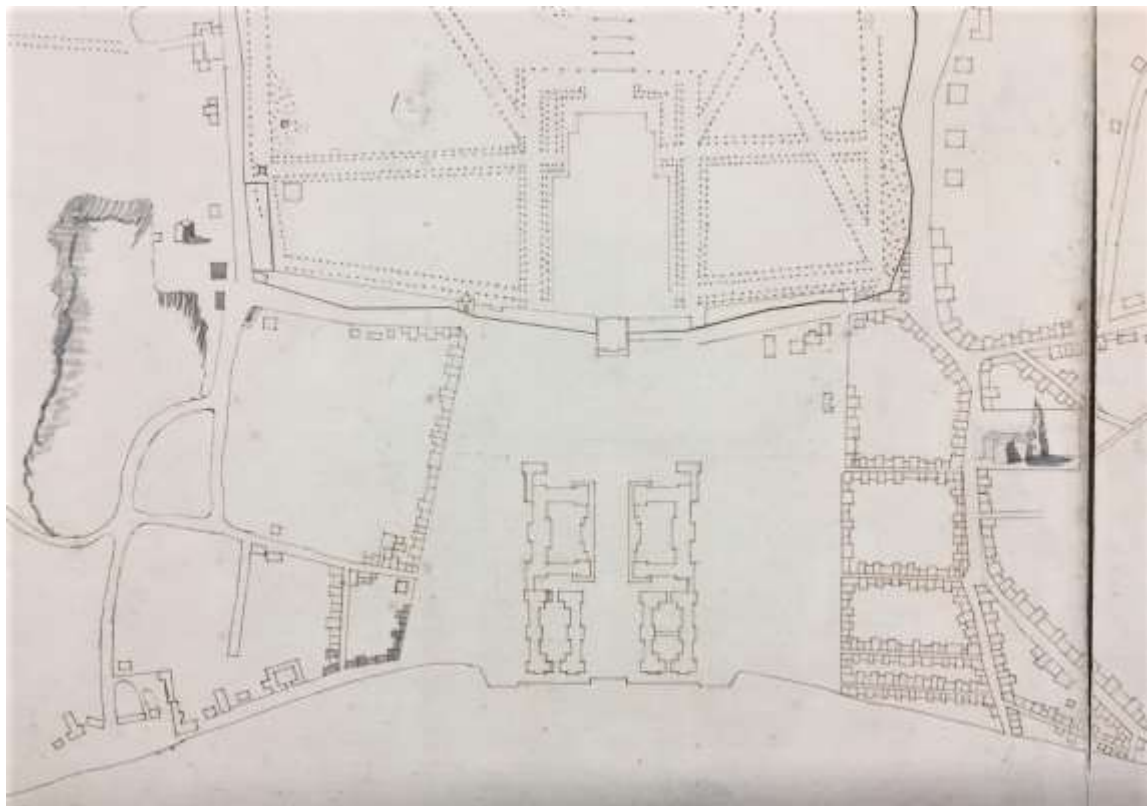


Figure 2. Excerpt from 'Map of Greenwich, showing the Royal Naval Hospital, the Park with its formal gardens and the Queens House, and Greenwich village with St Alfege's Church, early eighteenth century.' Collected by Robert Mylne, Clerk of the Works. ART/2 [NMM]

²²⁵ Bolton and Hendry, *The Wren Society*, VI:XI. Full siteplan is shown on plate XI.

Hawksmoor's associate, John James (1673-1746), is another example of the shared workforce that connected these projects. His role at Greenwich Church was significant, to the extent that several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts attributed the church solely to him, although he is now only connected to the design of the church tower, completed in 1730.²²⁶ James' career had followed a parallel path to Hawksmoor's, progressing from St Paul's Cathedral onto the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the 1711 London Churches.²²⁷

He was an educated man who translated several architectural treatises from Latin and French.²²⁸ Starting out as a carpenter at St Paul's Cathedral in 1707, he had become the Master Carpenter by 1711 and Assistant Surveyor by 1715.²²⁹ In 1699 he had also started work at the Royal Hospital in Greenwich, being appointed Assistant Clerk of the Works (under Hawksmoor) in Feb 1704/05 and Joint Clerk of Works in 1718.²³⁴ Though he had submitted a design proposal for Greenwich Church to the Commission, which was passed over in favour of Hawksmoor's proposal, in February 1712/13 he was appointed to carry out the carpentry work for the church, in partnership with Robert Jeffs.²³⁵ James and Jeffs were responsible for the construction of the large, bespoke roof trusses that enabled the wide ceiling span. These trusses were a significant technical achievement. Although the roof was destroyed in 1941, two illustrations survive of the roof trusses that show their complexity.²³⁶ There is evidence that James and Jeffs were also responsible for the design of this unique roof structure; following their appointment to carry out the carpentry work at Greenwich Church, James had written to the Commissioners offering

²²⁶ Edward Hasted, Thomas Streatfield, and Lambert Blackwell Larking, *Hasted's History of Kent, Corrected, Enlarged, and Continued to the Present Time. Part 1 The Hundred of Blackheath*, ed. Henry H. Drake (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1886), 96; Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV; Herts, Kent and Essex*, vol. 4, p. ; Charles Frederick Partington, *National History and Views of London and Its Environs* : (London : A. Bell [etc.], 1834), 75, accessed December 16, 2016, <http://archive.org/details/nationalhistoryv01partiala>; Richardson, *Greenwich*, 98.

²²⁷ Jeffery, 'English Baroque Architecture.'

²²⁸ Andrea Pozzo, *Rules and Examples of Perspective Proper for Painters and Architects, Etc in English and Latin* (London Benjamin Motte, 1707). Translated by John James.

²²⁹ Jeffery, 'English Baroque Architecture,' 37.

²³⁴ Jeffery, 'English Baroque Architecture,' 107–108.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

²³⁶ David T. Yeomans, *The Trussed Roof: Its History and Development* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), 80. Newton's drawing is in the RIBA Collection – 'Studies of roof trusses for the chapel for the Old Royal Naval College (Royal Naval Hospital), Greenwich, London: comparative sections of four roof trusses', SB62/5(16), date 1780.

his and Jeff's advice on the design of the trusses.²³⁷ In the eighteenth century, a master carpenter and surveyor (or architect) characteristically had a collaborative relationship and this would not have been unusual.²³⁸ During the construction of Greenwich Church, James was appointed Surveyor to the Commission (replacing James Gibbs in 1716) and worked alongside Hawksmoor on his subsequent London churches. With this promotion James crossed the threshold between craftsman and architect, suggesting that his contribution to Greenwich Church had convinced the Commissioners of his expertise.

It is possible that Greenwich Church was attributed to James in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (before Hawksmoor's reputation had grown) because James had been more visible during the construction process, particularly during the later construction of the tower in 1730. James also lived locally, so the attribution to James in these early texts reinforced the local credentials and parish ownership of the church. James' architectural design for the tower followed Hawksmoor's earlier proposals for the base, but changed to a different style for the upper stages, which had a more delicate, Palladian, style.²³⁹ This contrast in style continued the architectural disjunction between the tower and the body of the church, which first occurred when the body of the church collapsed and the 1617 tower survived, but it also emphasised James' authorship. St Alfege Church was thus a pivotal moment in the architectural careers of both Hawksmoor and James.

Hawksmoor's Greenwich Church – a National Monument?

Hawksmoor's task, when designing the first church for the 1711 Commission, was to negotiate the aims and objectives of the Commissioners and his fellow architects. Aside from the requirement for a larger church that could accommodate the increased local population, Hawksmoor was not concerned with local parish needs. The architectural design of Greenwich Church was prototypical and intended to create a national template. As Terry Friedman has argued, the church was the first example of an

²³⁷ LPL, MS 2715 (f.95), March 16th 1712/13.

²³⁸ Yeomans, *The Trussed Roof: Its History and Development*, 81–83. See Chapter 'Architect or carpenter: Who designed the roof?' 71-94.

²³⁹ Friedman, *The Eighteenth-Century Church in Britain*, 485.

English church with a Roman temple form and a ground-breaking precedent for future church design in Britain.²⁴⁰ Hawksmoor successfully initiated an association between Anglican churches and classical temples that survived into the nineteenth century. This classical building form, and particularly the portico, linked Anglican churches to an early period in the development of Christianity. (As we have seen, the Commission to Build Fifty New Churches stipulated that a portico was essential for the new churches.²⁴¹) Hawksmoor had researched biblical building descriptions and referred to published survey drawings of Roman buildings.²⁴² His sophisticated invocation and memorialisation of this early architectural style for Greenwich Church was completely new for a parish church building, and paid no attention to the church's local context.

As the first church to give architectural expression to the 1711 Act, Greenwich Church was conceived to impress a London-wide – perhaps even an international – audience. In keeping with Vanbrugh's recommendation that the new churches should have a 'solemn and awful appearance', Hawksmoor created an imposing and costly external façade for the church, using Portland stone and a giant Doric order that established a strong visual connection with St Paul's Cathedral. He used a Roman building type (the basilica), Roman classical orders and the imposing east portico, with its arch projecting into the tympanum, resembled a Roman triumphal arch. In this emulation of Roman culture, Hawksmoor's architectural design of the new church sought to associate the Church of England with an earlier, 'pure' form of Christianity. He transformed the parish church into a monument that celebrated the strength of Roman architecture and emulated early Christian practice, thereby expressing a national vision for the Church of England. But this strategy omitted any reference to the customary use and traditions associated with the parish church by the local inhabitants.

There is no evidence that the Greenwich parishioners were able to contribute to the design for their new church, after the design they submitted with their original petition had been set aside. Unfortunately, the vestry minutes from this period have not

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 395–396; Friedman, *The Georgian Parish Church*, 7.

²⁴¹ Du Prey and Hawksmoor, *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 143–44. Quotes LPL, MS 2690, 42-43, Meeting of the Commissioners 16 July 1712.

²⁴² Vaughan Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

survived, so we have no record of any internal debate at parish level. However, the condition of the existing site for Hawksmoor's new Greenwich church did significantly influence his church design. In 1710, when the body of the old parish church in Greenwich had collapsed, the church tower had survived unscathed. This tower had been built, funded and probably designed by the parish vestry in 1617.²⁴³ So, in 1711, when Hawksmoor first contemplated a new church design for Greenwich, the town centre site contained not only the old derelict church surrounded by its ancient churchyard, but also a 94-year-old serviceable church tower.

The 1711 Act required that each of the projected fifty new churches have a steeple and, on 16 July 1712, the Commissioners also stipulated in their 'Resolutions' that a steeple or church tower was required for each new church.²⁴⁴ However, for the new Greenwich Church the Commissioners decided to retain the 1617 church tower rather than build a new one. Hawksmoor's proposals for Greenwich Church were therefore forced to respond to this pre-existing tower and its fixed location on the site. He prepared several proposals for the design of Greenwich Church that varied in size and their treatment of the tower. On 6 August 1712 the Commissioners selected the smallest of Hawksmoor's proposals which comprised a new church body, in the style of a Roman temple, to be built next to but disconnected from the existing tower.²⁴⁵ The result was a temple-shaped church with impressive porticos at both the east and west ends, which was a self-sufficient design. A narrow gap separated its western end from Greenwich's old church tower.

The few Hawksmoor drawings of Greenwich Church that still exist also show how the body of the church and the tower were considered as two separate elements. Studies of the porticoes for the east and west external facades are shown on two Hawksmoor drawings held by Sir John Soane's Museum, suggesting that their geometric

²⁴³ Hasted, Streatfield, and Larking, *Hasted's History of Kent, Corrected, Enlarged, and Continued to the Present Time. Part 1 The Hundred of Blackheath*, 96. Note 5 describes how in June 1625 Church warden John Hulett borrowed £200 because the steeple was 'in greate ruine and deformitie' and had to be wholly rebuilt.

²⁴⁴ LPL, MS 2690 (f.42), 16 July 1712.

²⁴⁵ LPL, MS 2690 (f.50), 6 August 1712.

composition was carefully considered (Figure 3).²⁴⁶ The tower in front of the western portico is not shown or acknowledged. The east portico was also depicted in one of two engravings of Greenwich Church made by Jan Kip and dated 1714, possibly commissioned by Hawksmoor.²⁴⁷ This engraved image was heavily shaded, conveying the depth within the composition, and showed additional windows and large sculpted urns on the roofline (Figure 4). So, Hawksmoor's church had a simple, bold, temple shape with Roman doric columns, but the neighbouring church tower was of an older contrasting style.

A second engraving by Jan Kip shows the north façade (which was largely complete by 1714) with Hawksmoor's proposal for a new church tower added at the west end. Above the façade is a smaller, annotated floorplan of the church that includes an outline of the surrounding buildings and includes a wall separating the church from its churchyard (Figure 5).²⁴⁸ The north façade was drawn as an orthogonal elevation, without any perspective technique, so the projecting three-bay porch is indicated by its lack of shading.²⁴⁹ The tower, however, is drawn at a slight angle with some perspective, so a thin sliver of the west face is visible. As a result, the tower looks twisted out of alignment with the main church building. It is connected to the main body of the church only by a low, recessed bay, and looks like an independent piece of construction. The church tower is astylar and its thick width suggests it was intended to encase the older tower.

²⁴⁶ Hawksmoor, *Finished design for east elevation*, SM 43/9/8 and *LONDON: Church of St Alphege, Greenwich, Studies, W Elevation*, Vol 9/65 (40).

²⁴⁷ Jan Kip, 'Templum St Alphagi, apud Grenovicensses orientum Spect.', Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 13, 62.

²⁴⁸ Jan Kip, 'Basilica Grenovicana Facies Septentrionalis cum ejusdem Templi Vestigio.', Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 13, p.63.

²⁴⁹ The recently discovered Hawksmoor drawing of the north elevation, in the RGHT collection, may have been the basis for this part of the engraving.

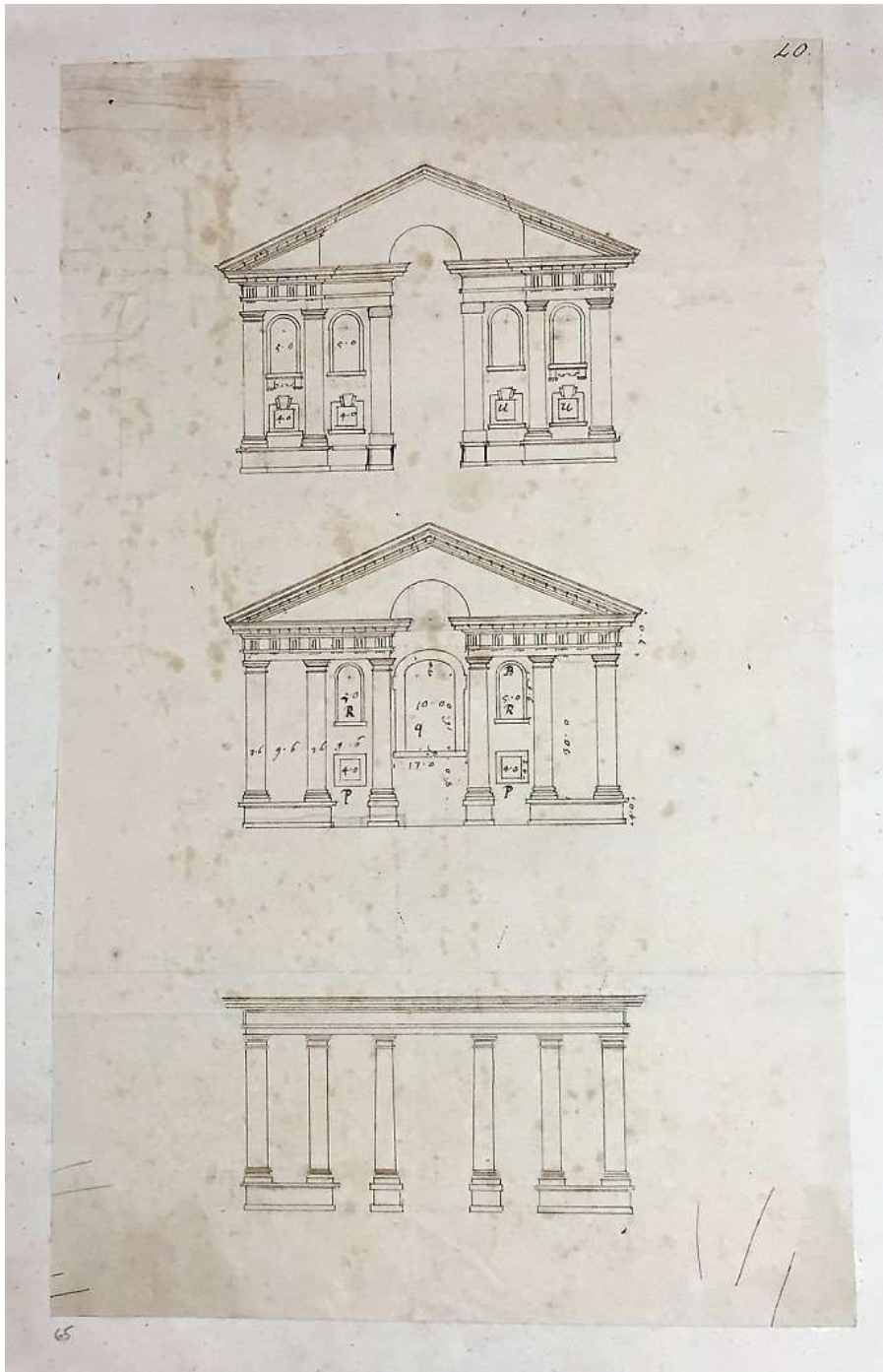


Figure 3. Church of St Alphege [sic], Greenwich, Elevation Studies, Nicholas Hawksmoor. West portico (top), east portico (middle), column arrangement (bottom). [Sir John Soane's Museum, Vol 9/65 (40)]



Figure 4. Templum St Alphagi, apud Grenovicenses orientem Spect., Jan Kip. [Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 13, p.62]

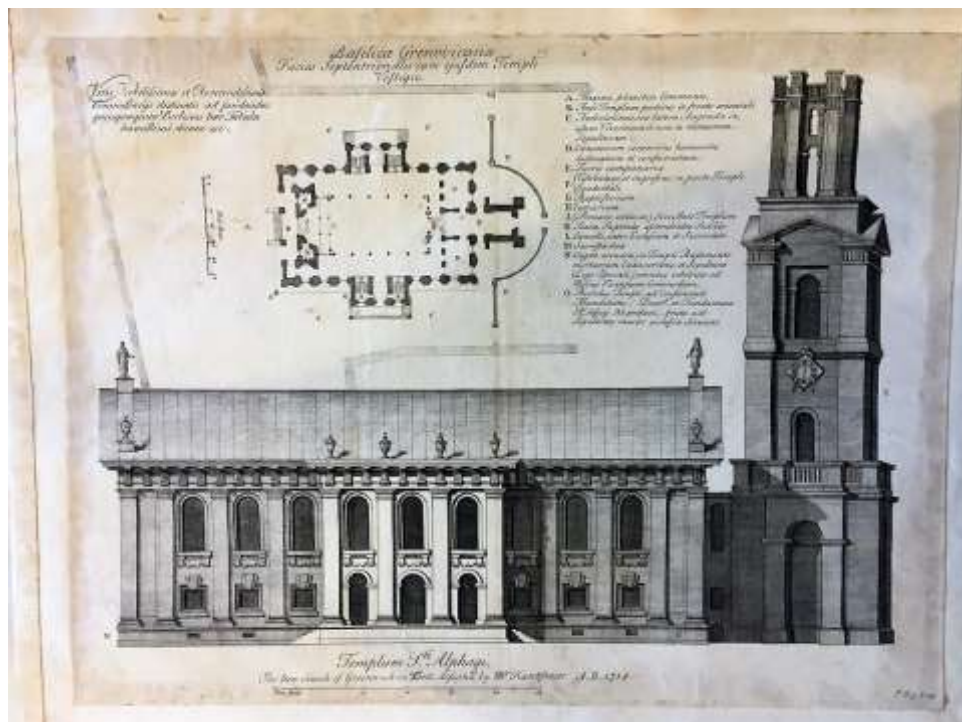


Figure 5. Templum St Alphagi, The New church of Greenwich in Kent, designed by Mr Hawksmoor A. D. 1714, Jan Kip. [Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 13, p.63]

This engraving did not convince the Commissioners and for another eighteen years the 1617 church tower and Hawksmoor's church coexisted. The difficult transition from one era to another was obvious in the stark contrast between these structures. Hawksmoor later adapted the church tower design shown in this engraving for the tower at St George in the East. When, in 1730, John James completed the Greenwich church tower in the Palladian style then in vogue, the disparity between the body of the church and the tower was perpetuated (Figure 6). Friedman described the James' Greenwich tower as a

stylistically mismatched, out-of-scale, multi-tiered solution, amalgamating the middle stages of St Martin-in-the-Fields and the domed Corinthian tempietto of Jones's Whitehall Palace scheme published a few years earlier.²⁵⁰

This mismatch between the tower and the body of the church was largely the result of the strained relationship between the 1711 Church Commission and the Greenwich vestry, as is clear from the correspondence retained in the Church Commission records at LPL and discussed below.

Hawksmoor's next three churches, St Anne's, Limehouse (1712-30), St George in the East (1714-1729) and Christchurch, Spitalfields (1714-29) were all on open field sites, significantly larger and with taller towers than Greenwich Church, and served newly formed parishes. These three churches had more complex internal arrangements and elaborate ornamentation. In comparison, Greenwich Church was physically constrained by its town centre site and the surviving church tower, and was less ambitious in terms of its scale and architectural detail. Hawksmoor's architectural aspirations for his first church were restricted by this local context, and, today, the perception of St Alfege Church as a cautious beginning to Hawksmoor's famous collection of London churches is common. But it was the first church built by the Commission to Build Fifty Churches and, as such, expressed their initial response to the Act, which went on to provide a prototype for their subsequent new churches.

²⁵⁰ Friedman, *The Eighteenth-Century Church in Britain*, 485.



Figure 6. A North-West View of Greenwich Church, J Meader and T Lodge, published 1771. [Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 13, p.63b]

The Local Parish and its National Church

By 1710, Greenwich parish church had occupied its site, in different built forms, for approximately five hundred years; the parish of Greenwich was old, and the town had developed around its church. When the parish church collapsed in 1710, Greenwich was a small town on the banks of the Thames adjacent to the royal manor of Greenwich, then being developed by Queen Anne into the Royal Hospital for Seamen. But Greenwich was only marginally smaller than its dock-dominated neighbour, Deptford, and had a rapidly rising population.²⁵¹ In 1710 the population of Greenwich was approximately 6000 and had increased by nearly 1500 in the preceding fifty years.²⁵² These numbers show that the pre-1710 parish church would only have had sufficient seating to accommodate a small proportion of the parishioners at one time, suggesting that Greenwich warranted a larger parish church and the assistance of the Commission to Build Fifty New Churches.

While the petition submitted by the parish to parliament in February 1710/11 was apparently the fuel that drove 'The Act to Build Fifty Churches', as described above, the reconstruction of Greenwich Church which resulted from the Act was a state-sponsored project over which the local inhabitants had little control. Nonetheless, some records survive of communications between the parish community and the Commission during the construction of the new church. These reveal areas where the parish vicar and vestry felt they should have some control and tried to resist the authority of the Commission, and the tense relationship that ensued.

Twelve petitions, letters and copies of 'Orders of Vestry' sent to the Commission by the Greenwich vicar and parish vestry, between 1715 and 1737, have survived in the Commission records at Lambeth Palace Library (LPL).²⁵³ Although the Commission's history has been thoroughly researched by architectural scholars, the detail of the communication between the Greenwich vestry and the Commission has not previously been scrutinised and is discussed here for the first time.²⁵⁴ The Commissioners' Minutes

²⁵¹ Peter Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth Century London: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale UP for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2004), 194.

²⁵² Michael Egan, 'The Population of Greenwich in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the Greenwich Historical Society* 2, no. 3 (2000): 87.

²⁵³ All these manuscripts are pasted into (LPL) MS 2715.

²⁵⁴ Bill, *The Queen Anne Churches*, ix–xix; Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 168. Downes mentions 'many petitions from the people of Greenwich' in connection with the tower.

record the decisions they made concerning Greenwich Church and also the occasions on which the vicar, the Reverend Dr John Turner, was required to attend their meetings.

The first issue which arose concerned burial space, which had a direct impact on parish traditions surrounding the treatment of the parochial dead. Following the completion of the external shell of the Church in 1715, several letters were exchanged between the Commission and parish on this matter, which suggested some discord. The new Greenwich Church was significantly bigger than its predecessor but built on the same site. As a result, the churchyard was reduced in size and there was less space available for burials. During the construction process many existing graves would have been disturbed.²⁵⁵ In addition, the Commissioners prohibited any burials inside the church building or within six feet of the church walls outside.

When the parish vestry sought a new church in 1710, they probably did not anticipate the subsequent disruption and reduction of the churchyard or the changes to their burial practices that were subsequently enforced by the Commission. Both these factors caused significant inconvenience and expense for the parish. On 12 January 1714/15 the Secretary to the Commission was instructed 'to write a letter to the Church Wardens of Greenwich to know what they have done in order to [illegible] enlarging the Church yard of that Parish for the security of the ffabrick of the Church.'²⁵⁷ This is the first mention of this matter in the LPL records; however, the phrasing suggests that the request to enlarge the churchyard was a repetition of an earlier instruction by the Commission. Reverend Turner responded in a lengthy letter, dated 19 January, with some urgency. He was apologetic because the Parish had 'not yet made so great progress' but they had reached an agreement with the owner of some adjoining land, 'tho at a very dear rate'.²⁵⁸ Two copies of their 'Orders of Vestry', dated 6 Jan 1714/15, described how the vestry had convened a committee of eleven men to deal with this land purchase and that they had reached an agreement to buy one half acre, to the west of

²⁵⁵ For example, the exact location of Thomas Tallis' burial was lost. See inscription in St Alfege Church, south west corner. The Commissioner's Minutes make no mention of this incursion into the churchyard.

²⁵⁷ LPL, MS 2690 f.200.

²⁵⁸ LPL, MS 2715, f. 116.

the Vicarage garden, from Mr Moore at a cost of £150.²⁵⁹ It is clear from this exchange that the parish was being required to purchase additional land for burial space, and at an inflated price, even though it was the Commissions' large church design and new burial regulations that were the cause of the burial space shortage. The issue escalated further on 23 March when the Commission:

Order'd That the Secretary write a letter to the Minister and Church-Wardens of Greenwich acquainting them, the Commissioners are informed that Several Corps have been buryed within the New Church there; contrary to the Acts of Parliament, and that for the future they forbear burying there, otherwise they shall be proceeded against.²⁶⁰

The Commission admonished the parish for carrying out burials within the church crypt, even before the church interior was complete. The inhabitants of Greenwich were being forced to change their burial customs and were struggling to comply. A year later the new burial ground had still not been purchased and the Commissioners suspected that the six-foot margin was being used for burials. On 9 April 1716, the Commissioners Minutes stated:

A Petition from the Minister and Church Wardens of the Parish of East Greenwich being read praying that the Church erecting there may be speedily finished, and the Minister of the said Parish being called in, was heard to the matter of the said Petition. Resolved that the Commissioners will not proceed in the consideration of that matter untill the parishioners do procure themselves a sufficient Churchyard and give security that they will not for the future bury near the foundation of the Church.²⁶¹

The parishioners were urging the Commission to complete the church. The external shell of the building was finished in 1715; this 1716 request was for the acceleration of the interior work so that the parish could occupy the church. However, the Commissioners refused to communicate any further with the parishioners until they had completed the purchase of land for a new burial ground and desisted from burying bodies near the church. In a prompt response, a copy of a Greenwich 'Order of Vestry', dated 15 April 1716, was delivered in person:

²⁵⁹ LPL, MS 2715, f. 121; worth £29,516.55 in 2019, according to <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>.

²⁶⁰ LPL, MS 2690, f. 208

²⁶¹ LPL, MS 2690, f. 265; the petition mentioned could be the undated MS 2751, f. 138.

the Reverend Dr Turner Mr John Robson Church Warden Thomas Jennings, Esq. Mr Robert Avis, Mr Richard Mead & Mr John Baxter be desired to attend ye Commissioners for Churches with a copy of these Orders of Vestry tomorrow, and as many other of the Parishioners as please.²⁶²

The senior members of the parish vestry had been summoned to meet the Commissioners and reassure them that the enlargement of the burial ground was in hand and the six-foot strip around the base of the church would not be excavated any further. The desire to be buried near the church was clearly deep-rooted. On 9 May 1716, at the next meeting of the Commissioners, Dr Turner was again summoned to report on progress and stated that the land purchase would be complete within a fortnight, sixteen months after the Commission had initially ordered the parish to purchase the land. The parish vestry's reluctance to complete this land purchase suggests they resented the enforced expense, as well as the alterations to their burial practices. After the meeting the Commissioners instructed their Solicitor

to prepare an Agreement between the Commissioners and the Churchwardens of Greenwich, obligeing them, not to bury within six foot of the walls of the new Church erecting in the said Parish, and also a Bond of £ [blank] penalty to be given by the said Churchwardens to the Commissioners for the Performance of the Covenant in the said Agreement.²⁶³

They had resorted to a legal contract to prevent the Greenwich parishioners from excavating near their new church, showing they were not confident that the parishioners would voluntarily comply with their instruction. Following this meeting, work recommenced on the interior of the church and John James was instructed to start work on the design of the pews.

The memorialisation of the dead was an important function of the parish church. Thomas Laqueur, in his important work on cultural attitudes to the dead, has discussed the historic significance of the east-west orientation of the graves and church buildings, and demonstrated that the churchyard was an intrinsic part of the parish that reflected the memorial wishes of local people.²⁶⁴ They sought to memorialise their dead through burial, stone tablets and sculpture positioned in or around the church. Their

²⁶² LPL, MS 2715, f. 122. Punctuation as original.

²⁶³ LPL, MS2690, f.275. The monetary amount of the penalty was left blank in the Commissioners' Minutes, possibly to be agreed later.

²⁶⁴ Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, 123–129.

commemoration of the dead augmented the meaning of the church and connected it to the people living in the surrounding town. In Laqueur's examination of the 'organic landscape' of the church, the churchyard and the dead, he uses the terms 'necrogeography', 'necrobotany', 'necrotopology and memory' to demonstrate the symbiotic relationships within the landscape of the churchyard that endured until the eighteenth century. In the process of constructing and completing Greenwich Church, the Commissioners strove to overturn this 'old regime' evoked by Laqueur.²⁶⁵

The sequence of events around the purchase of the new burial ground shows how much pressure the Commissioners exerted on the parish in order to alter the burial practices at Greenwich Church. The monumental design of the new church had ruptured the traditional relationship between the church and churchyard, which was a site laden with local memorials and redolent of both tangible and intangible acts of memorialisation. In the process of gaining a new church, the parishioners of Greenwich lost this close connection with their dead and their churchyard. More pragmatically, they had also been obliged to buy a costly new burial ground, an unanticipated expense, and lost the income previously received for crypt interments. But, it seems, the parish vestry was determined to use the crypt for burials. In 1747, after the Commission had been disbanded, a private bill for an *Act to enable the Parishioners of Greenwich to deposit corpses in the vaults under the church* started its journey through Parliament.²⁶⁸ Nonetheless, it is likely that this Act simply legalised a common practice because the earliest burial vault in St Alfege Church crypt, apparent today, is that of Sir Gregory Page dated 1720.

The second point of tension was the church tower. Following the consecration of the new Greenwich Church in 1719, Reverend Turner and his churchwardens turned their attention to the church tower. As described above, the 1617 tower was all that remained of the previous church and was a strong visual reminder of that now-gone church building.²⁶⁹ However, it clashed with Hawksmoor's church and was apparently not in

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 121–141. See Ch. 4 'The Churchyard and the Old Regime', subheading 'PLACE'.

²⁶⁸ England, ed., *An Act to Enable the Parishioners of the Parish of East Greenwich in ... Kent, to Deposit Corpses in the Vaults or Arches under the Church in the Said Parish, and to Ascertain the Fees That Shall Be Paid for the Same. [25 Geo. II c. 11]* (London, 1752).

²⁶⁹ See ABOVE, 92-93.

good condition. The first parish petition to the Commissioners that mentioned the tower simply invited them to view the tower, confident that this alone would persuade the Commissioners to order (and fund) its replacement:

We beg leave on this Occasion to Represent to this Honourable Board and Request that You will be pleased to direct, that our Old and Ruinous Tower may be viewed and upon Report of the State of it, we hope Your honours will do something to make it Answerable to the Nobleness and Magnificence of the Church;²⁷⁰

The architectural mismatch between the tower and the church, and the inadequacy of the tower was stressed. In conclusion, the petitioners urged the Commission to ‘make the Great Good Work Compleat’. This petition is undated, but is signed by Turner, so must have been written before 1720 when the new Vicar, the Reverend Ralph Skerret, arrived.²⁷¹ However, by this point, the Commission’s finances were under pressure and it was becoming apparent that they would not be able to build the fifty churches instructed by the Act, and the Greenwich petition was unsuccessful.²⁷²

Two years later, the Commissioners’ Minutes recorded on 11 October 1723 that they had received a petition from East Greenwich requesting the building of a steeple and other works, which was rejected.²⁷³ This petition is not in the LPL records, but on 25 October another petition was submitted by the parish of Greenwich that began:

That whereas upon a Petition to this Honourable Board on Fryday the eleventh Day of this Instant Leave was given to lay before your Honours the Necessarys to be done for finishing the Church of Greenwich in the same beautiful manner in which it hath been hitherto carry’d on.²⁷⁴

The Commissioners had suggested that the parish should resubmit their petition with more modest requests. This second petition asked the Commission to consider completing the paving surrounding the church (to prevent grave digging adjacent to the

²⁷⁰ LPL, MS2715, f. 140.

²⁷¹ ‘Rectors and Vicars of the Parish Church of St Alfege, Greenwich’, NADFAS Record of Church Furnishings, 1984, item 505, [unpublished document without page numbers].

²⁷² Port, *The Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches: The Minute Books, 1711-27, A Calendar*, 23:ix–xxxiii. <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol23/ix-xxxiii> (accessed 8 July 2020).

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 23:97–107. ‘11 Oct. 1723, 1. Read Petition from East Greenwich for building steeple and doing other works. They were told that the £25,000 to be raised by loan was not for building steeples but only to prepare for worship five of the churches already begun, but that Board was willing to receive representations about things they thought still wanting.’ [see also LPL, MS2691 f.342].

²⁷⁴ LPL, MS2715, f. 144.

walls, again referring back to the issue of burials), and the wall surrounding the new, enlarged church yard. The only reference to the steeple is the request for ‘Closing the West Side of the Church & providing for a communication with the Steeple now standing’. This probably describes a scheme to physically connect the existing, seventeenth-century tower with the new church building and therefore suggests that the parish had finally accepted that the Commission were not going to financially support the renewal of the tower. The petition continues with a curious passage that suggests some sort of negotiation:

These things in our humble Opinion, are necessary to be done; and what can't be hoped for but from your Goodness, and What We have Reason to believe would have been finished before this Time if not prevented by some Causes which are Now happily removed.

Proper Security hath We conceive from the Copy thereof which We have in our Hands already been given to your Honours on the Part of the Parish, which was one Condition of these Necessarys being finished; and if anything further be required on our Part we are ready to comply with your Directions: Humbly submitting ye Whole to your Honours & praying that You will be pleased to give such Orders in this Affair, as in your great Wisdom shall appear most reasonable.

This text suggests that, yet again, the Commissioners were vexed by the parish of Greenwich and, in response, the second petition was obsequious and carefully phrased. It emphasised the parish compliance with the Commission's instructions and expresses their subservience to the Commission. In doing so, they reminded the Commission of their authority and responsibility for the church building. They were successful because on the same day the Commission Minutes recorded that the works specified in 1718 be put in hand, which comprised the wall to enclose the church yard and the paving around the base of the church.²⁷⁵ The Commissioners nevertheless resisted the appeals for a new tower, despite these petitions from the parish vestry.

Finally, in December 1729, the parish vestry submitted a petition that highlighted the ‘Decay'd and ruinous’ condition of the steeple, as well as the national and international prominence of the church tower:

the Parish Church of Greenwich is a Royall Presentation, but what Orders have been made in Cases of the like Nature, and how much the said Church is exposed

²⁷⁵ LPL, MS2690, f. 344.

to Publick View and Notice, by standing in a Village from whence All Ambassadors make their Publick Entry, and to which Numbers of other Foreigners of Distinction frequently Resort.²⁷⁶

There is a sense of injustice in this petition. The petitioners believed the rebuilding of the church steeple was included in the Commission's 'Public Appointment' and they urged the Commissioners not to be prejudiced against them because of any 'former Inadvertencies or Neglect of Duty' and to extend their 'Favour to Them in the same Degree & Manner that you have done to other Petitioners.' This is a more robust statement that asserts the national importance of Greenwich and the inhabitants' entitlement to a new steeple. This time the petition was successful and John James started work on the new church tower in 1730.

For all English parish churches, the tower was an important component that contributed to the identity of the surrounding town or village, because it was a topographical marker that featured on the skyline and highlighted the location of the church. The tower of the new Greenwich church was a landmark that was identifiable both from the river and from the high ground in Greenwich Park. Hawksmoor's proposals for the site plan of the Royal Hospital in 1728 introduced a new vista with Greenwich church and its tower as its focus, which may have prompted the parish vestry's petition of December 1729.

In 1727 a new Commission had been formed to complete the Royal Hospital for Seamen by the newly crowned George II, which was awarded a grant of £10,000 in 1728.²⁷⁷ In response, Hawksmoor published his *Remarks on the founding and carrying on the buildings of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich*, accompanied by a new site plan of the Royal Hospital that included Greenwich Church on the east-west axis created by the proposed new road.²⁷⁸ The 'Via Regia', was shown running east-west through the Hospital site, aligned with Greenwich Church so as to create a prominent view of the church at its western end (Figure 1). So, when work recommenced on the Royal Hospital

²⁷⁶ LPL, MS2715, f. 149, dated 3 December 1729. [response in LPL MS 2692, Copy of Minutes of the commissioners, 24 June 1728 – 14 December 1758]. The petition does not explain exactly why the Greenwich parishioners feel that other petitioners have been shown greater favour.

²⁷⁷ Bolton and Hendry, *The Wren Society*, VI:28–29.

²⁷⁸ Nicholas Hawksmoor, *Remarks on the Founding and Carrying on the Buildings of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich*. (London: N. Blandford, 1728).

site in 1729, Greenwich Church was included in the new site plan. The parish vestry's renewal of their campaign for a new church tower is likely to have been inspired by this state investment in the neighbouring Royal Hospital and the prominence afforded their church in that project.

The state provision of the church building was novel and the parish vestry restated their gratitude in every communication, suggesting that they felt very fortunate but slightly unsure of their relationship with the Commissioners. For example, the first communication from the Reverend Ralph Skerret to the Commission, in 1721, requested permission to add extra pews to the cross aisle because 'the inhabitants of the said parish are become more numerous.'²⁷⁹ This minor request was conveyed as a formally phrased petition to the Commission, quoting a resolution reached by the assembled parish vestry and signed by the vicar and two church wardens. The formal and deferential mode of communication indicates that the vicar and the parish had a cautious attitude to the Commission. They continued to express their 'humble gratitude' for the new church, whilst pointing out the delay to its completion, and they persisted in their entreaties, particularly regarding the completion of the steeple. The disparity between James' church tower and Hawksmoor's church was generated by the Commission's delay in solving the tower problem, which was influenced by the local physical and social context specific to Greenwich church. The surviving disparity between tower and church is therefore an architectural expression of the tension between the Commission's intentions for the church and its local context.

The Dedication of Space within the Church

The construction of the new church further disrupted the local identity of the parish church by ignoring the overall dedication to St Alfege and destroying the network of individual memorials previously attached to the church building. Descriptions of the pre-1710 church illustrate the contrast in the approach to memorialisation between the old and new church buildings. This surviving information about the earlier church also

²⁷⁹ LPL, MS2715, f. 142, dated 26 October 1721.

demonstrates the extent to which Hawksmoor's new Greenwich church swept away any remnants of its predecessor.

As noted above, the Commission and Hawksmoor referred to St Alfege Church as 'Greenwich Church' in all their documentation. However, the association between Greenwich and St Alfege had previously been an important part of the town's identity. The parish church was reputedly built on the site of the saint's death at the hands of Danish Viking invaders in 1012. Greenwich Church had been dedicated to St Alfege, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, for many centuries and this dedication had a robust geographical and memorial significance. The story of St Alfege's death in Greenwich is a prominent narrative in the literature about the church, which has fluctuated over the centuries. It is a story that predates the royal influence on the town that was conferred by the nearby palace, and later the Royal Hospital for Seamen. There is no record of the parish inhabitants renaming the church or renewing the dedication to St Alfege during the Commission's time in power. However, in the late eighteenth century, the church's dedication to St Alfege is mentioned in several county histories, suggesting that the saint's story remained a prominent feature of the parish church.²⁸⁰

In 1576 William Lambarde (1536-1601) published his *Perambulation of Kent*, reputedly the first published county history. Lambarde's survey of the county of Kent was framed as a geographic journey, during which he collected local antiquarian information and documented the prominent buildings and local legends that he discovered. He was a Greenwich resident and was later buried in St Alfege's Church with an accompanying monument. The *Perambulation* included a chapter on the town of Greenwich, then part of Kent. Lambarde wrote of the church 'And in memorie of this Archbishop Aelpheg, the parish Church of Greenewiche (being at the first dedicated to his honour) remaineth known by this name even till this present day.'²⁸¹ The dedication to St Alfege is the only piece of information that Lambarde chose to share about the parish church, demonstrating how important that claim was for the town of Greenwich at that time. In 1659 Thomas Philipott published another county history of Kent and, again, the

²⁸⁰ Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV; Herts, Kent and Essex*, 4:465; Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 1:416.

²⁸¹ William Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent: Containing the Description, Hystorie, and Customes of That Shyre* (Bath: Adams and Dart, 1970), 388–389.

story of St Alfege was central to the identity of the parish of Greenwich. He quotes an account of St Alfege's death given by Ditmarus Mersepurgius, whom, the author asserted, was alive at the time of St Alfege's death and described these events in the eighth book of his *Chronicles*. This was followed by a brief statement that 'to the memory of this said *Ealphege*, is the parish church here consecrated', but no further information about the church was given.²⁸² These two authors considered the story of the saint more important than any aspect of the then-extant church building itself.

The recent discovery of a drawing showing a proposal for painted murals at St Alfege Church by Sir James Thornhill (1675-1734) offers further confirmation of the Commissions' reluctance to emphasise Greenwich church's dedication to St Alfege (Figure 7). The drawing probably dates from 1718.²⁸³ It shows two design sketches, side by side, each showing a composition that comprises an arch supported by two flat pilasters, between which is a lower arch. Groups of figures are sketched within the arches and above the lower arch (which possibly indicates the east window) with an ornate surround. The drawing on the left is entitled 'Fettering & tormenting St Elphage' and the righthand drawing is entitled 'Death of St Elphage'. Thornhill's drawing appears to have proposed two options for the decoration of the chancel; both included a painted figurative scene surrounded by a baroque cartouche, which portrayed violent scenes from St Alfege's imprisonment and death.²⁸⁴ In between the two design sketches is a handwritten note that reads 'Elphage or Alphage Arch Bpp: of Canterbury. To whom ye Church at Greenwich was dedicated.' On the reverse of the drawing are some reference notes, in brown ink, concerning the life of St Alfege with page numbers and abbreviated book titles. These provide evidence that Thornhill referred to both Lambard and Philipott while researching his depiction of these scenes from St Alfege's death.

²⁸² Thomas Philipott, *Villare Cantianum: Or, Kent Surveyed and Illustrated. Being an Exact Description of All the Parishes, Boroughs, Villages, and Other Respective Manors in the Country of Kent; and, the Original and Intermedial Possessors of Them, down to the Author's Time. Drawn out of Charters, Escheat- Rolls, Fines, and Other Public Evidences; but Especially out of Gentlemen's Private Deeds and Muniments*, 2nd ed. (Lynn: Printed and sold by W. Whittingham, 1776), 162.

²⁸³ Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 170. Downes refers to LPL MS2697, *Book of Works 1713-20*, 302, 310-12 where he found records of Thornhill's and Grinling Gibbon's work to the church in 1718.

²⁸⁴ Richard Hill has suggested that the two sketches may have been intended to decorate the east wall either side of the chancel at gallery level, where the benefaction boards are now positioned, [email 18 June 2018 with attached drawing].

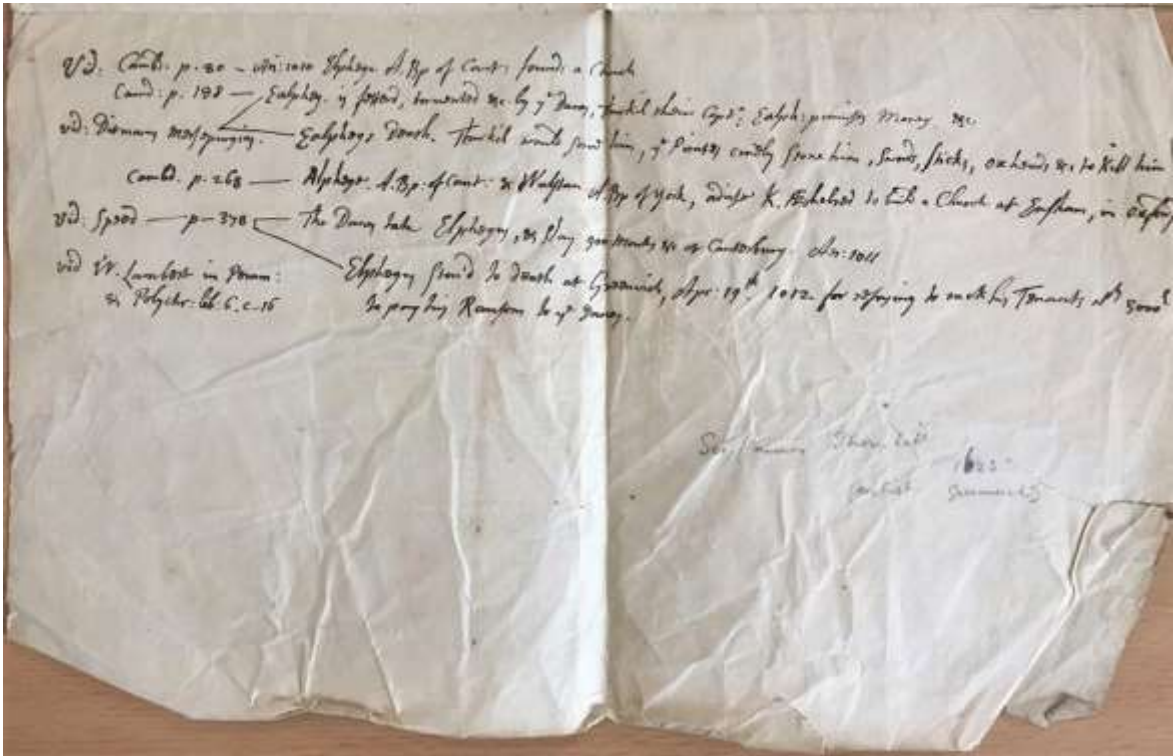
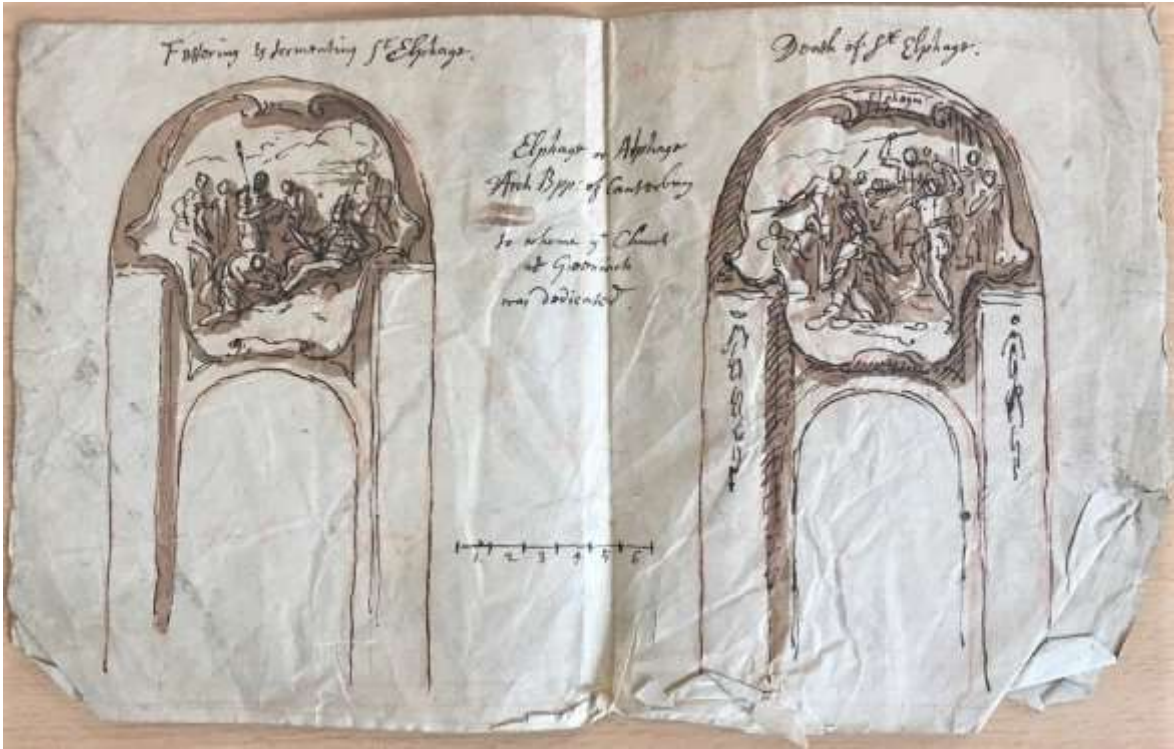


Figure 7. St Alfege Church archive, Sir James Thornhill, (top) Decorative proposals for St Alfege Church with (bottom) references noted on the reverse. [AF 31 May 2018]

In 1715 Thornhill was appointed to create a sequence of murals for the inside of the dome to St Paul's Cathedral, depicting the life of St Paul. However, the type of ornamentation appropriate for St Paul's Cathedral was the subject of much debate and took many years to conclude.²⁸⁵ The appropriate manner by which a Protestant church should be decorated was a contentious matter. As Tabitha Barber has recently noted, 'The post-Restoration legacy was thus a broad spectrum of opinion on the subject of images', ranging from a puritan rejection of any risk of 'idolatry' to a more Anglican royalist viewpoint that valued 'visual splendour and dignified liturgy' within a church setting.²⁸⁶ This tension was reflected in the prolonged debate surrounding Thornhill's decoration of St Paul's dome. The solution that was eventually agreed was to execute the murals using the 'Basso-Relievo' method, which involved the monochrome depiction of a sculpted surface, and was subsequently the technique Thornhill also used at Greenwich church. This was a relatively sombre form of ornamentation with a reserved palette that avoided any comparison with the colourful and flamboyant Roman Catholic style of church ornamentation. Thornhill was perhaps proposing that he would paint the scenes from St Alfege's life, shown in his drawing, using the approved Basso-Relievo technique at the new Greenwich church.

As Dr Richard Johns observed, it seems unlikely that such brutal and figurative depictions of St Alfege's death would be thought suitable for the decoration of a protestant parish church by the Church of England in 1718, and this scheme was not executed.²⁸⁹ Thornhill's drawing for St Alfege Church was produced while Thornhill was working on his project for the Painted Hall, but here his imagery was allegorical and stately. It is very different to the visceral compositions he proposed for St Alfege Church. Until the discovery of this Thornhill drawing proposal for the decorative scheme at Greenwich church, there was no evidence of any debate concerning the decorative options for the church interior. It appears that the explicit visual memorialisation of St

²⁸⁵ Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837*, vol. 1 (London: Country Life, 1962), 71–74.

²⁸⁶ Tabitha Barber and Tim Bachelor, *British Baroque: Power & Illusion Exhibition Book* (London: Tate, 2020), 51.

²⁸⁹ Dr Richard Johns, who has researched Sir John Thornhill's work extensively, was particularly struck by the dramatic scenes and thought it unlikely that there was an ecclesiastical precedent in existence in England today. [Meeting with Rebecca Parrant and Dr Richard Johns, 4 Oct 2018].

Alfege at Greenwich parish church was rejected in favour of a more abstract, indeed architectural, composition. Thornhill's dramatic and figurative compositions may have been to the taste of the Greenwich parish vestry, but they seem to conflict with the protestant ethos of the Church of England, which had led to the lengthy debate at St Paul's Cathedral. It is likely that the Commission would have rejected Thornhill's initial proposal for Greenwich church on that basis.

The existing decorative scheme for the chancel at St Alfege Church is a complicated architectural composition that was first created by both Hawksmoor and Thornhill in 1718. It combines carved wooden columns of different sizes with a backdrop of painted, two-dimensional, fictive architectural details. In this way, the shallow depth of the chancel was disguised. The painted coffering in the apse created a particularly convincing optical illusion of greater depth. This artistic and technical expertise was directed away from St Alfege and culminated in a chancel that referred only to the life of Christ, obliquely in the painted trophies on the walls on each side of the chancel.

Both the Commissioners and Hawksmoor minimised the association with St Alfege, perhaps partly because he had been a pre-Reformation Archbishop of Canterbury. The pre-1710 St Alfege Church had borne an inscription 'On the top of the Partition wall between the Nave of ye Church and the Chancel', which Bishop Kennet recorded in 1705.²⁹⁰ It read:

This Church was erected and dedicated to the glory of God and memory of S. Alphege ABP of Cant. Here slayne by the Danes because he would not ransom his Life by an unreasonable Sum of Money An. 1012.

The congregation seated in the nave would have seen this prominent inscription as they gazed towards the screened Chancel and the communion table. But, after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the function of the chancel, and the way communicants received the eucharist, within the Church of England liturgy had changed.²⁹¹ It became more important that the congregation could hear and see the service clearly. Thus, in the new church the chancel was open to the nave and must have been far shallower than the

²⁹⁰ *Monumenta et Inscriptiones in ecclesia parochiali de GRENWICH in agro Cantiano, mense Julio 1705*, British Library, Bishop Kennet's Collections Vol. IV, Lansdowne MS 938 f.150.

²⁹¹ Addleshaw and Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, 174–179.

chancel of the previous church. As a result, the congregation in the nave were closer to the communion table and encouraged to concentrate on the life of Jesus, rather than on St Alfege.

The responsibility for the upkeep of the chancel at St Alfege Church was associated with the Rectory, rather than the parish, so there may also have been some doubt as to who was responsible for the decoration of the new church chancel. The Rectory was owned by the nearby Morden College, founded in Blackheath in 1695 by Sir John Morden (1623-1708). The *Journals of the House of Commons* contain a petition from Morden College requesting funds for the reconstruction of the Chancel following the 1710 collapse. Later, in 1712, the Commission minutes record their correspondence with Lady Mordaunt (sic) following her removal of the chancel goods after the church collapsed in 1710.²⁹³ This division of responsibility for the building fabric of the church before 1710 illustrates how the Chancel had been considered a separate entity that was remote from the congregation. There is no further record of Morden College being involved with the construction of the new church, so it would seem that the chancel was united with the body of the church under the Commission's regime.²⁹⁴

Other forms of physical memorial within the pre-1710 church were also not automatically transferred from the old church to the new church. Further information about the old St Alfege Church can be gleaned from several sources. Bishop Kennet's record of the monuments and inscriptions, noted above, included locations within the pre-1710 church and some descriptions of the more ornamental monuments. There are further details of the church's memorials in an appendix to John Strype's *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*.²⁹⁵ Later in the eighteenth century, Edward Hasted and Daniel Lyson also included records of these memorials in their county histories.²⁹⁶ Finally

²⁹³ LPL, MS 2690 f.55; LPL, 2715 f.94.

²⁹⁴ Morden College archivist, Mrs Elizabeth Wiggins, kindly searched their archive for any reference to the chancel of St Alfege Church. Whilst she found nothing from the eighteenth century, she did find later documents that show that the Morden College trustees were concerned about their liability with regard to the chancel. Their financial liability was discharged in 1949 through an agreement with the Diocese of Southwark.

²⁹⁵ John Stow and John Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, vol. 2 (London, 1720), accessed September 22, 2019, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/strype/index.jsp>. Appendix 1, Chapter 12, 91-93; 'The Circuit-Walk on the South East and East Parts.'

²⁹⁶ Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 1:372-420; Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV; Herts, Kent and Essex*, 4:426-493.

an outline drawing of the east façade, also showing the church tower, was found in 2006 in the Pembroke archive, which gives an idea of the external appearance of the church before the collapse of 1710.²⁹⁷

From these sources we can tell that the church had a large chancel, a nave with a north and south aisle and a 'great north door' with a porch. There were approximately forty monuments and inscriptions inside the church, many memorialising members of the royal household. The chancel was densely occupied, with eleven separate monuments recorded, one of which is notably elaborate:

In the Chancel on the South Side, a pretty Monument of a Man in Armour, kneeling at a Desk, with eight Sons behind him; and a Woman kneeling at the same with seven or eight Daughters behind her.²⁹⁸

This monument dated from 1600 and bore a long inscription in Latin. In the Nave, at the east end of the north aisle was a monument to Robert Adam with 'a Bust of an Aged Man Craning on the Model of a fortified Building'. He was Surveyor of the Queen's Works and died in 1595.²⁹⁹ At the east end of the south aisle of the Nave was a 'a rich Monument of white Marble, with a figure of a Man half Way, in his Alderman's Gown'.³⁰⁰ This was dedicated to Sir William Hooker, Lord Mayor of London in 1674 (died 1697). There were a further seven monuments attached to the south wall and four to the north wall of the Nave. Attached to the north porch two black marble monuments memorialised five men from the Warner family, four of whom had been 'Master of the Barge' to the monarch, continuously from the reign of Queen Elizabeth to that of King William. So, the interior of the pre-1710 church had been densely populated with the sculptural and figural memorials to prominent inhabitants, many of whom had been members of, or served, the royal household. The monuments often included Latin inscriptions, a stone sculpture or a figure engraved in brass. Remarkably, none of these post-Reformation monuments

²⁹⁷ Rhind and Watson, *Greenwich Revealed*, 10. The origins of the Pembroke archive are discussed in Chapter 1.

²⁹⁸ Stow and Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster.*, vol. 2, Appendix 1, 91.

²⁹⁹ BL, Lansdowne 938, f.150; Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV; Herts, Kent and Essex*, 4:467.

³⁰⁰ Stow and Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster.*, 2: Appendix 1, 92.

and inscriptions were transferred to the new Greenwich church. Sir William Hooker's elaborate monument was only thirteen years old when the church collapsed.³⁰¹

No Greenwich vestry meeting minutes survive from this period, and there is no mention of the old memorials in the Commissions' records, so any local discussion that took place concerning the retention of the old church memorials has been lost. But the fate of one of these memorials is known. Following the collapse of St Alfege Church, a monument on the south wall of the nave, dedicated to William Lambard and his son, Sir Moulton Lambard, was moved to St Nicholas Church in Sevenoaks, Kent, by Thomas Lambard. In 1600 the extended Lambard family had arranged to bury their dead in the north Chancel of St Nicholas Church. The Reverend John Rooker of St Nicholas Church recounted:

At the time of the entire restoration of the Church at Greenwich, and when the monuments that were therein were so to speak exiled, this marble, sacred to the memory of his great grandfather and grandfather, escaped as into a harbour from the general wreckage,³⁰²

This comment provides a stark description of the attitude of the Commissioners and Hawksmoor to the pre-existing physical memorials of St Alfege Church and to earlier forms of memorialisation. It supports the impression that the new Greenwich church represented a complete transformation of the parish church and a conscious attempt to remove any reference to the historic parish community that had once worshipped there. Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission pursued a rational and scientific agenda for their churches, which sought to remove the dead and their memorials from both the church and the area of the churchyard nearest to the church.

The contrast between the internal layouts of the old and new St Alfege Churches suggests that distinctive chapels within the church were eradicated, removing any pre-reformation influence and focusing the congregation's attention on the main chancel. The old church was medieval and probably had a large, screened chancel and choir, and

³⁰¹ Appendix 2 comprises a notional church floor plan illustrating the positions of memorials within the old St Alfege church, created from a close reading of the documents mentioned.

³⁰² John Rooker, *Notes on the Parish Church of St Nicholas, Sevenoaks*. (Sevenoaks: J. Salmon, 1910), 84.

possibly additional side chapels. This description of the old church was inserted into Edward Hasted's *History of Kent* by the editor of the 1886 edition.

It contained Chapels of the Holy Trinity, St. Christopher, St. Anne, and Our Lady of Pity, where lights were kept burning, and also before the images of SS. Alphege, Erasmus, Nicholas, Michael, Clement, James, and George; it had north and south porches, and in the churchyard, west of the church, stood a cross called the "Palm Cross."³⁰³

The source is described as 'Evidences in Old Wills, *post*', so the information was derived from pre-Reformation wills that included bequests for prayers in certain chapels. As a description of the pre-Reformation St Alfege Church, it gives a sense of the church's historic uses, at least up until the mid-sixteenth century. Even though the statues almost certainly disappeared during Edward VI's reign, the chapel spaces probably remained as part of the pre-1710 church. A note to the text also described the stained-glass windows of the old church and the heraldic arms displayed. The east chancel window contained the arms of Edward the Confessor and of Thomas Arundel, and there are other heraldic arms described in some detail. This description suggests that, in addition to the many monuments and inscriptions recorded inside the church, at some point there had also been four chapels and seven images dedicated to a range of saints, with candles burning continuously. From these sources emerges a picture of a church building laden with memorial features and memorial spaces. Although the church interior would have changed during the turbulent seventeenth century, by 1710 it would still have lacked the liturgical and spatial clarity desired by Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission.

The east façade of the pre-1710 church is depicted in one of two early eighteenth-century drawings of Greenwich street frontages, found in the Pembroke archive. The simple but careful outlines show about two hundred and fifty buildings, along labelled street frontages in Greenwich, and are drawn to scale. 'Church Street' shows the east front of the old church in context with its neighbouring buildings (Figure 8).

³⁰³ Hasted, Streatfield, and Larking, *Hasted's History of Kent, Corrected, Enlarged, and Continued to the Present Time. Part 1 The Hundred of Blackheath*, 96.



Figure 8. St Alfege Church, East elevation before 1710 [Pembroke Archive, Rhind and Watson, *Greenwich Revealed*, 26].

Neil Rhind and Julian Watson, preeminent Greenwich historians, have analysed the drawings with reference to other extant drawings, paintings, maps and documents.³⁰⁴ They speculate, convincingly, that the drawings were made either by or for Hawksmoor in his role as Clerk of Works at the Royal Naval Hospital. The annotation is very close to Hawksmoor's handwriting and suggests that he was analysing the building fabric of the town in relation to his work at the Royal Hospital for Seamen. The depiction of St Alfege Church helped establish a date for the drawings. Crucially, the drawings give an idea of size and scale for the pre-1710 St Alfege Church. It is immediately evident that the new St Alfege Church, by Hawksmoor, was an enormous contrast to its predecessor, both in style and scale.³⁰⁵ The old church building was irregular and asymmetrical, suggesting it has been extended incrementally. There were open spaces either side indicating the width of the churchyard, where, according to Ned Ward in 1700, 'the numbers of dead had almost buried the church'.³⁰⁶ The old church would have accommodated fewer people, because the interior was smaller, less geometrically organised and unlikely to have included a gallery. In contrast, the interior of the new church maximised the number of seats and followed Wren's guidelines to ensure the congregation could hear the minister. The internal volume of the body of the church was constructed as a huge,

³⁰⁴ Rhind and Watson, *Greenwich Revealed*.

³⁰⁵ Richard Griffiths Architects and Hill, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich: Conservation Management Plan', 20. This drawing vividly illustrates the difference in size between the old and new churches by overlaying a drawing of the existing east elevation of the church and its predecessor, as shown in this 1710 line drawing, to scale.

³⁰⁶ Ward, *A Frolick to Horn-Fair with a Walk from Cuckold's Point Thro' Deptford and Greenwich*, 15.

clear cuboid, with the staircases, chancel and tower attached to the sides. There is a fierce rationality to the architecture of the new church, which denoted power and wealth on a national scale and which was entirely absent from the previous church. However, even with an increase in capacity to around 1500 seats, the new church would still not have accommodated the majority of the local population, which was approximately 6000 in 1711 and continued to rise throughout the eighteenth century.³⁰⁸ Despite the new church's apparent enormity within its town context, in 1711 the Church Commissioner's had chosen Hawksmoor's smallest design proposal for Greenwich church and they must have accepted that only a quarter of the inhabitants would attend church at one time.

Once the new Greenwich church building was completed, the parish congregation had to renegotiate their relationship with their church and decide how to arrange their pew seating positions within this vast new space. The design and arrangement of the pews in the new Greenwich Church was first discussed by the Commission in 1716. Two comparative layout drawings were produced, by John James, illustrating the church capacity with box pews and bench pews (Figure 9). The Commission resolved to use 'double seated pews' and the new church had approximately 1,500 sittings, including pews in the gallery.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ Egan, "The Population of Greenwich in the Seventeenth Century," 86–88.

³⁰⁹ LPL, MS2960, f.279, f.281; MS2715, f.126, f.127.

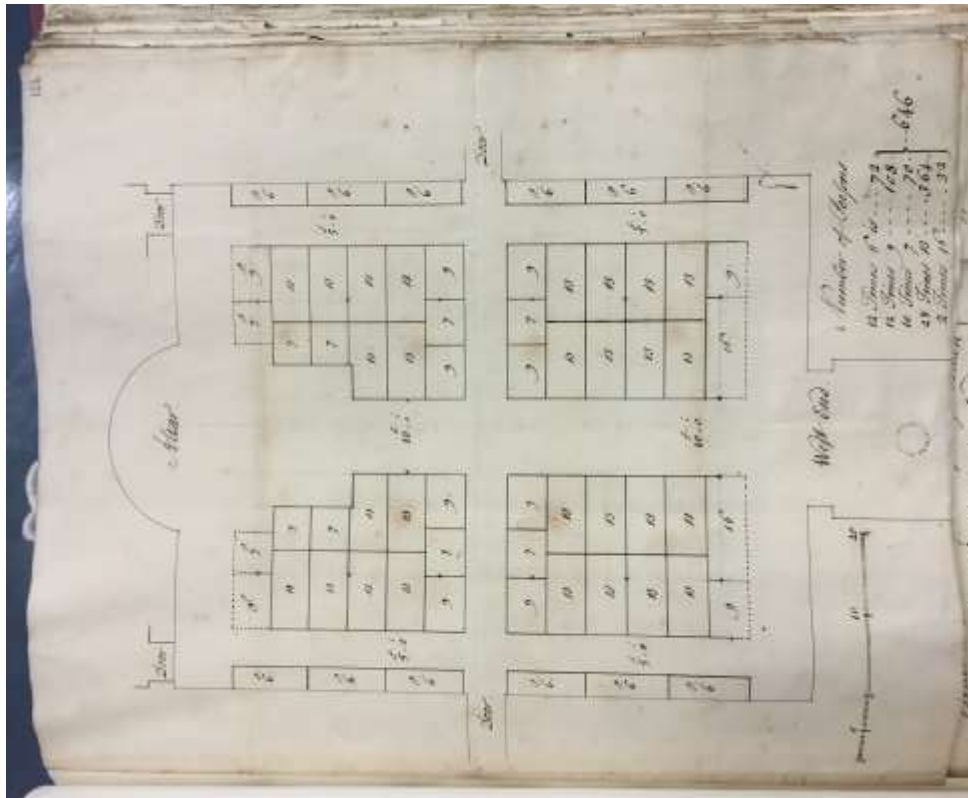


Figure 9. St Alfege Church floor plans showing layouts for (top) box pews and (bottom) bench pews in the nave. [LPL MS2715, f.126, f.127]

In 1718 the Greenwich parish vestry started organising the allocation of pew seats within the new church. The congregation had not worshipped in their parish church for eight years, and the new church was a different shape to their previous church, as well as having far more seats. The new seating arrangement within the church was thus a complex challenge. A pew list, prepared by the Greenwich parish vestry, with an accompanying letter to the Bishop of Rochester dated 29 September 1718 exists in the St Alfege Church archive.³¹² There are one hundred and thirty numbered pews listed with 930 names allotted a position. The location of each pew was described as north body, south body, north gallery or south gallery. A list of names was allotted to each pew. For instance, the names of twenty women are listed for pew number No. 9 in the 'South Body'. The seating plan suggests a social hierarchy within the congregation; the people sitting near the front tend to have titles. There is a strict division between men and women, and very few people were positioned in family groups, or with their spouse. The pews are occupied by either men or women, and the female pews are primarily at the front of the nave (or body of the church). The galleries are almost wholly occupied by men.³¹³

A letter attached to the pew list was addressed to the Bishop of Rochester and described the careful process by which the vestry allotted the seats. In April 1718:

Eleven persons were by common consent agreed upon & appointed for the purpose aforesaid: To which agreement and appointment, Eighty nine Parishioners of the said Parish present at ye Vestry, did, and hath to us been represented, Subscribe their Hands, no Exception having (as far as appears to us) been ever made to any of the Persons so nominated or to ye Regularity of their Choyce & appointment: And Whereas ye Eleven persons so appointed did, after various meetings had & Consultations held, through great Pains of Care agree upon & prepare such a Scheme or Plan of Seating & did lately lay it before us sign'd by ten of them.

Even after this laborious procedure, the appointed committee could not unanimously agree on the layout. Although it is likely that the pews were rented, there is no mention

³¹² St Alfege Church archive, Box 6, one single and five double pages with numbered lists of names (signed by ten men of the committee, one did not sign), along with a letter dated 29 Sept 1718 addressed to the Bishop of Rochester and signed by 'Fr Rossin'; all pages look like they were previously bound together. The text states that the pew list was submitted to the Bishop of Rochester with 'Plans of the Gallerys and Pews', however these were not in the archive.

³¹³ Appendix 3 describes a spatial analysis of the 1718 pew list.

of any rental costs – the pews were allocated in relation to a person’s social standing, as judged by the appointed committee. Again, it is worth noting that in a parish with a population of around 6000 people, the vestry comprised 89 men who elected a subcommittee of 11 men to decide where a predicted congregation of 930 people would sit inside the parish church. There was an appeal process described by the vestry committee:

We have taken some time duly to peruse and consider ye said Scheme, or Plan, & withall to see whether any of ye Parishioners of ye said Parish, who should think themselves personally agrieved by ye Distribution of Seating therein made, might apply themselves to us in order to our Redressing or causing by fit means to be Redressed, such personal Grievance.

But they had received no such appeals at the time of writing, so the committee’s judgement stood. The writer also commented on the necessity of allocated seating, and possibly a form of social segregation, for practical purposes:

...ye said New Church being now duly Consecrated & Opened for the use of ye said Parishioners, it is highly fitting & reasonable that upon their immediate Resort to it for ye Daily Celebration of Divine Service, ye said Parishioners should be informed in what seats they ought severally to sit & should accordingly repair to such seats when they attend Divine Service, for ye avoiding of Disorder & Confusion which must otherwise necessarily arise in so numerous an assembly, composed of Persons of so different & unequal a Condition & Character.

He was concerned about the proximity of such a large number and variety of people within the congregation, and how they could move about such a large church without discord. The pew list and accompanying letter convey a sense of the highly controlled and densely populated interior space of the church, where everyone had their place and the act of worship was wholly governed by the minister. However, the numbers show that the majority of the Greenwich inhabitants were not attending this church or participating in the parish governance in 1718.

While the vestry committee was carefully arranging the parishioners’ seating inside the church, there was one seat in the church that the local vestry resisted providing: the seat for the reigning monarch. In September 1718 there was an exchange between the parish vestry and the Church Commission regarding ‘a seat for the King’,

which was characteristically feisty. A copy of an 'Order of Vestry', signed by over eighty men, was submitted to the Commission, which read:

Ordered nemine contradicente (*unanimously*) that to take off ye imputation from ye parish, of denying his Majesty a seat in the parish Church an Humble Representation be made to his Grace the Ld Arch Bp of Canterbury and the rest of the Commiss [ioner] s for Churches, that they will be pleased to give Order that his Majesty be provided with a seat of distinction in our parish church, and that the Minister and Church Wardens do wait on his Grace and the rest of the Commiss[ioner]s with a copy of this Order;³¹⁵

In response, on 2 October 1718, the Commission minutes concluded that this 'Order of Vestry' constituted an obstruction and the Commissioners decided that they would not proceed 'any farther with the church until the obstruction be removed'.³¹⁶ This dispute was specifically about who should pay for the royal pew, rather than if one should be located inside the church, because the vestry demanded an order from the Commissioners, which would make them responsible for the cost. However, the parishioners' appeal to have the 'imputation' taken off, implies that they have already been accused of refusing to provide a royal pew and needed to refute that claim. At this time of Jacobite unrest, any doubt concerning the loyalty of the parish to King George I would have invited censure and the Church Commission's accusation is likely to have been the source of the parish's disfavour referred to in later petitions concerning the church tower.³¹⁷ There was no royal pew mentioned in the parish pew list sent to the Bishop of Rochester on 29 September 1718, but after the Commission's threat to stop work at the church on 2 October there is no further mention of the matter in the Commissioners' Minutes. John James was supervising the wood carving and installation of the pews inside the church in early 1719, so it seems likely that this work included the royal pew.³¹⁸ This debate, which occurred around the time when the parish vestry were considering how to reinhabit their new church, shows that the pew seating was a contentious social issue that the parish vestry struggled to resolve.

³¹⁵ LPL MS2715, f.128.

³¹⁶ LPL MS2691, f.211.

³¹⁷ Inwood, *A History of London*, 387–388. See above, 100-101, and <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativecrutiny/act-of-union-1707/overview/the-1715-rebellion/> Accessed 7 Sept 2020.

³¹⁸ LPL MS2691, f.224 and f.226, March 1718/19.

Conclusion

In the eighteenth century, the parish system provided a public and social forum (the vestry of ratepaying male inhabitants) that represented the parish in public matters. Throughout the construction of their new church, this parish vestry negotiated with the nationally ratified Commission, who appear to have behaved in an authoritarian fashion and disregarded local customs, around burial in particular. They had contrasting attitudes to the past, and how it should be memorialised: one was based on traditional and customary behaviour that was focused on the local parish, while the other was scholarly and aimed to promote the nation and the national church. The transformation of their church, from a local to a national monument, was a huge upheaval for the Greenwich congregation. Customary memorialisation acts and processes were significantly disrupted, and had to be remade at the parish church.

After the consecration in 1719 the parish inhabitants only gradually re-established their possession of the church. For example, they were initially slow to insert new memorials in the church; writing in 1797, Hasted noted that there were no new memorials inside the new church. He and Lysons described three notable new monuments in the churchyard; two were located at the east end of the church and dated 1714, to Sir Robert Robinson, and 1760, to Sir Henry Sanderson. A third was dated 1762, to Sir James Creed and his family 'who lie in a vault underneath'.³¹⁹ By 1838, Greenwood was able to list another thirteen mural monuments that had been installed inside the church, most of which also related to bodies interred in the crypt below.³²⁰ Thomas Kadwell's schedule of the burial vaults in the crypt of St Alfege Church, made in 1859 when the crypt was closed, recorded that there were sixty named burials vaults (including the old and new Vicar's Vaults) containing 1,058 coffins.³²¹ All but three of the burial vaults were opened after the 1751 Act of Parliament granting permission for the parishioners to use the crypt for interments. In the three decades between 1780 and 1810 thirty new burial vaults were opened, which represented an increased uptake on

³¹⁹ Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 1:420.

³²⁰ C. Greenwood, *An Epitome of County History, Wherein the Most Remarkable Objects, Persons, and Events, Are Briefly Treated of. Vol. 1: County of Kent* (London: published for the proprietor, at the office of the author, 1838), 16–17.

³²¹ Gavin Burns and Charles Kadwell, *Greenwich Churchyard; Monumental Inscriptions* (Greenwich: Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society, 1923), I–III, 929.3, RGHT.

the part of local families. The crypt was indeed filling up and in 1821 the vestry proposal for a new chapel of ease (the subject of the next chapter) included a new crypt.

The dedication to St Alfege gradually re-emerged: the story of St Alfege's death was prominent in published descriptions of St Alfege Church and Greenwich in the later eighteenth century.³²² However, in addition, appreciative architectural accounts of Hawksmoor's St Alfege Church start to appear. The first detailed description of the architecture of St Alfege Church was published by Henry Richardson in 1834. Contributed by Mr R. P. Browne, a local architect, the description carefully identifies the components of the classical orders while interspersing complimentary comments. He concludes that: 'This convenient and noble edifice throws a shade over the many trifling buildings of the day, and will long form one of the first ornaments to the town.'³²³ The church itself had become an admired monument, and any individual memorials inside the church go unmentioned. But, by this time, St Alfege Church was itself categorised as the 'old church' because the parish vestry had built the 'new church' of St Mary nearby in Greenwich, the subject of the next chapter.

³²² Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: Greenwich', in *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 1* (Canterbury, 1797), pp. 372-420; Daniel Lysons, 'Greenwich' in *The Environs of London: Volume 4, Counties of Herts, Essex and Kent* (London 1796), pp. 426-493. Both accessed at www.british-history.ac.uk in 2017.

³²³ Richardson, *Greenwich*, 103.

CHAPTER 3 - St Mary's Church 1823-1936:

The New Church and how it was Forgotten

From 1825 until 1918 the parish of Greenwich was served by two churches because St Alfege Church had a chapel of ease called St Mary's Church, located a short distance away near the entrance into Greenwich Park (Figure 10). Surviving photographs and drawings of St Mary's Church suggest that it had an imposing architectural presence and was of a comparable size to St Alfege Church (Figure 11). This chapter charts the rise and fall of St Mary's Church: from its enthusiastic creation by the Regency population of Greenwich, to its decline in popularity later in the nineteenth century and eventual demolition in 1936. The stark contrast between these two phases in the life of St Mary's Church show how local attitudes to the building changed. The forms of memorialisation that were incorporated into the church building, including the architectural references and the crypt accommodation for the dead, were very specific to the society that created the church. As time passed, the parish size was reduced and the population changed causing St Mary's Church to become anachronistic; both the architectural values and the burial practices were out of date, and St Alfege no longer needed a chapel of ease. This lost church appears to exemplify Forty's observation that, although the 'creation of buildings for commemoration is one of the oldest purposes of architecture', yet 'buildings have been an unreliable means of prolonging memory'.³²⁴ Furthermore, the impulse or duty to sustain the memorialisation of the dead at St Mary's also seemed to falter after the church closed. This chapter explores the disappearance of St Mary's Church and the associated failure to memorialise either the society who created the church or the people who were buried there, in stark contrast to the endurance of the present-day St Alfege Church and some of its memorials.

Figure 10. (next page) 1870 map of Greenwich showing the churches of St Mary and St Alphege (sic). [Digimap, <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/historic>, © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (2017). All rights reserved. (1870).]

³²⁴ Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, 206.





Figure 11. View of St Mary's Church from the south, date unknown, black and white photographic print [St Alfege Church archive]

St Mary's Church was proudly described and drawn during the nineteenth century in several contemporary publications.³²⁵ It was portrayed as (almost) superior to St Alfege Church because it was perceived as a new and sophisticated building. The first phase of the church's existence celebrated the social and civic aspirations of the Regency Greenwich community which sought its construction. The architectural style took advantage of Greenwich Park to emulate, and memorialise, the idyllic landscape paintings and gardens of the late eighteenth century. For the wealthier inhabitants, the new crypt essentially provided an extension of the St Alfege Church crypt. In 1834 local writer Henry Richardson published a book that was part guide and part survey of Greenwich. He described both the parish churches of St Alfege (the 'old church') and St Mary (the 'new church'), which were evocatively illustrated. The admiration for the new church of St Mary's was echoed by Charles Partington in his contemporary illustrated book, which was less detailed but encompassed the whole of London.³²⁶ Shortly afterwards, in 1838 Greenwood's *Epitome of County History* volume dedicated to Kent, a section on Greenwich mentioned St Mary's Church, described as 'a neat edifice in the Grecian style' with a 'chaste and elegant' interior, before mentioning St Alfege Church. He described St Alfege Church as a 'very fine structure, of Roman architecture', by John James and proceeded to list a selection of the 'numerous monuments in the interior' (as discussed in Chapter 2).³²⁷ Greenwood focused on the sophisticated appearance of St Mary's Church and the memorials at St Alfege Church, as if memorialisation were the primary purpose of the latter, older edifice. In these nineteenth-century topographical accounts, St Mary's Church had become an additional identifying feature for the town of Greenwich, which provided a more fashionable space for worship, while St Alfege Church became identified with the past and the dead.

By the early twentieth century St Mary's had entered a new phase of its existence; the congregation had declined, causing the church to be closed in 1919, less than a

³²⁵ William Howarth, *Some Particulars Relating to the Ancient and Royal Borough of Greenwich* (Greenwich: Edward George Berryman, 1882); Charles Frederick Partington, *National History and Views of London and Its Environs* : (London : A. Bell [etc.], 1834), accessed December 16, 2016; Henry S. Richardson, *Greenwich: Its History, Antiquities, Improvements, and Public Buildings* (London, Simpkin & Marshall; [etc., etc.], 1834).

³²⁶ Partington, *National History and Views of London and Its Environs*, 75. With illustrations facing 73.

³²⁷ Greenwood, *An Epitome of County History, Wherein the Most Remarkable Objects, Persons, and Events, Are Briefly Treated of*. Vol. 1, 16–17.

century after its consecration. The treatment of the site, following the demolition, displayed a remarkable lack of thought about the memorials and burials in the church; the coffins in the crypt were converted into unmarked graves and an unrelated statue planted in the church's place. In fact, the authorities involved seemed intent on forgetting both the building and the individuals buried within the church crypt, perhaps because they were inconvenient to development plans for the area. The church building's former site has now been reconfigured twice, with the result that there is no longer any physical indication of the church's location above ground. The fate of St Mary's strongly contrasts the endurance of St Alfege Church, which was the subject of a substantial restoration campaign in the 1930s, while the building fabric of the by-then closed St Mary's deteriorated. In 1935, neither the local parishioners nor the church authorities were sufficiently motivated to save St Mary's either as architectural evidence of the past church community who built and used the church, or to sustain the memory of the people buried at the church. This offers an alternative viewpoint from which to consider the endurance of St Alfege Church and is illustrative of a particular phase of English church history. The fate of St Mary's is also worth remembering as part of the parish's history which has been influenced by the nearby development of the National Maritime Museum and later heritage priorities that appeared in Greenwich.

National and Local Acts of Parliament

The declared motivation for the construction of a chapel of ease for Greenwich was the area's population increase. In 1816, a former church warden, John Kimbell, published an assessment of the parish income, property and dependants for the benefit of future church wardens.³²⁸ This invaluable book created a clear profile of the parish in the early nineteenth century. Kimbell noted that St Alfege Church accommodated 'upwards of 1500' but was 'far too small for the increased population of the parish, which amounted, by the census of 1811, to near 17,000 souls'.³²⁹ By his tone it seems he was slightly anxious about the management of the parish, suggesting this information

³²⁸ Kimbell, *An Account of the Legacies, Gifts, Rents, Fees, Etc Appertaining to the Church and Poor of the Parish of St Alphege, Greenwich in the County of Kent*.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8. See page 279 for a detailed breakdown of the 1811 census figures.

contributed to the desire for an additional church in 1821. The population growth in Greenwich is corroborated by other sources and can also be connected to the growth of late Georgian London as a whole.³³⁰ Church attendance at this time was compulsory for anyone who wanted to hold public office, and the competition posed by dissenting chapels was still keenly felt. In Greenwich some dissenting chapels had appeared in the early nineteenth century: in 1816, a Wesleyan Chapel opened in George Street, which seated 1,000 people, and in 1823 the 'Maize Hill Chapel' opened, also with seating for 1,000 people.³³¹ Providing an adequate number of seats for the population to regularly attend the parish church was thus seen as an important moral duty for the continuance of Anglican conformity. The state church required reinforcement to compete with these chapels for their congregation.

The Church Building Movement, between 1810 and 1818, generated the political and theological motivation for the 1818 Act. Following the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, some politicians felt that 'the Church and its religious and moral teachings was [sic] a bulwark against revolution', and within the Church of England there was growing support for a more Evangelical form of worship.³³² The Act was designed to limit the number of dissenting chapels and congregations, because there was a fear that dissenting preachers could inspire revolutionary feeling. The expansion of the Established Church to keep pace with the growing population, was restricted by the parish church's traditional association with a geographical parish or territory, and its population. Dissenting chapels faced no such requirement; they could be built wherever a site was acquired and anyone could attend the services.³³³

The Public General Act, 58 George III, c. 45, passed on 30 May 1818, described an ambitious programme designed to address these concerns nationally. Entitled 'An Act for building and promoting the building of additional Churches in populous Parishes', it started a national project to build six hundred new churches in England, and was

³³⁰ Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century: A Human Awful Wonder of God* (London: Vintage, 2008), 68, 77, 98; Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV; Herts, Kent and Essex*, 4:571–572; Richardson, *Greenwich*, 12–13; Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth Century London*, 196–197.

³³¹ Richardson, *Greenwich*, 113–114. Chapter IX 'Places of Worship of the Various Denominations of Dissenters'. He lists six chapels, including a Roman Catholic chapel, with seating for a total of 3,900 people.

³³² Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 15.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 39.

amended by further Acts in 1819, 1822, 1824 and 1827.³³⁴ The primary aim of this legislation was to provide Anglican church accommodation that was proportional to the parish population and particularly to include free seats to accommodate the poor. An initial budget of one million pounds was extended as the large number of churches required to satisfy this aim became apparent. The Act intended to speed up the process of building new Anglican churches, by offering grants to existing populous parishes to enable them to build an additional church and provide free seating.

The Church Building Commission created to implement the Act comprised members of the clergy and laymen.³³⁵ They established the processes for assessing parish needs (with reference to the 1811 census for population), administering a parish application and judging the architectural proposals they received. In contrast to the 1711 Act and Commission, in 1818 the onus was on the local parish to compile a detailed proposal for its new church and apply for a grant from the Commission. Any grant awarded was intended to supplement local funding and the administration of the approved project was the responsibility of locally nominated trustees (rather than surveyors appointed by the Commission as in 1711). The process thus required significant commitment and support from the host parish, both financial and managerial. Whilst the Commission retained the power to approve the architectural design of the church buildings, the selection of the architect was in the hands of the applicants, usually a parish committee. As a result, a large number of architects worked on what came to be known as Commissioners' Churches, and their architectural appearance was varied.³³⁶ The Act contained no guidance on the architectural appearance of the new churches, but the Commissioners' approval of the architectural plans was required. Unlike the 1711 Commission, the architectural standards employed by the 1818 Commission were not clearly defined. Minimizing building costs was a high priority for the Commission and churches sponsored by the 1818 Act are usually considered rational and pragmatic

³³⁴ England, *An Act for Building and Promoting the Building of Additional Churches in Populous Parishes*, vol. 58 George III, c. 45, 1818.

LPL hold extensive records of the Church Building Commission associated with these Acts, see <https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=CBC>

³³⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 30–35. Also, Appendix 3, 361–362.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 349–359.

buildings rather than examples of great architectural merit.³³⁷ However, Wren's advice regarding auditory churches and the appropriate internal dimensions to ensure the congregation could see and hear the preacher, was still being heeded.³³⁸ The proposal put forward by the parish of Greenwich in 1822 was thorough and complied with the Act's requirements. St Mary's Church was an early recipient of a substantial grant of £11,000 from the Church Building Commission and seems to have been one of the best examples of the Act's architectural output.

The idea to build an additional church in Greenwich was first announced in 1821, when the Reverend George Mathews proposed the construction of a new church in 'an address' issued to parishioners on 21 September 1821.³³⁹ The social impetus required to build a chapel of ease for St Alfege Church, in accordance with the procedure outlined by this Act, denoted a thriving and populous parish. Indeed, the parish vestry minutes from this time (which do survive, unlike those from the 1710s) suggest the vestry was an efficient and business-like organisation.³⁴⁰ The vicar was usually chair of the vestry meetings held at St Alfege Church and all ratepayers were entitled to attend. The administration of the parish and the church was closely connected, so local political relationships and debates would have occurred in this forum.³⁴¹ On 15 February 1822 the vestry minutes recorded that:

The Rev.d Dr Burney stated to the meeting, that from the great want of Pews and Sittings for the Accommodation of the Parishioners in the present Church for the Purposes of publick Worship, several of the Inhabitants had formed themselves into a Committee with a View to obtaining Loans and Donations towards building a new Church, that, with the Aid of £8000 promised by the Commissioners for building new Churches in populous Places, a sufficient Sum had been raised for building a Church, but Provision was necessary for the due Service of the Church when erected, and it was considered, that without a Rate being made for that Purpose, it would be impossible to proceed with so very desirable a Work.³⁴²

³³⁷ Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837*; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*; Webster, 'Late Georgian Churches: "Absolutely Wretched" or the Triumph of Rational Pragmatism?'

³³⁸ Webster, 'Late Georgian Churches: "Absolutely Wretched" or the Triumph of Rational Pragmatism?', 153.

³³⁹ Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect', 37.

³⁴⁰ RGHT hold the Greenwich Parish Vestry minute books for 1814-1824, 1824-1831 and 1831-1839.

³⁴¹ French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England 1600-1750*, 91-140.

³⁴² The Vestry Minutes 1814-1824, 310.

The vestry members continued to debate the means of supporting the proposed new church and appointed a committee to 'peruse and consider the several Clauses in the Draft of a Bill proposed to be brought into Parliament, and if necessary, to watch the Progress thereof in both Houses'. They reported to the vestry on 17 May 1822 and noted:

The Revenue of the Church may be considered as arising from the following Sources. 1st Pew Rents 2nd The Rate of 3d in the Pound for 3 Years 3rd Fees for Burials & c 4th Purchase Money arising from the Sale of Vaults, and 5th Fines or Penalties.³⁴³

In contrast to St Alfege Church, from the very outset the provision of a crypt with burial vaults was a financial and practical necessity for St Mary's. Whereas in 1711 the Commissioners were unconcerned about the cost to the parish of maintaining the new church, in 1821, because the parish vestry were more in control of the process, they were very concerned about the onward running costs of their new church. As seen in Chapter 2, the pressure on burial space in Greenwich was acute and St Mary's Church was to have no external burial ground of its own. The crypt of St Alfege Church was filling up with burial vaults, since the 1751 Act that legalised burials in the crypt, so the argument for the provision of a crypt beneath St Mary's Church specifically for burials was financially compelling.

The draft bill became a Local Act of Parliament dated 24th June 1822. Local Acts were generated by local initiatives that required national authorization, and as such constituted an important interaction between local and national authorities.³⁴⁴ The 'Act for erecting a new Church in the Parish of *Greenwich*' nominated trustees to implement the construction of the new church and stated that their tenure would conclude seven years after its consecration.³⁴⁵ Amongst the ten trustees named are the vicar of the parish of Greenwich (George Mathews, but also any future vicar of Greenwich), the Right Honourable Nicholas Vansittart, John Angerstein, the Reverend Charles Parr Burney and Vice Admiral William Taylor. Aside from the vicar, these were nationally influential men

³⁴³ Ibid, 333.

³⁴⁴ Innes, 'The Local Acts of a National Parliament.'

³⁴⁵ England, *An Act for Erecting a New Church in the Parish of Greenwich in the County of Kent, and Vesting the Same and the Scite Thereof in Trustees, and for Making Provisions Respecting the Same.*, vol. Anno Tertio, Georgii IV, c. 71, 1822. See second clause. A copy is held by CERC, file 100581-1.

whose presence as trustees demonstrates the mix of local and national influences on the new church. In reality these local and national influences always operate together, but for this project their inter-relationship is revealed by considering them separately. Local resident Nicholas Vansittart (1766-1851) was a well-respected Chancellor of the Exchequer (1812-1823); in that role, he had been instrumental in drafting the 1818 Act of Parliament, and then served as a Church Commissioner. He was made Lord Bexley shortly before construction started on St Mary's Church in 1823.³⁴⁶ So, the parish of Greenwich had a politically knowledgeable and powerful sponsor for their grant application to the Commission. Vansittart's participation would have ensured that the initial proposal for the new church was robust and would certainly have encouraged the Church Commissioners to respond positively. John Angerstein (1774-1858) was the son of John Julius Angerstein (1735-1823), a successful businessman instrumental in establishing the marine insurance brokers Lloyds of London, and an influential art collector.³⁴⁷ He was later the Member of Parliament for Greenwich (1835-37). Vice Admiral William Taylor (1760-1842) was a local resident with an impressive naval career. His inclusion as a trustee indicated the Royal Hospital's stake in this project. The Rev. Charles Parr Burney (1786-1864) was the son of the Rev Charles Burney (1757-1817), known for his school in Greenwich and his collection of rare books and manuscripts, now owned by the British Library. The local Burney School was run by the son, Parr Burney, from 1813 until 1833.³⁴⁸ Many of those involved with the project to build a new church also made personal financial donations; for instance, Vansittart contributed £800 and Angerstein gave £235 15s.³⁴⁹

The Local Act of 1822 defined the legal status of the new church by officially naming the trustees and describing their duties and obligations. The sources of funding available to the trustees and the practical operation of the church were carefully

³⁴⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 57; John Plowright, 'Vansittart, Nicholas, First Baron Bexley (1766–1851), Politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28105>.

³⁴⁷ Jenkinson, *Woodlands and John Julius Angerstein*.

³⁴⁸ Lars Troide, 'Burney, Charles (1757–1817), Schoolmaster and Book Collector', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, last modified 2004, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4079>.

³⁴⁹ Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect', 39–42.

outlined. The vestry, and its dedicated committee, ensured the Act contained a comprehensive programme for the building's construction and management. The trustees were empowered to raise money by renting pews inside the church and selling burial space within the crypt. Clause XXIX of the 1822 Act outlined the 'Burial Fees, Dues and Profits' sanctioned in respect of 'Burials, Monuments, Tombs and other Stones' at St Mary's Church. It ratified the role of the crypt and, in an age fearful of grave robbers in search of cadavers for anatomists, specified the coffins:

No Burials shall at any Time be made or allowed under the Site of the said intended church, except such as shall be in Vaults or Catacombs, of which Vaults there shall be no more than One Tier, and inclosed in Leaden or other Metal Coffins, and any Undertaker or other Person who shall bury or cause to be buried, or be concerned in burying any Corpse in the Vaults or Catacombs within or under the said Church, without such Corpse being inclosed in a Leaden or Metal Coffin, shall forfeit and pay the Sum of Fifty Pounds.³⁵⁰

The use of lead coffins would also have delayed the decomposition of the corpse, and the coffins themselves would take even longer to degrade.³⁵¹ The emphasis on preservation is reinforced by the permanence of the burial vault ownership. Clause XXXVII further described the legal status of the burial vaults:

all such Catacombs, Vaults, and Arches to be sold by virtue of this Act shall be conveyed as Freehold Inheritance in Fee Simple unto the Purchaser or Purchasers of the same respectively, being Parishioners of Greenwich.

This complete ownership of the burial vaults was unusual; only the wealthy would have been able to afford these burial vaults and the vault ownership could be handed down to descendants like any other form of freehold property. The crypt at St Mary's Church thus offered burial vaults that were designed to provide a permanent resting place away from organic matter and the parish churchyard.

A silver plaque that commemorated the event where 'The First Stone was laid on the 17th day of June in the YEAR 1823', can now be found mounted in a window reveal

³⁵⁰ George IV. *Regis Cap.lxxi*. An Act for erecting a new Church in the Parish of *Greenwich* in the County of *Kent*, and vesting the same and the Scite thereof in Trustees, and for making Provisions respecting the same. 24th June 1822, clause XXIX, 2383. Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute: The Politics of the Corpse in Pre-Victorian Britain*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xv, 80.

³⁵¹ Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, 157–160; Malcolm Johnson, *Crypts of London* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013), 23–24.

within St Alfege Church (Figure 12). The text recorded the main participants in the ceremony, the names of the trustees and this brief description of the project:

The Ground for the Site of the Church was a joint venture from HRH Princess Sophia Matilda, Ranger of Greenwich Park, and the Hon. the Directors of the Royal Hospital. The Funds for the Erection of this Church arose from Benefactors and Subscriptions together with a Grant of £11,000 by His Majesty's Commissioners for building New Churches. The Sum at which the builders contracted was £13,530. The Estimate for the Incidental Expenses was £1300. The Parish voted in Vestry on the 2nd day of Feb 1822 a Rate of three pence in the Pound to be raised for the first three Years after the Consecration of the Church to be applied towards the performance of the Service.

All the local participants were carefully acknowledged and the financial management of the project was spelt out on the commemorative plaque, but there was no religious statement or dedication.



Figure 12. Commemorative plaque: Church of St Mary, Greenwich. [AF Nov 2016]

To mark the start of construction in 1823, a procession made its way from St Alfege Church to the site of St Mary's Church and ceremonially delivered the plaque, which was then incorporated into the church foundations. Afterwards a celebratory dinner was held in the Painted Hall of the Royal Hospital for Seamen. A description of the procession in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1829 conveyed the high level of local investment in the project, and identified the key protagonists as Princess Sophia Matilda (1773-1844), Lord Bexley and the Governor of Greenwich Hospital:

A splendid procession of the inhabitants, with the neighbouring clergy in their convocation robes, with numerous auxiliaries of the most respectable description, proceeded from the old Church to the Park to meet her Royal Highness, who was supported by Lord Bexley and Vice-Admiral Sir R. G. Keats, the Governor of Greenwich Hospital. From the information of a friend who was present, I learn that the ceremony was conducted with the utmost solemnity, was witnessed by a numerous and respectable company, and concluded in the most satisfactory manner.³⁵³

This plaque and its ceremonial journey to the site of St Mary's Church show that the local parish were keen to celebrate and memorialise the start of construction work for their new church. The procession also illustrated the civic nature of the joint endeavour to build the church by the parish, the Royal Hospital and the Royal family.³⁵⁴

The political and religious framework within which the creation of St Mary's Church was conceived and developed was well defined and pragmatic. However, no mention was made of any architectural requirements for the new church building until after the project had its funding and legal structure established. The process by which the church design was generated was in complete contrast to the approach of the 1711 Church Commission, and of Hawksmoor, to the design of St Alfege Church. In 1822 the Church Building Commission were not concerned about creating a prototypical church design, to apply to the whole of the Commissions' output. Their overriding ecclesiastical agenda was the need to include more of the national population in local Anglican parish church congregations. By contrast, the 1711 Commission aspired to create a fundamental form of Anglican worship related to primitive Christianity. Hawksmoor

³⁵³ Edward John Carlos, 'New Churches - No. XXIV', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1829, 397.

³⁵⁴ The plaque was eventually returned to St Alfege church by the demolition contractors for St Mary's Church in 1936.

ignored the surrounding townscape of Greenwich and created an ambitious church that expressed grandeur and authority, seemingly unrestrained by any financial concerns. As seen in Chapter 2, the local inhabitants, and indeed the vicar, had no say in the design of St Alfege Church after their original plan was supplanted by Hawksmoor's design. In contrast, the 1818 Act, of which St Mary's Church was a product, had a much less pervasive national agenda and encouraged local parishes to build their own churches. As a result, the subsequent architectural ambitions for the new church in Greenwich were strongly influenced by local concerns, such as the location and context of the site, and the sophisticated impression that the local elite of Greenwich society wished to convey to the outside world.

Architectural Development

The architectural historiography relating to St Mary's Church and its architect, George Basevi (1794-1845), is not extensive. Basevi was a successful pupil of Sir John Soane (1753-1837) and is best known for designing the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. His obituary in the *Annual Register* for 1845 stated that:

In 1822 Mr Basevi was appointed to build a new church (St Thomas's) at Stockport, and in the following year another (St. Mary's) at Greenwich, both of them in the Grecian style, of elegant design, and admirable in their internal arrangements.³⁵⁵

This obituary also noted Basevi's influential three-year tour of Italy and Greece, studying and drawing the antiquities, which commenced in 1816 shortly after the end of the Napoleonic Wars.³⁵⁶ The tour was described in detail, with close reference to Basevi's letters home to his family, in a series of articles published in *The Architect* in 1922.³⁵⁷ From this, we learn that Basevi considered the landscape setting of the buildings he was studying to be very important. In one letter he wrote:

³⁵⁵ *Annual Register* (J. Dodsley., 1846), 305.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 304–307.

³⁵⁷ W. H. F. Basevi, 'The Grand Tour of an Architect', *The Architect* (1922). Published in 5 parts: July 7, 5-6; July 21, 43-44; July 28, 70-71; August 18, 117-118; September 1, 156-157.

I make pictures of my architectural studies. This combination is, I am convinced, beneficial to me. It takes me a little longer time but teaches me landscape composition, and makes my studies ... more interesting.³⁵⁸

Basevi was as preoccupied with the composition of the drawings he created, as with the architectural design of the historic buildings he was analysing. The author of this article in *The Architect* suggested that he might have been a successful painter rather than an architect, such was his 'tendency to convert his architectural studies into landscape drawings.' So, as architect for the St Mary's Church in Greenwich, he would have been fully conscious of the landscape surrounding the building.

In August 1818 Basevi was in Athens and saw the new Act as an opportunity to advance his career:

hearing from his brother that there were proposals to build a number of churches in London and the south of England, he determined on returning through Italy to make a special study of churches.³⁵⁹

He continued to focus on churches during his journey home via Malta, Sicily, Naples, and while travelling northwards through Italy. He urged his brother to write with any information about the new church commissions in England:

In your answer to this be very particular to let me know all that is going forward in the architecture line: when the designs for the churches are to be sent in: what money is to be expended on those to be built in London;³⁶⁰

During the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) state expenditure on architecture had been minimal, so this church building Act presented a welcome opportunity for younger architects like Basevi to secure valuable commissions.³⁶¹ The 1818 Act hastened Basevi's return to England and he arrived with examples gathered from ancient, southern European, church architecture.

The Church Building Commissioners consulted the Crown Architects (retained by the Office of Works) about the cost and design of the proposed churches.³⁶² These architects were the most successful and well-known of their day, but had contrasting

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 117.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 156.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 157.

³⁶¹ Summerson, *Georgian London*, 135–136.

³⁶² Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*. Chapter 4 discusses the Crown Architects roles, 59-82.

architectural styles: John Nash (1752-1835), responsible for the laying out of Regent Street and Regent's Park for the Prince Regent (later King George IV) in 1811; Robert Smirke (1781-1867), later architect of the British Museum; and Sir John Soane, best known today for his Lincoln's Inn Fields house, now Sir John Soane's Museum. Basevi had been a pupil of Soane's between 1811 and 1816, and they seem to have had a good relationship.³⁶³ It is likely that Basevi would have been influenced by Soane's views on the new churches, and that St. Mary's Church was designed with these in mind.³⁶⁴ Because St Mary's Church was such an early work in Basevi's independent career – perhaps the first – and given Soane's position of authority in relation to the Church Commission, it is likely that Soane had some influence over the design of St Mary's Church. Soane's notebooks record that he 'examined Basevi's church for Greenwich' with Nash on 3 April 1823.³⁶⁵ Soane himself designed and built three churches for the Church Building Commission and his first, St Peter's Church, Walworth, was under construction at the same time as St Mary's Church.³⁶⁶ St Peter's Church (still in use) shares some architectural features with St Mary's Church. It was constructed from the same materials distributed in a similar composition: the four Ionic columns are of pale Portland stone; other stone dressings and the tower are in the warmer coloured Bath stone, with a light-coloured brick facing to the external walls. This church shows us what black and white photographs of St Mary's Church cannot: the delicate colours of the façade (Figure 13). The arched brick windows on the north and south facades of St Mary's Church were particularly reminiscent of Soane's architectural style (Figure 15).

³⁶³ Arthur Bolton, *Architectural Education a Century Ago* (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 1925), 6. Sir John Soane's Museum hold many drawings by Basevi.

³⁶⁴ Joseph Michael Gandy, *A Group of Churches, designed by Sir J. Soane to illustrate different Styles of Architecture*, 1825, Sir John Soane's Museum, P259.

³⁶⁵ Bolton, *Architectural Education a Century Ago*, 9. Soane's notebooks are held by Sir John Soane's Museum.

³⁶⁶ The other two churches designed by Soane were Holy Trinity in Marylebone (1826-27) and St John's Church in Bethnal Green (1826-28).



Figure 13. St Peter's Church 1824, Walworth, Sir John Soane. [Paul Farmer, <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/5141454>]



Figure 14. St Peter's Church 1824, Walworth, Sir John Soane, south elevation. [Stephen Craven <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1495390>]



Figure 15. St Mary's Church 1824, Greenwich, George Basevi, south elevation under demolition in 1936. [RGHT]

On 7 May 1822 the Building Committee reported to the Board of Commissioners that 'In respect to the Church proposed to be built at Greenwich' they had 'received a set of Plans for this Church prepared by Mr Basevi', and this is the first mention of Basevi's appointment. The estimate for this church was £12,000 including the architect's commission. The plans were presented to the Board and they resolved that 'the Board approve of the general style and character of the Building save the termination of the Tower'.³⁷⁰ The Architect afterwards attended the Board, and laid before them a new Design for the Tower, but this was also found to be unsatisfactory and Basevi was asked to prepare another. A week later, Basevi presented two more options for the tower to the Commissioners, who appear to have had strong opinions about its appearance, to the extent that they were prepared to modify Basevi's proposals:

That the Board approve of the Design marked No.1 for the Tower of the new Church proposed to be built in this Parish, with the exception of the top of the Tower, for which the Dome top of No.2 must be substituted.³⁷¹

The following January the Rev. George Mathews successfully appealed to the board to reverse their decision, and option No.1 was executed.³⁷² Mathews' justification for this alteration was firstly financial, because the trustees wished to minimise the cost of the tower, but secondly architectural. 'The new Church', he wrote:

is to be placed between the present one, a very handsome Grecian Building completely of Stone, with a Cupola to the Steeple, and the Splendid Edifice of the Royal Hospital with its two magnificent Domes. It appears therefore, that as the new Church must be of the plainest Order, and almost entirely of Bricks, and unable to compete with, or in any way resemble the beauty of the two other Buildings, its whole character should be kept quite distinct, since any supposed attempt at resemblance would only serve to render [loose?] conspicuous its own inferiority.³⁷³

The Vicar and trustees had no wish to rival the impressive eighteenth-century architecture in Greenwich, but instead took a more pragmatic approach that lacked architectural ambition and was mindful of the financial cost. Later, in 1846, Basevi's

³⁷⁰ CERC, Minute Book 7, CBC/2/1/5, pp. 24-25.

³⁷¹ CERC, Minute Book 7, CBC/2/1/5, pp. 51-52.

³⁷² CERC, Minute Book 9, CBC/2/1/7, resolution on 28 Jan 1823, pp.298-99.

³⁷³ CERC, Minute Book 9, CBC/2/1/7, Mathews' letter to the Commissioners dated 7 Jan 1823, p.202

obituary contained an intriguing reference to the church towers of his two Commissioners' Churches, St Mary's and St Thomas' Church in Stockport. Apparently '[t]he steeples of neither satisfied his own mind, but he was not responsible for their defects. The commissioners would be architects, and marred the original designs.'³⁷⁴ Although this Church Commission had made no specific rules concerning the design of the new churches (unlike the 1711 Commission), evidently the Commissioners had strong ideas about the church towers.

Both Basevi's church designs from 1822, St Mary's and St Thomas', are examples of the Greek Revival or 'Grecian' style of architecture, and indeed it was thought at the time that the Commission favoured that style over the Gothic.³⁷⁵ In Great Britain, the development of this neo-classical style of architecture at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century was driven by the archaeological survey work of the, largely aristocratic, Society of the Dilettanti.³⁷⁶ This was a scholarly, aesthetic movement that sought to accurately recreate some of ancient Greece's classical temples. The Dilettanti had funded the survey expedition and resulting publication of *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762) by James 'Athenian' Stuart and Nicholas Revett, which had increased the popularity and accessibility of Greek architectural details.³⁷⁷ The Greek Revival style celebrated the sophistication and good taste of those involved, with connotations of their social class or gentility.³⁷⁸ There was a strong association with the aspirational 'Grand Tour' and the social status that travel in Italy and Greece conferred.

In Greenwich, the architecture of St Mary's Church would therefore have reflected these cultural values and the aspirations of the church's creators; the local trustees and the Church Commission. At the end of the eighteenth century, following a fire in 1779, Stuart and his clerk of works William Newton had re-modelled the interior of

³⁷⁴ *Annual Register*, 305.

³⁷⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 177–178.

³⁷⁶ J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Greek Revival: Neo-Classical Attitudes in British Architecture, 1760-1870* (London: John Murray, 1972). Part Two 'The Greek Revival: Classic and Romantic', 63-153; Crook closes with 'The Greek Revival was in some respects a failure. But at least its failures were appropriately heroic. And the attitudes from which it sprang were not entirely meaningless.'

³⁷⁷ James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. 1 (London: Josiah Taylor, 1762). Stuart had carried out this survey work instigated by the Society of the Dilettanti and this publication was a key reference text for the neo-classical Grecian style of architecture.

³⁷⁸ J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Dilemma of Style: Architectural Ideas from the Picturesque to the Post-Modern* (London: John Murray, 1987).

the nearby chapel of the Royal Hospital for Seamen, providing a local example of the 'neo-Grecian spirit' in architecture.³⁷⁹ The interest in the architecture of ancient Greece had no connection with Christianity, but arose from the intellectual and archaeological study of ancient classical temples. Therefore, the choice of a Greek Revival architectural style for St Mary's Church was inspired by architectural fashion, rather than the religious purpose of the building. By contrast, the interest of Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission in Roman and biblical styles of building had been justified by a desire to retrieve a 'pure' form of Christian worship from the early days of Christianity. As a result, their use of architectural memorialisation had a very specific intention, which connected the religious function of the building with the historical references incorporated into the architectural design of the church. The 1818 Church Commission's approach to the construction of the new churches prioritised the provision of the maximum number of pew seats using the most cost-effective method. They later asked the crown architects to analyse the cost implications of adopting a classical or gothic style of architecture, but in the early years when St Mary's was built, the Commission were thought to prefer the classical style.³⁸¹

Basevi's other Commissioners' Church, St Thomas' Church in Stockport, was also built in a classical Greek Revival style and still exists.³⁸² It was built at approximately the same time as St Mary's Church and consecrated three months after St Mary's, in September 1825. Basevi exhibited his design drawings for St Thomas's Church at the Royal Academy in 1822, which suggests that he designed the two churches during the same time period, but preferred the design of St Thomas' to St Mary's Church.³⁸³ They share some design characteristics, but the larger Stockport site enabled Basevi to separate the portico from the tower of St Thomas's, so the church tower was at the traditional west end of the church and the giant portico spread across the full width of the east end. The building materials also differed; St Thomas's was built entirely of a local sandstone, which gave a monolithic appearance quite different to the collage of

³⁷⁹ Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 2: South*, The Buildings of England (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1994), 264.

³⁸¹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 177.

³⁸² A general history of St Thomas's can be found here: <http://www.stthomasstockport.org.uk/churchhistory.html> accessed 10 July 2020.

³⁸³ Bolton, *Architectural Education a Century Ago*, 17.

Suffolk brick, with Portland and Bath stone features, used for St Mary's Church.³⁸⁴ So, St Thomas' Church was accessible from both the east and west, unlike St Mary's, and had a more permanent, monumental stone appearance. This existing Basevi church provides further information about Basevi's architectural objectives for St Mary's Church, and the differences between the two reflect the influence of the location and parish interests.

St Thomas' Church was listed grade I in 1952, with the following description:

1822-5, by George Basevi (his only surviving Commissioners church). The grandest classical church in the Manchester region and the only Commissioners church of the 1st grant in Cheshire. Built under the Million pound act of 1818 at a cost of £15,000. Design has affinities with Hawksmoor's St Alphage, Greenwich. Ashlar. Nave of 4 bays, aisles, north and south porches, lofty west tower rising to clock stage and cupola. The east end, formerly the main entrance front, has a giant hexastyle Ionic portico, with pediment. Notable interior with Corinthian colonnade over the galleries. Ionic altar-piece. The chancel was remodelled in 1890 by Medland Taylor and the original seating has been replaced.³⁸⁵

The comparison to St Alfege church in Greenwich is intriguing and possibly inspired by St Thomas's size, its imposing east facing portico, the monolithic stonework and separate church tower at the west end. It has been recently restored with financial assistance from the National Churches Trust, so it has survived and become a local heritage asset (Figure 16).³⁸⁶ This church gives a tantalising insight into what might have been if St Mary's Church in Greenwich had survived until the 1950s.

³⁸⁴ Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect', 38; 'Obituaries of Buildings, No. 41, St Mary's Church, Greenwich'; Clare Hartwell, Matthew Hyde, and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Cheshire: The Buildings of England*, (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2011), 595–596.

³⁸⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1067160>, accessed 6 December 2019.

³⁸⁶ See <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/st-thomas-church-stockport-becomes-community-hub>, accessed 7 Sept 2020.



Figure 16. St Thomas' Church, Stockport, northeast view.

[<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/stthomas> accessed 10 July 2020]

Setting: The Location and Site for the New Church

St Mary's Church had a prominent location within the town of Greenwich, adjacent to the entrance to Greenwich Park and close to the Royal Hospital for Seamen. In 1825 the church would also have faced the main route east through the town, Silver Street (now Nevada Street) because Nelson Street was not built until 1834. The two churches were only a short walk apart (two hundred and fifty metres), so they could be operated in tandem by the incumbent with little difficulty. The proximity to Crooms Hill, which ran up the west side of the park and had many large houses by 1820, was perhaps also relevant because the new church provided a convenient and up-to-date place for the wealthy residents to worship (Figure 17).

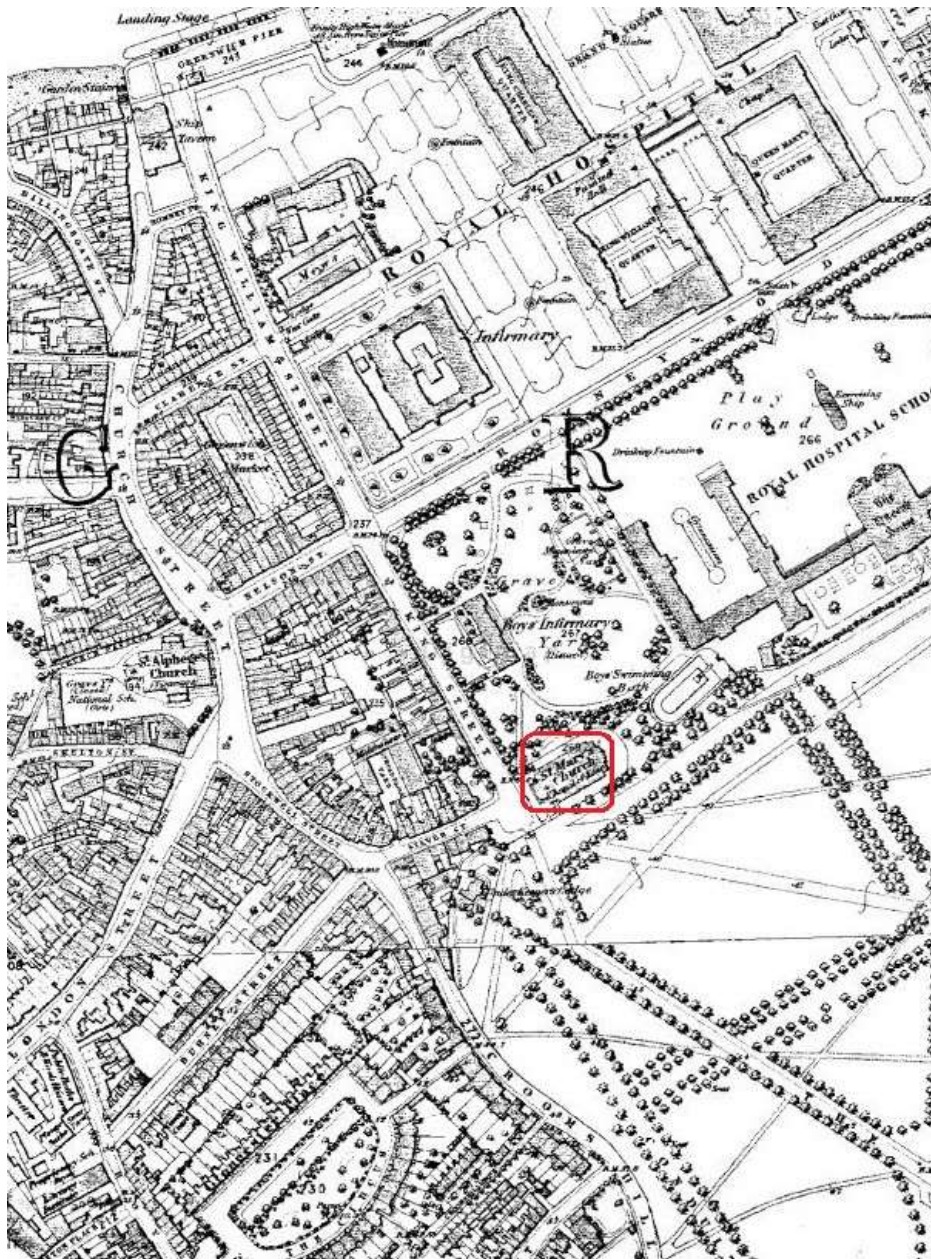


Figure 17. Map of Greenwich from 1870 with St Mary's Church outlined in red.
[Digimap, <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/historic>, © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (2017). All rights reserved. (1870).

Discussions about the location of the new church showed how important the wealth of surrounding households was to the future success of the church. After the Commission had offered an initial grant of £8000 on 8 January 1822, the Rev. George Mathews responded on 12 March with a lengthy letter detailing a change of site and the financial implications.³⁸⁷ He wrote:

the Site proposed for the Church was upon Blackheath, a situation in some respects ineligible, as regarding its distance from the main Population, but chosen for especial reasons, on the one hand, the difficulty (or rather impossibility) of finding any spot more conveniently situated, to be procured even by purchase, and the very high rate off purchase if it could have been procured – on the other, the certainty of a Free Grant of a portion of the Royal Manor on Blackheath, and the assurance of effectual aid from the numerous and opulent Inhabitants of that District, both by Subscriptions and Loans for the Building and by Engagements for Pews³⁸⁸

So, the parish of Greenwich had initially hoped that the wealthy population living on the edge of Blackheath would support the new church in a location fairly distant from the poorer inhabitants of Greenwich which it sought to serve. The offer of a prime site in central Greenwich, by HRH Princess Sophia Matilda (Ranger of Greenwich Park) and the Directors of the Royal Hospital seemed to remedy this problem. However, Mathews continued:

The change of Site has produced a change of circumstances fatal to the interests of the Church. The Subscriptions, Loans and Engagements for Pews from the distant and opulent Inhabitants of Blackheath are in most cases wholly withdrawn and in others are no longer to be expected. The Wealthier part of those who reside in the immediate neighbourhood of the new Site, are satisfactorily seated in the present Church. That part of the Parishioners, therefore, from which we are to look for annual Income from Pew Rents consists chiefly of the middle orders, and from these we cannot with reason or justice look for so much, however desirous of accommodation they may be, while the present Free Church is near to them, to which they feel that, as Parishioners, all have an equal right of access.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ CERC, Minute Book 6, CBC/2/1/4, an initial grant of £8000 is authorised on page 38; Mathews' letter is transcribed, 211-216.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 212-213.

³⁸⁹ CERC, Minute Book 6, CBC/2/1/4, 214.

This was a conundrum that illustrated both the expected class division between the two churches and the impact of charging for pew seats whilst also providing free seats. A second church built so close to St Alfege Church would unavoidably split the congregation in two and Mathews seemed to expect this to occur along class lines, suggesting that St Mary's Church would be occupied by the 'middle orders'. As a result of Mathew's communication, the Commission agreed to grant an additional £3,000 to enable the Vicar and Trustees to accept the offer of this site for the new church and overcome the funding difficulty.³⁹⁰ The procurement of a site for the new church was a difficult business and not one that St Alfege Church had encountered. Furthermore, the joint donation of the site added two more powerful stakeholders to the project.

The site agreed for St Mary's Church was formed from parts of Greenwich Park and the Royal Hospital Burial Ground. Two copies of the drawn plans that accompanied the grants of this land, by King George IV and the Commissioners of the Royal Hospital, show a boundary line passing diagonally through the rectangular plot, and the tight boundary constraints of the donated site (Figure 18).³⁹¹ St Mary's Church was wedged between two national institutions and contained by a robust surrounding wall. Access to the church was solely via the west facade and the adjacent park gate was moved to facilitate this frontage. In effect, the property boundary between the park and the hospital burial ground had been prised apart to create a vacant plot for the new church. Evidently the acquisition of this site for the new church involved a complicated legal arrangement, despite it being a donation. So, while the site for St Alfege Church had been in ecclesiastical ownership and use for many centuries, the land where St Mary's Church was built straddled the boundary between two national and secular institutions. The new church had no strong historical ties to its site and was indebted to its powerful neighbours.

Despite having a restrictive site, at street level St Mary's Church would have appeared to have a spacious and intentionally prominent position, because of its setting. It was surrounded by the open and landscaped ground of Greenwich Park and the Royal Hospital Burial Ground. Indeed, an access gate to the burial ground was built into the

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 216.

³⁹¹ CERC, File 100581-1, the plans are dated 2 June 1825 and 23 June 1825.

curved wall leading north from the west-facing portico of St Mary's Church. This access gate produced the visual inference that the Hospital Burial Ground was St Mary's churchyard, even though it was not.

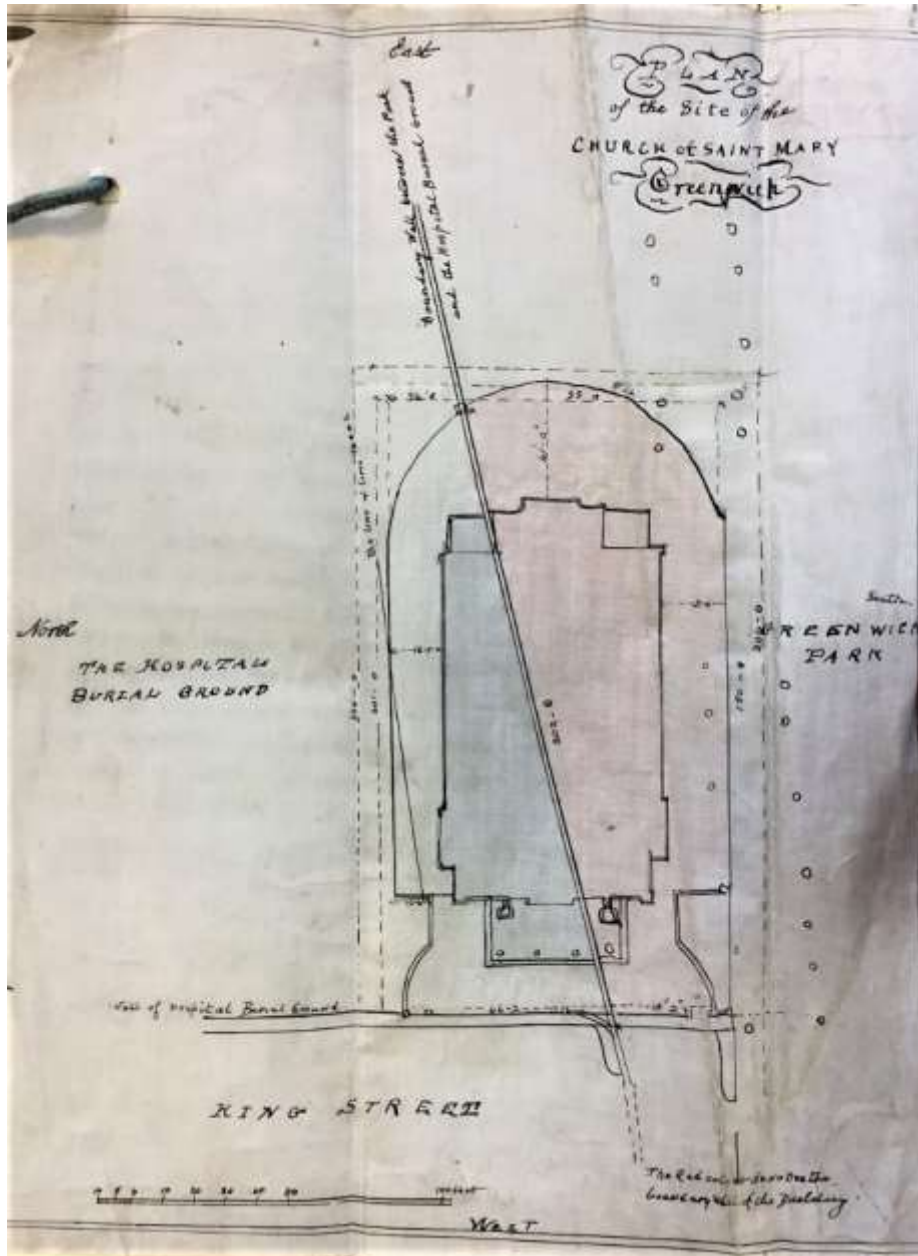


Figure 18. Copy of a plan that accompanied the grant of land for St Mary's Church. [CERC file 100581-1]

Similarly, St Mary's tall church tower incorporated an open platform at the top level, which implied a viewpoint from which to admire the surrounding vista and claim some intangible ownership of it. As a result, St Mary's Church appeared to be an elegant and authoritative addition to the town when it was first built.

This sense of a planned picturesque setting was enhanced by other nearby features. For example, within the park and on the other side of St Mary's Gate, was St Mary's Lodge (Figure 19). Built in 1807-8 by John Nash, this 'cottage orné' was a house for the Park Underkeeper. Nash was responsible for this lodge because he had been architect to the Surveyor General of Woods, Forests, Parks and Chases since 1806.³⁹³ As noted above, by 1820 Nash was a crown architect who had worked extensively for the Prince Regent, but he was also major contributor to the picturesque movement. This architectural approach focussed on buildings within a landscape or garden design.³⁹⁴ The presence of what came to be known as St Mary's Lodge probably influenced the local inhabitants' aspirations for this area of Greenwich, where the Royal Park meets the town at the bottom of Crooms Hill.



Figure 19. St Mary's Lodge, Greenwich Park. [AF 14 Nov 2018].

³⁹³ Geoffrey Tyack, 'Nash, John (1752–1835), Architect', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19786>.

³⁹⁴ David Watkin, *The English Vision; The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design*. (London: John Murray, 1982), 181–189. Chapter 8: 'The Picturesque in Village and Town'.

A print entitled 'View of St Mary's and Croom's Hill, Greenwich' (circa 1825) shows St Mary's Church from a viewpoint roughly located at the junction of Stockwell Street and Silver Street (now Nevada Street) looking east (Figure 20).³⁹⁵ The arch leading to Spread Eagle Yard, which still exists, is visible on the left. However, the buildings on the south side of Silver Street have been omitted, removing the visual barrier between the street and the park and giving a wide view that includes Nash's St Mary's Lodge. This omission also enabled the print view to show the park entrance gate relocated away from St Mary's Church and towards Crooms Hill. Occasional congestion caused by the proximity of the entrances to St Mary's Church and Greenwich Park had been a problem and this fictional view may well have been part of a proposal to further enhance the setting of St Mary's Church and remove this bottleneck on the footpath. An undated, draft letter from Churchwarden Suter to Princess Sophia Matilda appealed for the relocation of the gate due to the congestion.³⁹⁶ Henry Richardson's *Greenwich: its history, antiquities, improvements, and public buildings* of 1834 appears to confirm this idea:

It has been remarked as a subject of regret that an improvement, corresponding with that recently effected near the Church of St Alphege, is not made in the lower part of Croom's Hill, by the removal of the houses from the New Church to the stabling on Croom's Hill, so as to throw the Church and Park into public view from the Town.³⁹⁷

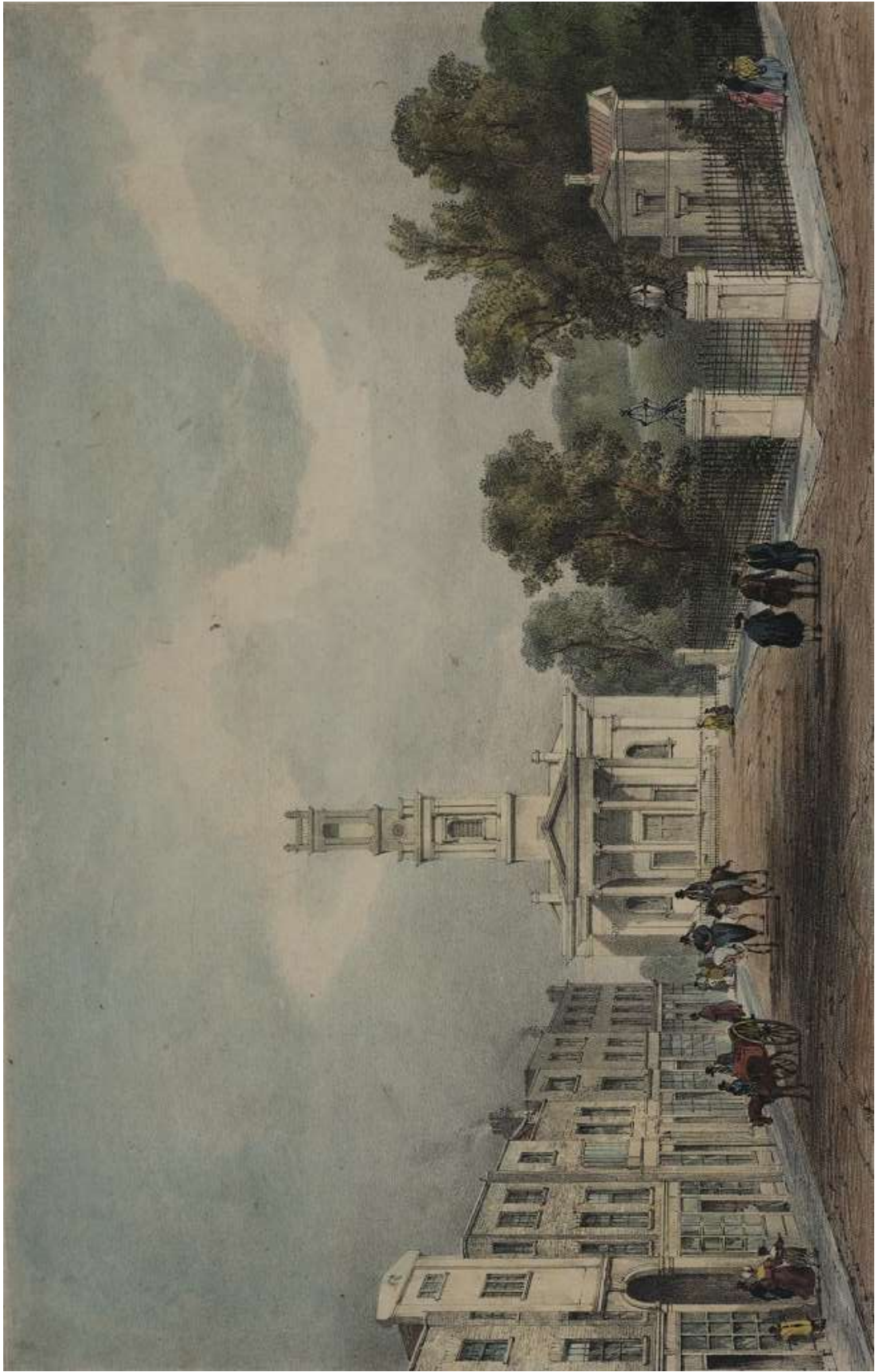
The junction between the affluent Crooms Hill and Silver Street, which led to St Mary's Church, was also improved in this scheme, creating a pleasant promenade. The print expresses the importance of this picturesque, landscaped composition, incorporating the church, the park and the lodge.

Figure 20. (next page) View of St Mary and Croom's Hill, Greenwich, c.1825 [Collage – The London Picture Archive, catalogue no. p5375360]

³⁹⁵ Lithograph print, City of London: London Metropolitan Archive, Collage record number 19676, Catalogue number p5375360.

³⁹⁶ RGHT; thanks to Dr Ann Dingsdale for her transcription.

³⁹⁷ Richardson, *Greenwich*, 112. The improvement to St Alphege mentioned by Richardson in this reference note was the addition of the southern part of the churchyard.



The locations of both St Mary's and St Alfege Church were impacted by changes to the Greenwich town layout during the 1830s. Nelson Road, which extended Romney Road west towards St Alfege Church, was created in 1834. This straight road opened up a long view of St Alfege Church, but at a slight angle, so the church's north elevation and the tower were the focus. In 1824 the site for St Mary's Church had blocked an unused part of the Old Woolwich Road and the new church faced a busy corner of the main thoroughfare running east-west through Greenwich. The creation of Nelson Street bypassed St Mary's and the immediate area must have become far quieter.

Richardson's 1834 publication also included an illustration of St Mary's Church, which portrayed it from a south west viewpoint and also showed the entrance gate to the park relocated to the west, away from the church entrance.³⁹⁸ St Mary's Church was portrayed surrounded by verdant trees and the sky is full of soft billowy clouds, as if part of a romantic landscape painting, with the caption 'The New Church of St Mary'. In the foreground are several figures enjoying their leisure time in the park. The church's neo-classical, Greek Revival architecture contributed to this romantic or poetic perception of the church building in an idyllic landscape scene.³⁹⁹ By contrast, the illustration of St Alfege Church, in the same book, provides a less serene impression.⁴⁰⁰ Depicted from the north west, John James' tower was shown in the foreground, which provided a similar building composition to the illustration of St Mary's Church. This viewpoint also placed the churchyard in the foreground of St Alfege Church and concealed the grand eastern portico that faced the town. In this way the artist avoided a direct comparison between Basevi's narrow tetrastyle (four column) Ionic portico and Hawksmoor's Baroque hexastyle (six columns) portico composition. St Alfege Church was labelled 'The Old Church of St Alphege' and positioned amid crowded gravestones and spindly trees; the wall of the burial ground was artfully demolished to reveal the full view of the west façade. The irregular town buildings of Greenwich provided the backdrop (Figure 21).

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 107.

³⁹⁹ Crook, *The Greek Revival*; Partington, *National History and Views of London and Its Environs*, 73–75. Partington describes St Mary's Church briefly: 'The new church is a very handsome edifice. Its tower and portico are especially admired for the chaste simplicity of their design.'

⁴⁰⁰ Richardson, *Greenwich*, 95.

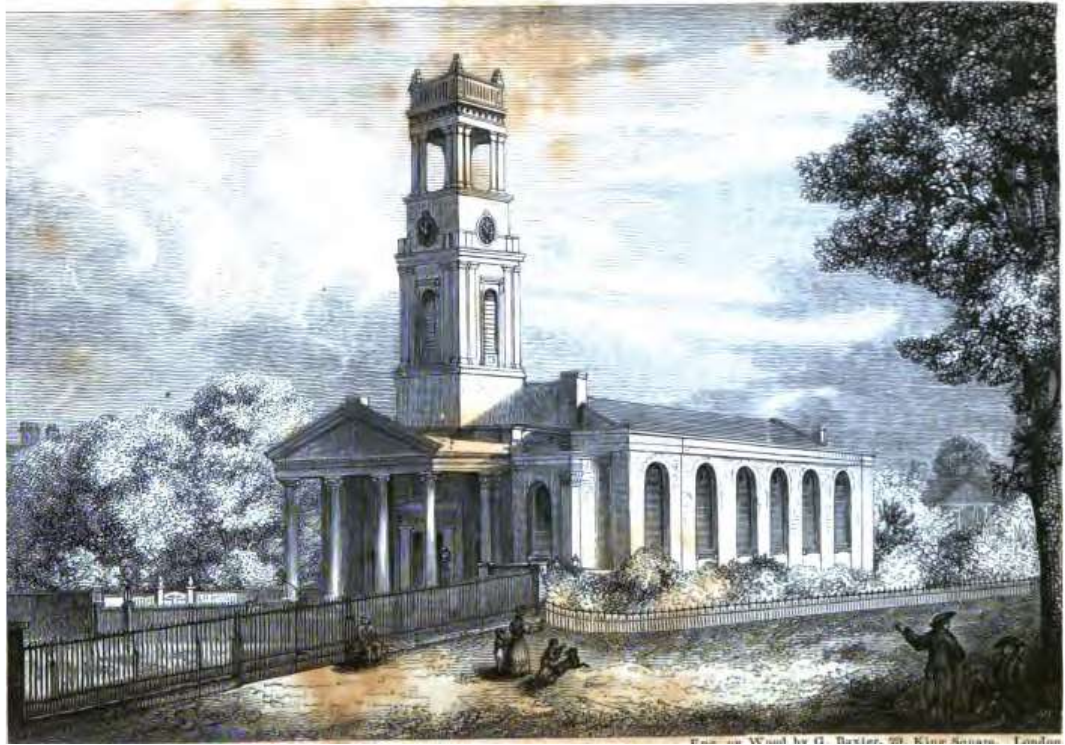


Figure 21. Illustrations of St Mary's Church and St Alphege Church, Richardson, *Greenwich: its history, antiquities, improvements, and public buildings* (1834).

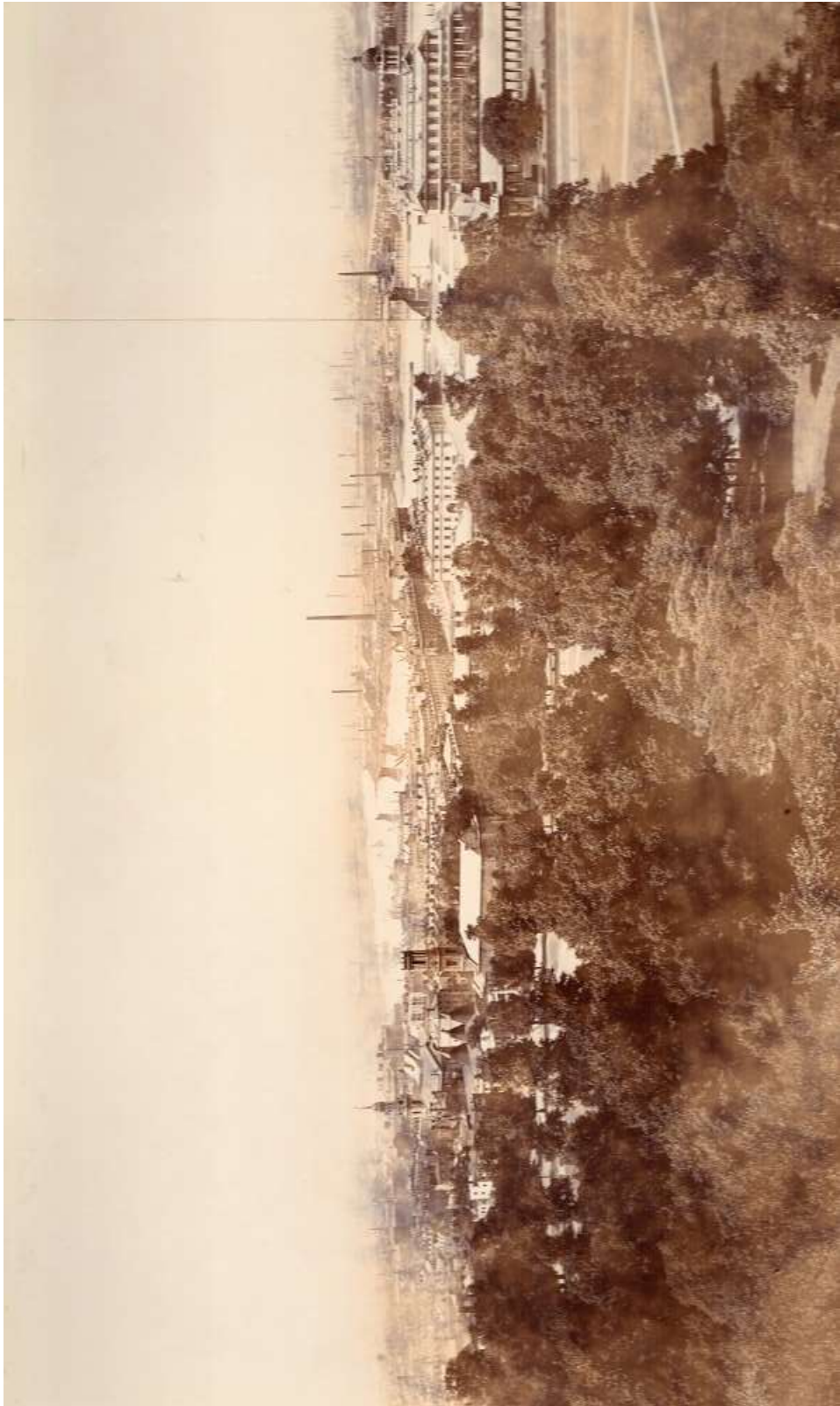
These two illustrations suggest the contrasting characters of St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church, as perceived in 1834. The portrayal of St Alfege Church strongly conveys that passage of time and the burial of the dead, while St Mary's Church's idyllic setting contains no sense of the passage of time or the finite nature of life, but rather a celebration of the present for an affluent and confident part of society. The physical position of St Mary's Church implied a social alliance between the parish vestry and the national institutions of the Royal Park and Hospital. The prestige of the parish vestry would have been enhanced by this association. The new church building borrowed historic and social cachet from its prestigious neighbours. The site itself was critical to the character of St Mary's Church and the emphasis on town improvements focused on the current growth and gentility of Greenwich, rather than the memorialisation of any historic feature of the site or past community.

The view from the high ground in Greenwich Park looking north-west towards the City of London is an iconic panorama that has been the subject of many paintings and drawings since Anthony van Wyngaerde's 1558 drawings of the Tudor palace at Greenwich.⁴⁰¹ In 1879 this view was beautifully captured in an early photograph, which may have been taken from the viewing platform on the roof of the Royal Observatory (Figure 22).⁴⁰² It is apparent that the tower of St Mary's Church made a bold addition in the foreground of this historic panorama. The close proximity of St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church is evident from the location of their towers within this view; however, the contrasting architectural styles prevented any other visual affiliation. This photograph also shows how Greenwich had become an urban, industrial area; there are many chimneys on the Isle of Dogs, towards Deptford and stretching along the riverfront eastwards. The air quality precludes any distant view of London.

Figure 22. (next page) Excerpt from a panoramic view of Greenwich and the Isle of Dogs, 1879. [photographic print, RGHT]

⁴⁰¹ Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, 64–65. Drawings held by the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. NMM have several later examples in their collection including: Johannes Vorsterman, *Greenwich and London from One Tree Hill*, c.1680, NMM ref. no. BHC1808; Peter Tillemans, *View of Greenwich and the River Thames from Greenwich Park*, 18th century, NMM ref. no. BHC1834.

⁴⁰² Ludlow, *Greenwich*, 10–11. This photograph is held by RGHT.



The location of St Mary's Church still appeared to be part of the Royal Park ensemble, but this photographic view demonstrated how the idyllic setting suggested by the 1824 print and Richardson's 1834 illustration was reliant on carefully chosen viewpoints. The images conveyed by the prints sought to capture and memorialise a version of the present that was already disappearing, as can be seen by the industrial landscape which surrounded Greenwich in 1879.

How the Local Community Used their New Church

The parish vestry had been deeply involved in the construction of the new church, and St Mary's attracted an enthusiastic local congregation who engaged with the church both as a place for communal worship and other social occasions. A celebratory concert held before the church was consecrated and in the presence of Princess Sophia Matilda provides a sense of the initial excitement about the new church. The interior of the church was a sophisticated setting for the congregation and the organisation of the pew seating suggested a social hierarchy, similar to that of St Alfege Church in 1718. In 1842, an elaborate funeral service at St Mary's treated the interment of a corpse in the crypt as a hugely significant and sombre occasion, which attracted the attention of many local inhabitants. St Mary's Church was the setting for these communal activities which showed how some of the nineteenth-century parishioners engaged with their new church.

Shortly after the completion of the new church building, on 14 May 1824, a musical festival was held in St. Mary's Church and was reported in the *Morning Post*.⁴⁰³ This 'grand performance of sacred music' was attended by Princess Sophia Matilda, who 'occupied the front of a gallery erected for the occasion over the altar, and extending to the pulpit'. It sounds like the princess herself was on display, perhaps as recognition of her pivotal role in the creation of St Mary's Church. The audience comprised well-dressed 'Nobility and Gentry of the County', who were predominantly female and listened to the choir and orchestra perform Handel's *Messiah*, as well as pieces by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. This could well have been the inaugural society event for the

⁴⁰³ 'Greenwich Music Festival', *Morning Post* (London, May 15, 1824), 16662 edition, 3.

new church and the newspaper report paints a picture of a sophisticated and glamorous gathering. In the same year, the National Gallery of Naval Art opened nearby, in the Painted Hall, and attracted over 50,000 visitors a year. This art collection went on to form the core of the National Maritime Museum's collection.⁴⁰⁴ As both events testify, Greenwich was staging sophisticated cultural events and attracting tourists. Eighteen years earlier, Greenwich had become the focus of intense national attention when the Painted Hall became the site of Nelson's lying-in-state. Thousands of people queued to see his body and his funeral procession was a state spectacle that departed from Greenwich to travel upriver to St Paul's Cathedral.⁴⁰⁵ These events highlighted the town's national maritime history for the nineteenth century, reviving its national historic status and arguably inspiring the local ambition that generated St Mary's Church and developments to the town centre during the nineteenth century.

On Saturday 25th June 1825, over a year after the musical festival, St Mary's church was consecrated by the Bishop of Oxford. This ceremony was also expected to be a popular event; the *Form of Consecration* stated that 'The Church Doors to be opened at half-past Ten o'clock; No Admission without Tickets.'⁴⁰⁷ The seating inside the church accommodated 1713 people, including 645 'free seats'. The provision of these free seats for the poorer members of the parish was a condition of the Church Building Commissioners' grant (£11,000) and of Lord Bexley's (Nicholas Vansittart) personal contribution of £800. The remaining pew seats were rented by parishioners and the

⁴⁰⁴ Timeline exhibited at The Painted Hall in the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, during the conservation of the Painted Ceiling (2017). Anya Lucas et al., *The Painted Hall; Sir James Thornhill's Masterpiece at Greenwich* (London and New York: Merrell, 2019), 111.

⁴⁰⁵ Barker, *Greenwich and Blackheath Past*, 74–78; Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, 8–15.

⁴⁰⁷ RGHT, *Form of Consecration of the Church of St Mary, Greenwich*, (Greenwich: William Richardson, 1825), 12-page booklet. The order of events was as follows: 'The Lord Bishop of Oxford, acting by a Commission from the Lord Bishop of Rochester, will proceed to the New Church, at Eleven o'clock, and be received by the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Vicar of the Parish, the Trustees of the New Church, the Churchwardens, and other attendant on the occasion. A Petition is presented to the Bishop, praying that his Lordship will consecrate the Church. The Petition is read by the Registrar; the Commission is also presented to his Lordship; and the Bishop declares that he is ready to consecrate the Church, according to the Prayer of the Petition, and in conformity with the Commission. His Lordship, being then conducted to the Vestry, puts on there his Episcopal Robes; and, proceeding thence to the West Door of the Church, attended by the Clergy, who are present, goes up the Middle Aisle to the Communion Table, the Bishop and the Clergy repeating the 24th psalm alternately, the Bishop one verse, and they another', 3-4.

income used to finance the church.⁴⁰⁸ Two sets of drawings, now held by RGHT, indicated the layout of the pews inside the church. Both sets are annotated and shaded with different colours. The first set comprises three sheets showing tightly spaced pew layouts for the nave, the gallery and the area immediately adjacent to the altar or 'Communion' as it is called on the drawings (Figure 24). They are undated, but names have been added by hand to over half the pews quite roughly, suggesting that these drawings were drafts used to aid the allocation of the pew seats, although to what purpose is unclear. Although the pews are colour coded, there is no key to explain the distinctions. The seats are labelled and there are some familiar surnames (Enderby, for instance), many women's names and also a Royal Pew marked 'HRH' on the south side of the gallery, near the pulpit. The seating area around the communion is shown at a larger scale and more carefully described. Mrs Forman, possibly the wife of trustee Edward William Forman, is right at the front (Figure 23).⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ George IV. *Regis Cap.lxxi*. An Act for erecting a new Church in the Parish of *Greenwich* in the County of *Kent*, and vesting the same and the Scite thereof in Trustees, and for making Provisions respecting the same. 24th June 1822, clause XXIX, 2384.

⁴⁰⁹ RGHT, archive box of prints of St Mary's Church; three sheets, undated.

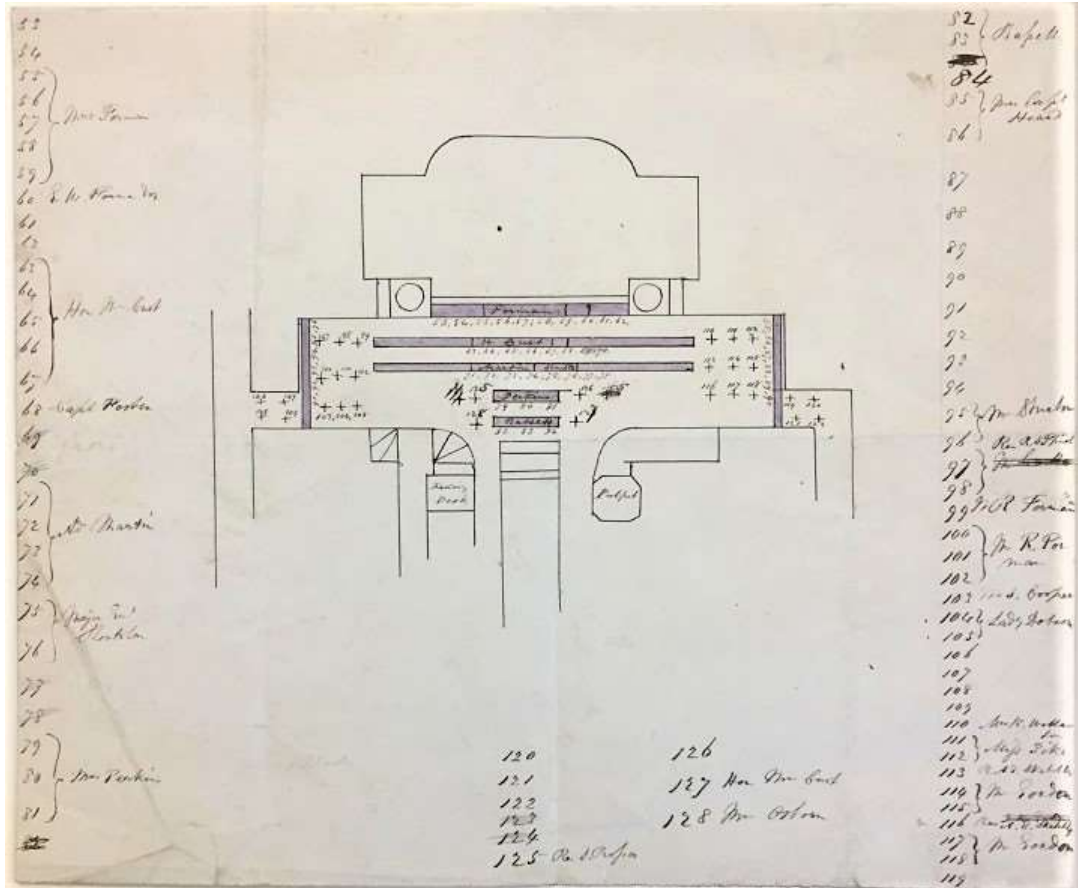


Figure 23. St Mary's Church, Greenwich, detailed seating layout for the area at the front of the church. [RIGHT]

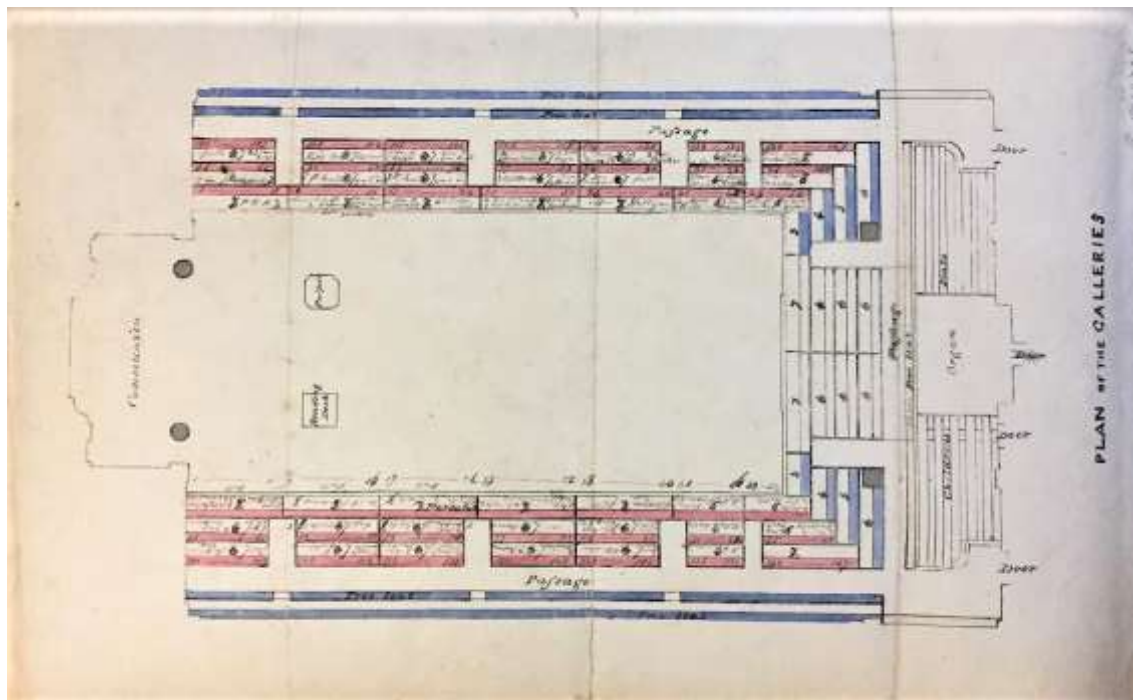
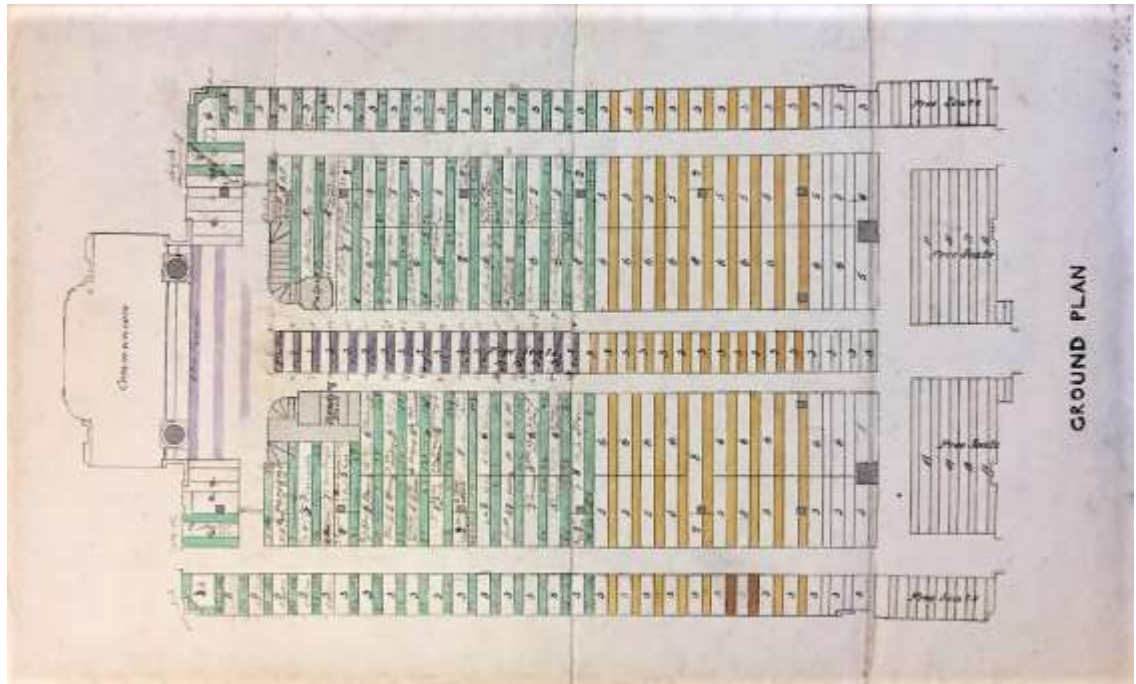


Figure 24. St Mary's Church, Greenwich, annotated internal seating layouts. [RIGHT]

The second set of drawings includes two floorplans, which show the pew layouts for the nave and gallery. These layout plans were colour coded (with different colours) to denote the rental cost of each pew and a key detailed the specific 'Prices of Sittings' (Figure 25). There are no names allocated to seats. Both plans were endorsed with a signed approval confirming compliance with the 1822 Act and dated 22 May 1826, so these drawings were prepared to gain the Commission's approval for the seating plan and pricing.⁴¹⁰ The pew layout was tightly spaced and its pricing strategy reminiscent of theatre seating arrangements, with six different price categories in addition to the free seating and children's seating. The most expensive pews were at the front of the gallery, costing £1 11s 6d and a designated royal pew was not shown.⁴¹¹ The free seating was shown more tightly spaced, with a narrow block of free seats running down the middle of the aisle, suggesting the designer was determined to demonstrate a high number of free seats. These aisle seats were possibly not installed because photographs of the interior show the central aisle without the free seats shown on the plan.

Privately rented pews had been identified as a problem during the debates leading up to the 1818 Act because they excluded from church any parishioners who did not rent a pew, whether because of lack of availability or cost. The emphasis on the provision of free seats within the 1818 Act and by the Commission denoted a desire to encourage a congregation that included all classes of people. However, the tiered pricing of the pews in St Mary's Church meant that, once seated in their allocated positions, the congregation would be clearly organised into an arrangement that described their wealth and status within local society. The first set of plans seem to indicate that the most expensive seats were the first to be allocated, with the seating immediately in front of the 'Communion' being fully booked. Interestingly this seating area was omitted in the second set of plans, which was sent to the Commission. Instead, a larger area of open space was reserved in front of the chancel. This process of pew seat allocation at St Mary's contrasts with the method employed at St Alfege Church in 1718 (see above), when an eleven-strong vestry committee was tasked with arranging the inhabitants into a

⁴¹⁰ RGHT, archive box of prints of St Mary's Church; two sheets, dated 1826.

⁴¹¹ Approximately £150 in 2019 according to <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>

suitable configuration. In the detailed 1711 pew list and accompanying letter, there was no mention of charging rent for the pews.

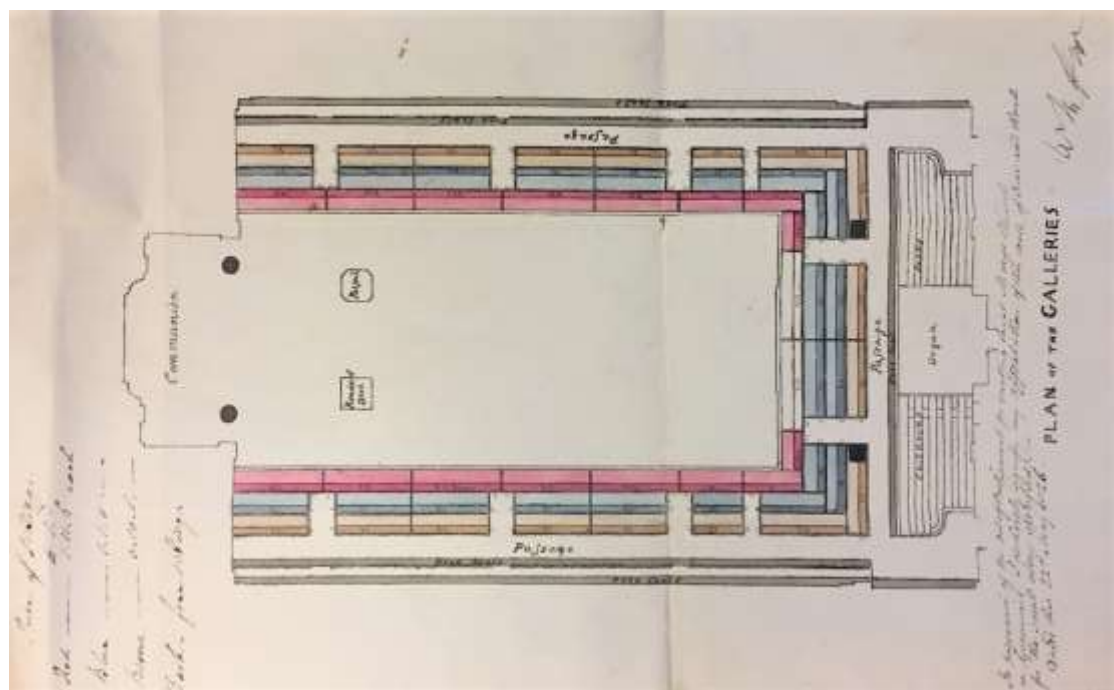
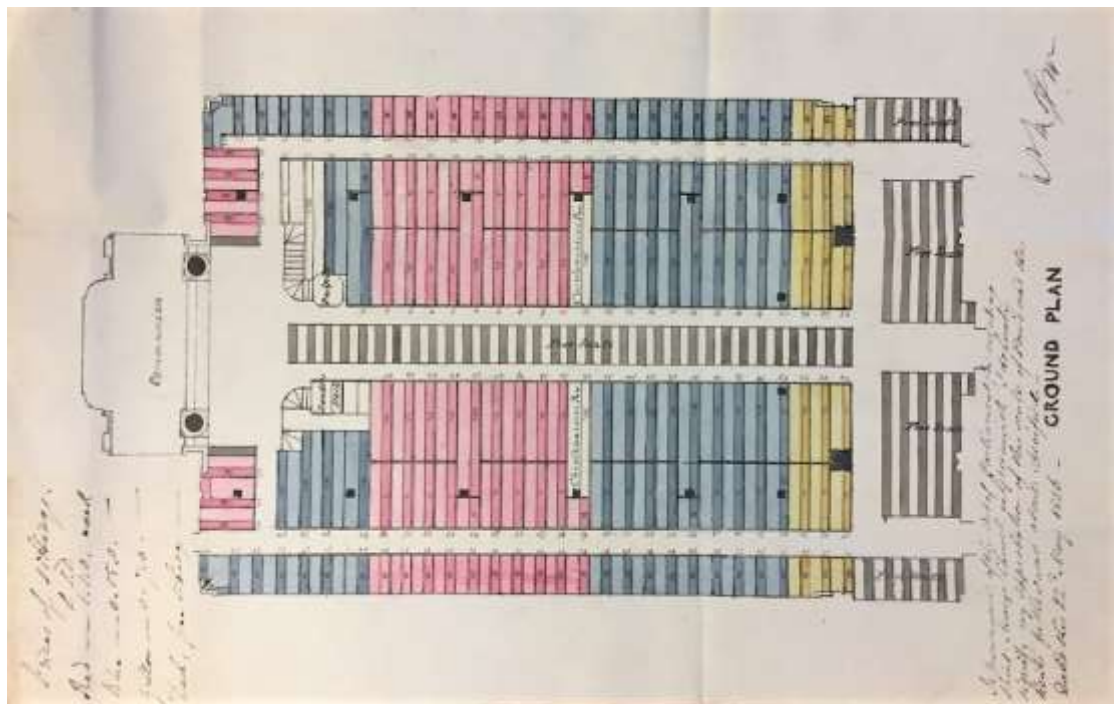


Figure 25. St Mary's Church, Greenwich, internal seating arrangements with colour wash to designate cost. [RGHT]

At St Mary's the pews were arranged within a church interior that was admired by commentators and provided a cultured setting for the congregation. This new group of parishioners were organised inside the church into a fixed seating arrangement that conveyed their wealth and status, within an elegant and fashionable interior. The architect, vicar and trustees envisaged and presented the newly formed congregation in this theatrical manner. Edward John Carlos provided a detailed architectural description of the interior in an 1829 series of articles on the new (1818 Act) churches, which was reprinted in Richardson's book five years later.⁴¹³ It was 'decorated' said Carlos, 'in a style of elegance rarely met with in the modern Churches; a considerable degree of ornament is introduced, but there is nothing superfluous or gaudy' (Figure 26). Carlos strongly emphasised the good taste displayed in the architectural design, suggesting this quality was the church building's strongest attribute.



Figure 26. Interior view of St Mary's Church. [St Alfege Church Archive]

⁴¹³ Carlos, 'New Churches - No. XXIV', 395–397; Richardson, *Greenwich*, 107–112.

The popularity of St Mary's Church during the second half of the nineteenth century seems to indicate that it was admired and well-used by its congregation. In 1866 the Rev. John Cale Miller (1814-1880) was appointed Vicar. He was an eloquent preacher who attracted large congregations.⁴¹⁴ An 1882 publication described the role of this charismatic Vicar at St Mary's Church:

This was the favourite church of the late Canon Miller; again and again he thundered forth, with his accustomed energy and determination, to a congregation so great that sufficient sitting accommodation could not be provided. The fact that "the Doctor" was going to preach, was more than enough to draw persons to St Mary's long before the service commenced; and of his sermons, which frequently occupied more than an hour in delivery, his hearers never seemed to tire.⁴¹⁵

So, during this period the Rev. John Cale Miller preferred St Mary's Church to St Alfege Church. When Miller died in 1880 the parish church lost a powerful local attraction that had ensured a full church.

From 1825 onwards, St Mary's Church was also popular with the wealthier inhabitants of Greenwich as a burial site, because the church crypt supposedly provided a secure and high-status interment. St Mary's crypt was seen almost as an extension of St Alfege Church crypt. The latest burial vault in St Alfege Church crypt is dated 1842, but the majority of the vaults had been opened in the eighteenth century and were privately owned, so by 1825 available space in the St Alfege Church crypt was limited and St Mary's Church crypt provided an alternative burial site away from the congested burial ground. An example of the sort of inhabitant who chose to be interred at St Mary's was Thomas Brocklebank, Esq. of Westcomb Park, whose death and funeral were reported in *The Morning Post* in June 1843.⁴¹⁶ The article recounted an elaborate funeral, with 'nine mourning coaches' followed by a procession of private coaches. Mr Brocklebank had been managing director of the General Steam Navigation Company, which had extensive works by Deptford Creek. The works were closed for the day (although it was Saturday) and many of his employees attended the funeral. It was an important occasion when the 'park and road to the church was lined with the inhabitants of Greenwich and Deptford,

⁴¹⁴ Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect', 42.

⁴¹⁵ Howarth, *Some Particulars Relating to the Ancient and Royal Borough of Greenwich*, 97–98.

⁴¹⁶ 'Fashionable Arrangements for the Week', *Morning Post* (London, June 19, 1843), 22595 edition.

and the church was filled with many of the most respectable residents of those towns.’ His remains were deposited ‘in the family vault at St Mary’s Church, Greenwich.’ Mr Brocklebank was one of twelve people interred in St Mary’s crypt that year and he joined 189 earlier interments, though this was a very small proportion of the overall parish burials.⁴¹⁷ Notably, the cholera epidemic of 1849 made little difference to the annual rate of burials at St Mary’s, possibly because of the substantial fee charged for interment.⁴¹⁸ Unlike many other London crypts and burial grounds, St Mary’s crypt was not closed in 1859 in response to the 1850s Burial Acts, so it continued to provide a local protected burial space for the wealthier inhabitants throughout the nineteenth century.⁴¹⁹ As a result, the crypt only gradually declined in popularity, from its initial status as a high class burial space set in an idyllic landscape, which avoided the overcrowding of the parish burial ground, to something more macabre.

Falling out of Fashion

Although locally St Mary’s Church seems to have been popular during the nineteenth century, its architectural style became outdated by the middle of the century, particularly for Anglican churches. St Mary’s Church was built towards the end of the neo-classical period, when its elegant styling and picturesque setting were already falling out of fashion and, where churches were concerned, also becoming the subject of moral criticism.⁴²⁰

The later 1830s were to see the emergence of a wholly new style of architecture, especially favoured for ecclesiastical buildings. A Gothic Revival in church architecture

⁴¹⁷ Calculated from a ‘Schedule of Coffins’ prepared by Cluttons in 1935.

⁴¹⁸ Three of the coffins listed in Cluttons’ ‘Schedule of Coffins’ are dated 1849. The number of burials recorded for the parish in 1849 was 1040 (Sutton, *The Effect on Mortality of the 1848-1849 Cholera Epidemic in the Parish of St Alfege, within the Registration District of Greenwich*, p. 28, University of Strathclyde, 2011.)

⁴¹⁹ CERC, file 100581-2 and LMA Q/BRN/7. This schedule of coffins in St Mary’s crypt was compiled in 1935 by Cluttons, and showed that regular burials in St Mary’s crypt continued until 1889; the last occurring in 1914. In 1859, when St Alfege Church crypt was closed, St Mary’s crypt would not have been full and perhaps remained open for that reason.

⁴²⁰ Crook, *The Dilemma of Style: Architectural Ideas from the Picturesque to the Post-Modern*, 40–45. The end of Chapter 1, ‘The Consequences of the Picturesque’, and the beginning of Chapter 2, ‘Pugin and Ecclesiology’ give an explanation of this transition.

was led by Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-1852) and his 1836 publication of *Contrasts*.⁴²¹ This polemical work was inspired by Pugin's low opinion of the 1818 Church Building Commission's architectural output and the theological ideas developed by the Ecclesiologists.⁴²² The moral associations attributed to medieval, or Gothic, architecture caused neo-classical architecture to become increasingly discredited from the 1840s onwards. The focus on Gothic architecture also signified a fundamental shift in liturgical priorities within the Anglican church service. The Ecclesiologists, who started as an undergraduate society at Cambridge University (the Cambridge Camden Society), were medievalists who sought to create churches that were imbued with symbolism and an inspirational, spiritual atmosphere. Medieval churches usually attached great importance to the character and size of the chancel.⁴²³ The Ecclesiologists' aims strongly contrasted with the practical guiding principles of Wren's eighteenth-century 'auditory' church (designed to ensure the congregation could see and hear the preacher clearly), which had also been adopted for the early nineteenth-century Commissioner's churches.⁴²⁴ St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church were both examples of such auditory churches. In a similar way to Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission, the Ecclesiologists sought a more authentic mode of Christian worship through architectural reference to an earlier era, but they chose to emulate the British medieval era rather than the early Christianity practised around the Mediterranean during the late Roman era. Here again, an ancient form of Christian worship was memorialised through the use of a particular architectural style invoking pre-Reformation Christian worship (and indeed Pugin was himself a Roman Catholic convert). The early Gothic Revival churches reflecting the ideas of Pugin and the Ecclesiologists were criticised by evangelical Anglicans for their similarities with Roman Catholic churches.⁴²⁵

So, from the 1840s onwards St Mary's Church was out of step with dominant architectural thought and the Ecclesiologists' new theological concepts. Building alterations made to St Mary's Church at this time included, notably, the addition of

⁴²¹ Rosemary Hill, 'Pugin, God's Architect', *The Guardian*, February 24, 2012, sec. Books, accessed April 14, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/feb/24/pugin-gothic-architect>.

⁴²² Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600-1900*, 133.

⁴²³ Addleshaw and Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, 203–209.

⁴²⁴ Whyte, *Unlocking the Church*, 42–43.

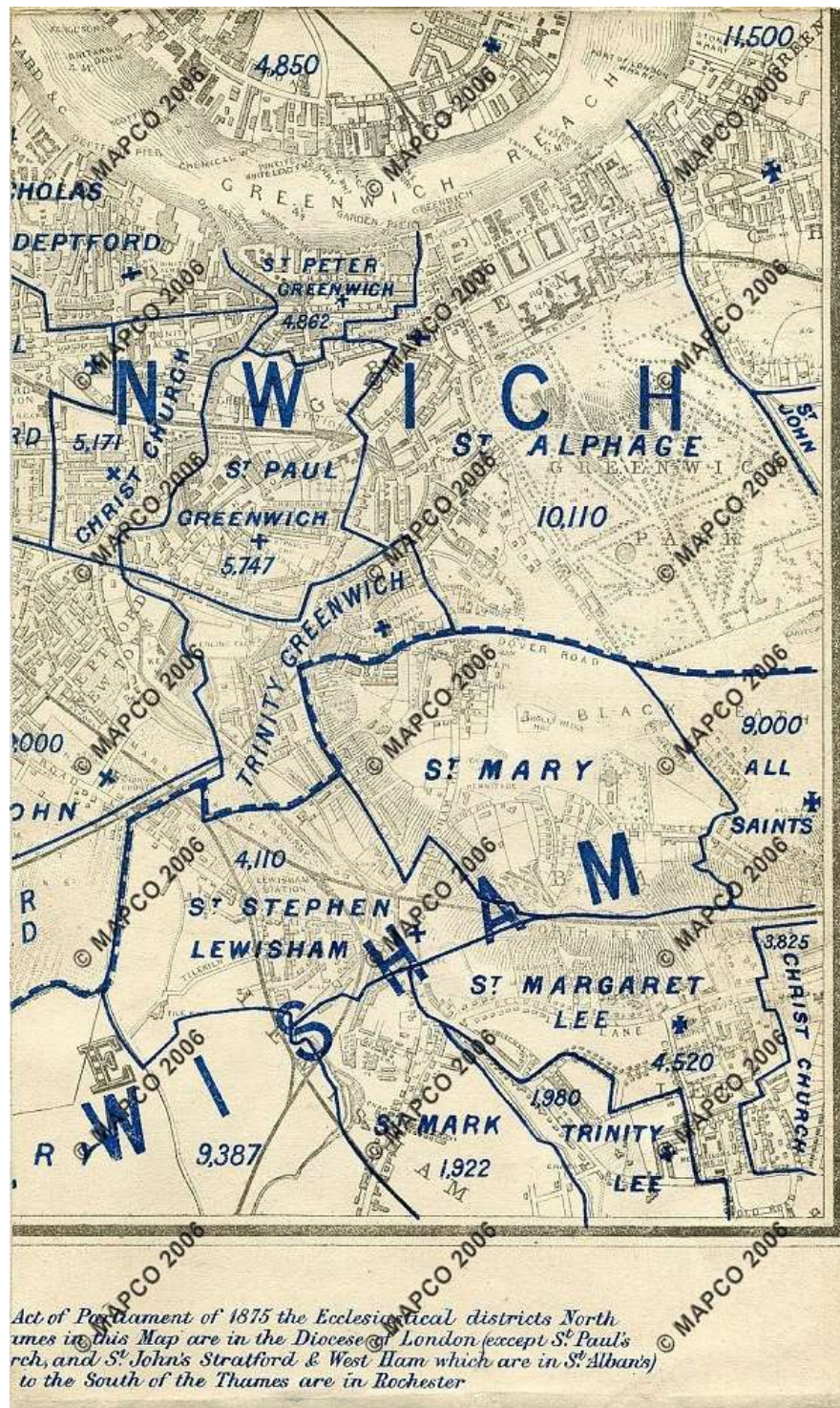
⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4–8. Discussion of the passionate responses to Littlemore Church, Oxford, in the 1830s.

stained glass to the chancel side windows, which would have cast coloured light into the chancel area and probably given the altar a hint of the medieval atmosphere favoured by the Ecclesiologists. No less important however, were population pressures. During the nineteenth century the ancient parish of St Alfege was gradually divided into smaller parishes, and new churches and chapels were being built to serve these communities. For instance, in 1840, a new parish was formed to the east of Greenwich, towards Woolwich, and between 1846-48 a new Gothic style parish church (Christ Church) was built on Trafalgar Road, under a mile away from the churches of St Alfege and St Mary.⁴²⁶ By 1903 there were eight smaller parishes within the boundary of the ancient parish of St Alfege, each with its own new church in the Gothic style (33Figure 27). Furthermore, in 1869 the Royal Hospital for Seamen closed to residents, reducing the population of the town centre in Greenwich.

An 1870s map of Greenwich also shows how many competing chapels and churches, of various denominations, there were within walking distance of Greenwich town centre. Among them was a Roman Catholic Church situated nearby on Crooms Hill: 'Our Ladye Star of the Sea', also built in the Gothic style. Begun in 1846 and complete by 1851, this church was designed by architect William Wardell, a pupil of Pugin; some of its fixtures, including the stained-glass window, were even designed by Pugin.⁴²⁷ Completed only twenty-six years after St Mary's Church was consecrated and a short walk away across Greenwich Park, 'Our Ladye Star of the Sea' was at the forefront of the new wave of architectural and ecclesiastical scholarship in 1851. The Gothic Revival style was in the ascendant.

⁴²⁶ The North West Kent Family History Society lists the details of all the Greenwich churches and chapels on their website: <https://www.nwkhfs.org.uk/green-st-green-longfield/greenwich> (accessed 12 July 2020). Christchurch was converted into a community centre in the mid 1980s and a new modern church was added at its east end. <https://www.explorechurches.org/church/christ-church-east-greenwich> (accessed 12 July 2020)

⁴²⁷ www.greenwichcatholic.org/?page_id=312 (accessed 20 Oct 2019); 'The Catholic Emancipation Acts of 1829 saw the beginnings of a formal Catholic Restoration.'



33Figure 27. Excerpt from 1877 map showing the parish boundaries. [Edward Stanford, London, <https://mapco.net/parish/parish.htm>, accessed 3 Aug 2020]

When St Mary's Church was built in 1823, the 1818 Church Commission had still favoured a neo-classical style of architecture. This changed, however, and most of the later Commissioners' churches were in the Gothic style. The 1818 Church Commission's churches built between 1818 and 1856, of all styles, have largely been overlooked by architectural historians. John Summerson noted this anomaly in his Foreword to M. H. Port's book, which examined the history of the 1818 Commission and tabulated the numerous churches built by this Commission.⁴²⁹ It is unclear whether this anomaly was caused by the diversity of the church designs, the professed focus on economy and the resulting design simplicity, or simply the huge number of churches within this group. However, a recent article has suggested that the Victorian distaste for the pragmatic approach of the 1818 Church Building Commission, and the opprobrium cast upon them by the Ecclesiologists, has unduly influenced the poor reputation of these 'Late Georgian Churches'.⁴³⁰ This poor reputation probably also contributed to the architecture of St Mary's Church being undervalued in the early twentieth century. It was not until 1914 that the first positive and influential book on neo-classical architecture in Great Britain was published, by Professor Albert Richardson, the architect of the 1946-53 restoration of St Alfege Church.⁴³¹ This book remains a valuable reference for buildings of that era and demonstrates Richardson's interest in architectural history early in his career.

St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church 1880 - 1935

To understand why St Mary's disappeared and St Alfege remains in this dynamic period of change, it is important to understand just how sharply the fortunes of St Alfege's and St Mary's diverged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1880 parish attention returned to St Alfege Church. In August the Rev. Brooke Lambert (1834-1901) succeeded the Rev. John Cale Miller, becoming vicar of Greenwich and the

⁴²⁹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 7–8.

⁴³⁰ Webster, 'Late Georgian Churches: "Absolutely Wretched" or the Triumph of Rational Pragmatism?'

⁴³¹ A. E. Richardson, *Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland during the Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries* (London, B. T. Batsford, Ltd.; New York, C. Scribner's sons, 1914), accessed August 31, 2018, <http://archive.org/details/monumentalclassi00rich>. Richardson mentioned Basevi's two churches, St Mary's and St Thomas's, his Fitzwilliam Museum (1845) and residential work at Belgrave Square (1825-40).

incumbent for St Alfege Church and its chapel of ease, St Mary's Church.⁴³² Lambert was concerned with social reform and had written a book entitled *Pauperism* (1871) after his time as vicar at St Mark's, Whitechapel (1866-1871). He had also carried out building restoration work at his two previous parish churches and shortly after arriving in Greenwich he commissioned the architect Basil Champneys (1842-1935) to prepare a report on St Alfege Church.⁴³³ Champneys was born in Whitechapel while his father was rector at St Mary's Church, Whitechapel; he and Lambert shared an ecclesiastical background that had focused on social reform.

Champneys' report praised the architecture of the church and described it as 'an excellent congregational church', and considered it fortunate that 'no attempt has been made to Gothicise it.'⁴³⁴ He advocated the removal of the stained-glass east window (to be replaced by a painting) and additions to Hawksmoor's reredos (the carved wooden columns in the apse), which he considered 'incomplete'. His recommendations were largely followed, with the exception of those concerning the apse. The subsequent building work, completed in 1887, comprised repairs to the roof, installation of new heating and lighting systems, redecoration, improvements to the choir area, organ repairs and general woodwork repairs. The alterations to the furniture and fittings in the choir area elevated the role of the chancel and altar, as well as increasing the separation of the nave and chancel, in line with the Ecclesiological precepts. This fairly costly 'renovation' project thus adapted St Alfege Church in line with late Victorian taste, to some extent, while St Mary's Church languished.⁴³⁵

During this period at the end of the nineteenth century, there is no record of St Mary's Church receiving any architectural attention from the parish community, after the

⁴³² Ronald Bayne and C A Creffield, 'Lambert, Brooke (1834–1901), Social Reformer and Church of England Clergyman,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34381>.

⁴³³ M S Briggs and Michael W Brooks, 'Champneys, Basil (1842–1935), Architect and Author,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32357>.

⁴³⁴ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 7; 'Report of Mr Basil Champneys on St Alphege Church, Greenwich', 8 August 1881, p. 1.

⁴³⁵ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 7, 'Renovation of the Parish Church of St Alfege, Greenwich. Final Report.' Dated July 1888, the introductory text refers to the project as the 'Renovation of the **old** Parish Church'; the project cost £2535 7s 4d – approximately £331,970 in 2019.

installation of the stained glass noted above. The next surviving report on the condition of St Mary's church came in 1917 when both St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church were inspected for damage following a huge explosion in January 1917 at a munitions factory in Silvertown, approximately two miles away from Greenwich (near the present-day Excel Centre).⁴³⁶ In February, the architects and surveyors Thomas Dinwiddy & Sons reported on the extent of the damage to the churches caused by this explosion, to the Vicar of Greenwich. St Mary's had suffered more damage than St Alfege Church, but the main structure was found to be sound. Dinwiddy listed 43 broken panes of glass and 11 lead comes (profiled strips used to join pieces of stained glass) that needed to be made good and he advised that the 'glass and leadwork should be repaired, and a claim for the cost made to the Ministry of Munitions.'⁴³⁷ There is no record of whether the windows were repaired; however the report suggests that in 1917, damage to the windows aside, the church building fabric was in reasonable condition. Soon after in June 1919, however, St Mary's Church was closed. The bell, organ and clock were removed and sold during 1920.⁴³⁸ A letter written by Churchwardens J. East and W. C. Fretwell in February 1920 described the 'adverse balance' of the church accounts. This was caused by:

A reduction in the amount contributed by the Seat-holders, and some exceptional expenditure; while with regard to St Mary's we may remind you that although the Church was closed for public worship June last, and notwithstanding the fact that the Rev. Youngman with his accustomed generosity gave Mr Sayle a cheque to defray all the known expenses up to the date of his leaving the parish, there are still certain expenses going on, such as Insurance which must be kept up, and the Church requires careful watching and dusting from time to time.⁴³⁹

The parish finances were clearly not in a good condition and St Mary's Church had become a financial burden and security problem. Furthermore, after the church's closure, the crypt had become a ghoulish attraction. A local newspaper reported 'boys playing in the vaults, lying in the open coffins and making groaning noises to frighten

⁴³⁶ Jerry White, *Zeppelin Nights: London in the First World War* (London: Bodley Head, 2014).

⁴³⁷ St Alfege Church, Archive Box 6; letter dated 16 Feb 1917, from Donald Dinwiddy to the Rev. F. J. Tackley.

⁴³⁸ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 6; letters dated 16 Oct 1920 and 6 Dec 1920, from Mears and Stainbank to Mr Fretwell (churchwarden). St Mary's single bell was bought by Mears and Stainbank, for £53.14s.8d, and removed from the church tower, by them, in December 1920.

⁴³⁹ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 6; letter dated 28 Feb 1920, from J. East and W. C. Fretwell (churchwardens) to Mr Sewell.

their friend'.⁴⁴⁰ In 1932 five men were charged with the theft of lead from St Mary's crypt.⁴⁴¹ The accessibility of the coffins in the crypt put them at risk of desecration. Furthermore, the forgotten memorial plaques in the disused church above made the bodies somewhat anonymous and reduced the significance of the crypt as a memorial space.

The PCC tried to find an alternative use for St Mary's Church. An application, from 'the Vicar, Wardens and Parochial Church Council', to convert the church building into a parish hall was received by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1925.⁴⁴² This was however hampered by the presence of the crypt and its 357 coffins. The most recent of these had been interred as recently as 1914 but the bulk were from 1827-1847, with an average of 10.5 burials per year for those twenty years.⁴⁴³ As the Secretary to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners discovered, there were 'certain freehold interests subsisting in parts of the church independent of the freehold estate of the church proper'. The burial vaults were, in other words, still the property of the purchaser's families. The permanence of the burial vaults, and the memory of those interred, limited the treatment of the building as a whole. As the Secretary commented:

Structurally Church and Vaults may be one but legally, it would seem, Church and Vaults are separate properties, as much separate in fact as if they existed on separate sites, in which case there would be no difficulty or question of propriety.⁴⁴⁴

In essence, the parish did not own the burial vaults and this was to significantly limit what could be done with the church building above. The Secretary also noted that, because of the presence of the vaults, the Home Secretary's permission would be required to convert the church into a parochial hall. By January 1927 this conversion scheme had been abandoned and the Church Council informed the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that the Seamen's Hospital Society were interested in buying the church. In 1929, the parish

⁴⁴⁰ Tony Lord, 'Boys would lie in the graves and be scared', *The Mercury*, 4 June 2008. Lord refers to articles in the *Kentish Mercury* between 1919 and 1936. Lord also recounts witnessing the unveiling of the statue of King William IV, as a child in the summer of 1936.

⁴⁴¹ '5 Arrests Among Old Coffins', *The Daily Telegraph* (London, April 30, 1932).

⁴⁴² CERC, file 100581-1, application letter dated 10 August 1920 and accompanying drawings describing the proposed layout.

⁴⁴³ Calculated from the 'Late Church of St. Mary, Greenwich; Schedule of Coffins in the Crypt' prepared for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1935. Copies held by CERC and LMA.

⁴⁴⁴ CERC, file 100581-1, undated handwritten notes on the parish application.

obtained authorisation from the diocese, in the form of a faculty, to apply the £611 raised from the sale of St Mary's organ, bell and clock towards the purchase and renovation of a new parish hall.⁴⁴⁵

The Rev. O. H. Thomas, Vicar of Greenwich, wrote to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in November 1933. He noted that St Mary's Church required repair work to 'keep it a safe structure' and went on to describe the proposed sale to the Seamen's Hospital Society. Thomas was concerned because 'it seems no consecrated building can be sold to an outside corporation until all bodies are removed and re-interred in consecrated ground'. Indeed, despite the church's closure in 1919, I have found no record of the church or site undergoing a process then, or since, to remove its consecrated status. The Seamans Hospital Society had offered the Vicar £1,800 for the church and site but were not prepared to pay for the removal of the bodies; however, they thought that 'the Office of Works would be able to get the ground, and their workmen do the work at considerably less cost than Undertakers'.⁴⁴⁶ The Vicar was carefully negotiating with the Seamen's Hospital and the Office of Works, and the treatment of the bodies in the crypt seems to have been primarily a financial consideration, rather than one of concern for the dead. The following year the Seamen's Hospital Society proposed a new scheme:

The Office of Works has offered them the Statue of William IV from London Bridge, so they will grass over the site and at this end of the Church, where no bodies lie, they will erect the Statue, fence in the ground, and I believe use it for a nurses ground for sitting out.⁴⁴⁷

The Vicar's report on this scheme to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners shied away from mentioning the demolition of the church and framed it as the benevolent provision of a garden area for local nurses to use in their rest periods. For the Vicar, the issue of the bodies in the crypt was overshadowed by his anxiety about the

⁴⁴⁵ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 7, faculty dated 18 December 1929. The Church of England faculty process is administered by the Diocese and the incumbent is obliged to gain permission for proposed building alterations.

⁴⁴⁶ CERC, file 100581-1, letter 21 November 1933.

⁴⁴⁷ CERC, file 100581-1, 9 November 1934. The EC Secretary has added a file note stating that he has 'enquired at the Home Office' and that the sale requires their consent, however, this 'wd doubtless be given'.

safety of the site and his desire to free the Parish Church Council from their financial responsibility for the building.

The 1930s were a time of severe economic depression, so it is understandable that the Vicar was anxious about the financial aspects. In 1933, on an application form that sought a grant for St Alfege Church from the City Parochial Charities (Ecclesiastical) Fund, the Rev. O. H. Thomas mentioned poverty within the parish twice. He described the character of the parish as 'a few middle-class position, but majority are very poor' and when asked about any 'special circumstances' he responded that 'the parish on the whole is very poor: the church is one of the finest possible'.⁴⁴⁸ Again in 1935, on a similar application form, he described the parish as 'mostly poor'. He may have been exaggerating the poverty of his parish, to appear deserving of a grant, but he certainly lacked significant donors within the parish.

The Rev. A. G. L'Estrange had written in 1886 that Greenwich had declined during the preceding century and had not retained its 'commanding position'.⁴⁴⁹ A high proportion of 'very poor' inhabitants are shown around the church on Charles Booth's 1898-1899 Poverty Map, particularly towards the river in the parish of St Peter, but the parish of St Alfege, Greenwich, which was towards the south and east of the church, appeared to be largely middle class (Figure 28).⁴⁵⁰ So, Greenwich and St Alfege Church were in need of promotion, and their historical connections and stories were valuable currency.

More particularly, Thomas had an urgent problem on his hands in the main parish church: death watch beetle had been found in the gallery woodwork at St Alfege Church and urgent repairs were needed to the organ. A major fundraising effort was launched in 1933 with the Vicar and churchwardens appealing for donations both locally and internationally. Their printed appeal letter read:

⁴⁴⁸ CERC, file ECE/7/1/2947, application form dated 12 July 1933.

⁴⁴⁹ Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, *The Palace and the Hospital, or Chronicles of Greenwich*. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1886), 275.

⁴⁵⁰ Charles Booth's London Poverty maps and police notebooks are available online <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/17/-0.0086/51.4808/100/0> (accessed 20 Jan 2020) and the archive is inscribed into UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

Dear Sir,

The old Church of St. Alfege at Greenwich, with its historical associations badly needs help. The famous Tallis Organ is in desperate need of repair and death watch beetle has been found in the timbers of the Gallery of the Church.

If you are interested in historical buildings and in the preservation of this old Church, with its associations with the Tudor Monarchs / Wolfe will you help by sending a donation towards the sum of £2,000 which must be raised to put it into complete repair?

The people of Greenwich are very poor and although those who can will contribute generously we cannot hope to raise the whole £2,000 without assistance from friends outside the Parish.

Yours faithfully, Vicar⁴⁵¹

In 1933 these historical associations of the church were employed to attract donors and a printed booklet on the church expanded this tactic further.⁴⁵² The promotion of the church through its connections with several nationally renowned historical figures was intended to extend its appeal beyond the parish. The focus was on the perpetuation of this type of popular memorialisation through storytelling, rather than on the building's more mundane role as a parish church. Between 1931 and 1936 St Alfege Church was granted a total of £1100 towards the repairs, from the 'City Parochial Charities Fund ' and St Mary's Church is not mentioned on any of the documentation.⁴⁵³ The repair work to the St Alfege Church gallery was completed in May 1934, while the demolition of St Mary's Church was under negotiation.

⁴⁵¹ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 7; Church warden, Mr F. H. Sewell's, extensive and worldwide correspondence concerning the appeal, during 1933 and 1934, is also in this box.

⁴⁵² 'St Alfege, Greenwich', May 1933; The Preface ends: 'We make no apology for giving the full history contained in this appeal, since we believe that the historical associations of the old Church must be of interest to many who may never have been to Greenwich and yet who wish to help in its restoration.' 3.

⁴⁵³ CERC, file ECE/7/1/2947; equivalent to approximately £78,326 in 2019. St Mary's church is not mentioned on any of the seven application forms submitted by the Vicar for these grants.

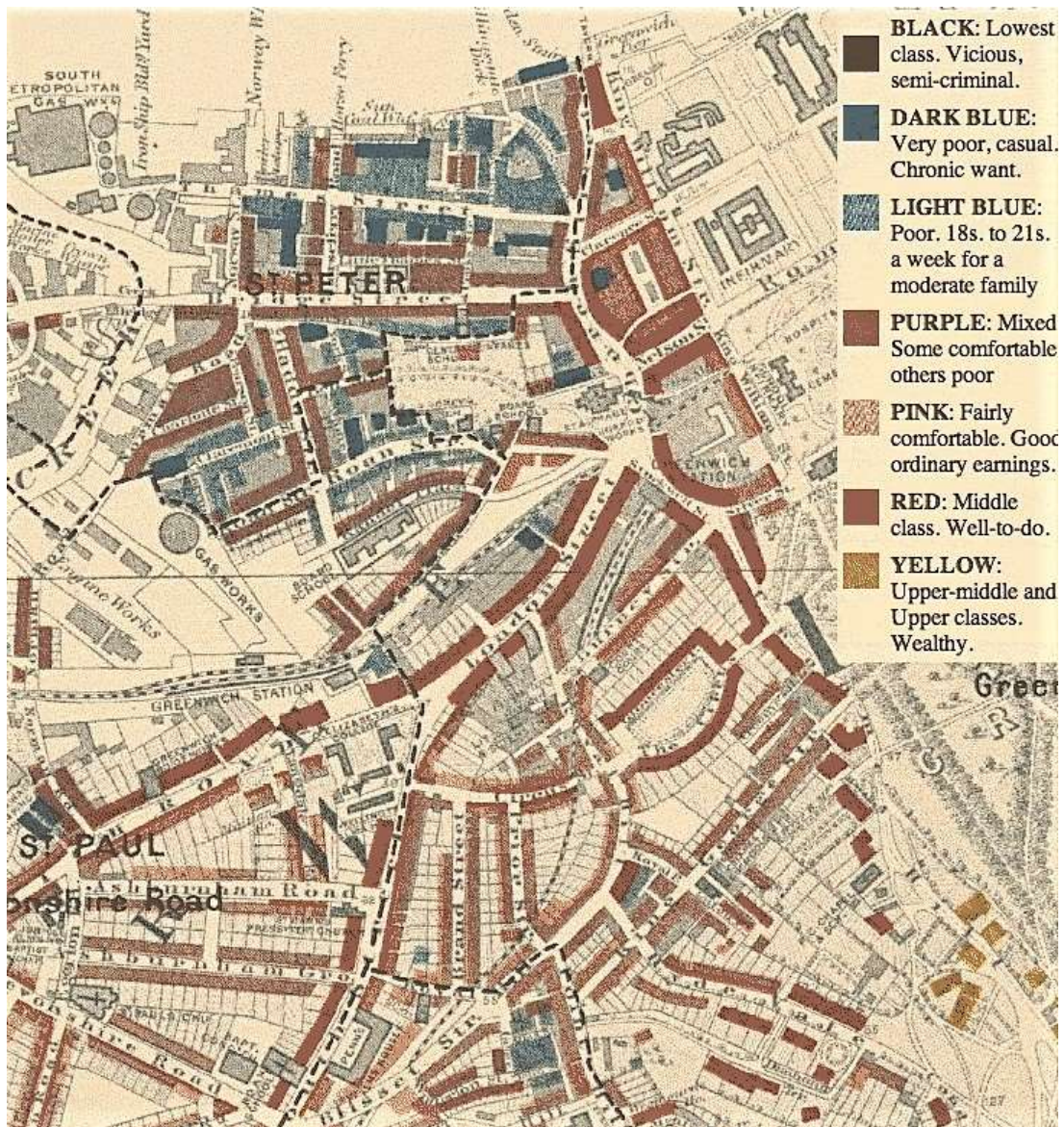


Figure 28. Excerpt from Charles Booth's 1898-99 Poverty Map showing Greenwich.
 [from <https://greenwich.wiki.zoho.com/Greenwich-Poverty.html>]

Demolition Era

From the above, it is already clear that the paths of the two parish churches of Greenwich diverged radically in the early twentieth century. The Vicar and Churchwardens campaigned ardently to protect the building fabric of St Alfege Church, whilst at the same time negotiating the demolition of St Mary's Church. Indeed, the site of St Mary's Church became more valuable in March 1934, when the adjacent building, the old Naval Boys School, was taken over by the Office of Works to be developed into the National Maritime Museum.

In 1935 St Mary's Church featured in *The Architect and Building News*, a longstanding specialist journal then edited by Sir John Summerson. In April they published a photograph of the church's west façade and a caption announcing its forthcoming demolition. In June they incorporated a supplement that included the only architectural drawings of the church that I have found (Figure 29).⁴⁵⁵ This supplement was no. 41 in a series entitled 'Obituaries of Buildings' but the text, whilst praising the architecture, does not express any regret. A more sympathetic and concerned article appeared in 1936, written by A. R. Martin – a local historian and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.⁴⁵⁶ Martin made a brief reference to the future plans for the site and noted that the crypt was to be filled in, and gave a thorough account of the church building.

Figure 29. (next page) St Mary's Church; architectural elevations and sections [The Architect and Building News, June 1935].

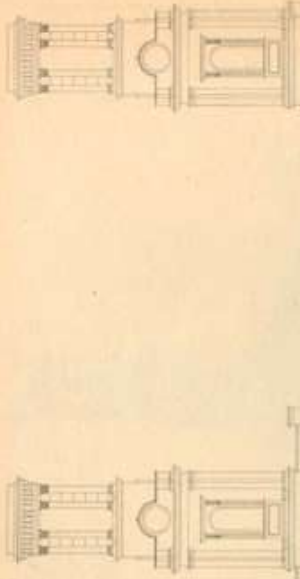
⁴⁵⁵ 'Obituaries of Buildings, No. 41, St Mary's Church, Greenwich.' *The Architect and Building News*, April 26, 1935, 83 includes a photograph of St Mary's church with a caption: 'The church of St Mary, Greenwich, which is to be demolished, is an early work of George Basevi, Soane's favourite pupil, and the architect of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The church was finished in 1825. It is proposed to clear the site, grass it over, and erect upon it the statue of William IV recently removed from King William Street in the City.'

⁴⁵⁶ Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect.'

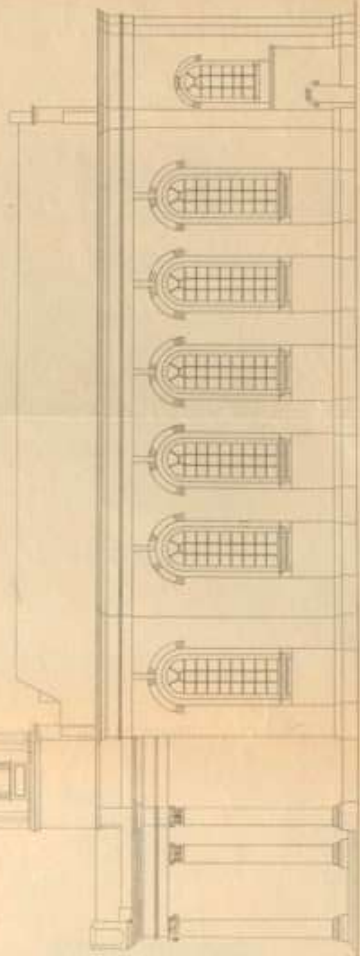
ST MARY'S • GREENWICH PARK •

G BASEVI ARCHT 1823

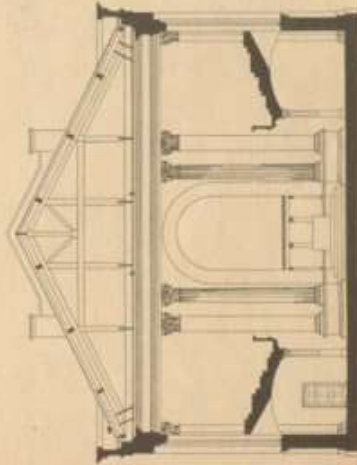
Scale: 1/4" = 1' 0"



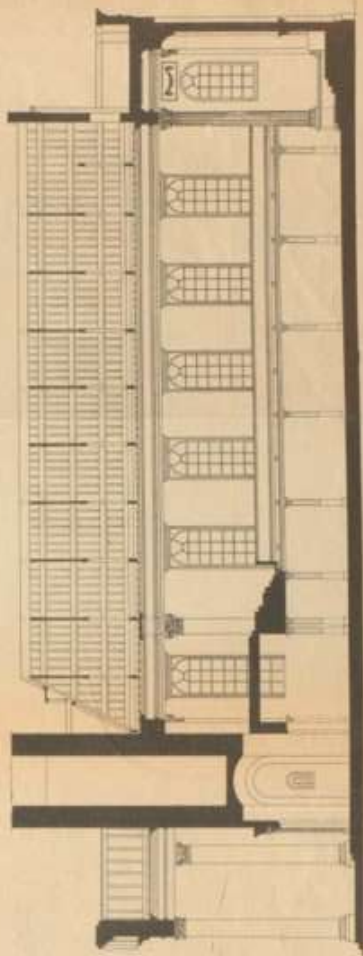
FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



CROSS SECTION



LONGITVDNAL SECTION

‘Although of no outstanding architectural merit’ he concluded:

the building, with its simple and effective tower, certainly adds to the beauty of the view from the high ground in Greenwich Park, and combines with the Hospital buildings and the tower of St Alfege in providing a panorama perhaps of its kind unrivalled in England.⁴⁵⁷

St Mary’s Church was here, again, appreciated chiefly for its contribution to a picturesque composition generated by its location, rather than as a parish asset or an architectural gem. Both these 1935 articles sought to record the existence of St Mary’s Church for posterity, by publishing a type of architectural memorial for the building. Martin regretted the demolition of St Mary’s but the *The Architect and Building News* did not question the logic of the church’s demolition; they simply recorded its passing.

In December 1934, Mr E de Normann of the Office of Works wrote a lengthy letter to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, following his visit to St Mary’s Church. He outlined the problems, as he saw them, with the demolition of the church. He felt a scheme whereby the church was demolished but the crypt remained intact would be costly (£2600) and result in a large grassy mound to cover the crypt, which would be a liability and possibly unsanitary in the future. He believed ‘By far the better plan would be to demolish the vaults at the time of demolition of the church leaving the dead in situ’. This had the advantage that the site could then accommodate the statue of William IV, as had been proposed by the Office of Works. He ended by stating that the Office of Works scheme was reliant on ‘any private rights in the vaults having previously been extinguished’. The Secretary made a handwritten note on this letter:

The writer seems to think the whole object of the EC PCC Bp Incumbt & etc [Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Parochial Parish Council, Bishop, Incumbent] is to make provision for his statue. If we could get rid of the private rights and remove the bodies we could doubtless get a good price for the site. It is presumably only on account of the disabilities that there is any questions of giving away the site. Whoever takes the site will have to take it subject to the existing rights.⁴⁵⁸

So, the task was to identify and mitigate any ‘private rights’ to the burial vault, although the Secretary was clearly frustrated by the financial restrictions these private rights

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁵⁸ CERC, 100581-1, letter from Mr E. de Normann of the Office of Works to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, dated 3 Dec 1934, handwritten note added by the Secretary.

imposed. On 24 January 1935 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners published a notice in the national and local press advertising their draft scheme for the 'taking down of the Church of St Mary, Greenwich and the disposal of the site thereof'. They further advised that 'Copies of the draft Scheme can be obtained from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Office by the representatives' relations or friends of any persons whose remains have been interred in the vaults aforesaid'. Any objections needed to be submitted within 20 days.⁴⁵⁹ Miss Susan Anne Robertson managed to submit her objection letter by February 6th, and subsequently her relative Mr E. G. Robertson wrote fourteen detailed and lengthy letters between 1935 and 1937.⁴⁶⁰ Mr Robertson argued for a landscaping scheme that was more suggestive of a memorial garden, with a surrounding hedge separating the area from the open park. He also wanted it to be possible to locate specific graves and poignantly remarked:

I have several relations buried in those vaults, including my grandfather (a Commissioner of Greenwich Hospital), my grandmother, an uncle, &, besides my father's first wife, my father, & I have already had an experience of unknown or unidentified graves – those of two of my sons in France – which I have no wish to repeat.⁴⁶¹

As a result of Mr Robertson's persistence, a survey of the coffins in the crypt was carried out and a numbered, typed schedule produced. There are ten people with the surname Robertson listed in the schedule of coffins in the crypt.

The enormous loss of life of the First World War (1914-18), referred to by Mr Robertson, was within living memory of all those involved in the demolition of St Mary's Church. Their surprisingly pragmatic attitude to the bodies interred in the crypt of St Mary's Church occurred within the context of the shocking death toll and national memorial projects associated with the First World War. The correspondence conveys a

⁴⁵⁹ CERC, file 100581, newspaper clippings of a 'Public Notice' issued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (EC) and dated 22 January 1935, from the *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, (24 January 1935), and *The Kentish Independent and Kentish Mail*, and *Kentish Mercury* (25 January). The Notice states that 'Objections to the draft Scheme must reach the office of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners not later than the 13th February, 1935.'

⁴⁶⁰ CERC, file 100581-1, letter from Miss Susan Anne Robertson (from Sussex) to the Secretary of the EC dated 6 Feb 1935, entitled 'Protest in respect to the Vaults'. CERC, file 100581-2, letters from Mr E. Robertson (from Norfolk) to the Secretary of the EC, dated 22 February 1935, 1 March 1935, 18 March 1935, 9 May 1935, 18 June 1935, 19 June 1935, 29 June 1935, 11 April 1936, 13 May 1936, 8 July 1936, 13 August 1936, 31 August 1936, 6 January 1937, 26 April 1937.

⁴⁶¹ CERC, 100581-2, Letter to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners dated 18th March 1935.

sense of resignation on the part of the Secretary to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and a brisk efficiency from the Office of Works. Their primary aim was to find a design solution for St Mary's site that would satisfy Mr Robertson sufficiently for him to withdraw his objection.⁴⁶² The result was a complex compromise.

In 1935 a complicated arrangement was agreed between the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Office of Works and the Seamen's Hospital Society, who owned the building and land immediately to the north of St Mary's Church. The demolition of the church and the rehabilitation of the site carefully avoided removing the coffins or desecrating the site, and furthermore prohibited any commercial development of the site. During the demolition process the coffins were laid out on the floor of the crypt and the arches broken. The crypt was then filled in with soil and debris from the demolition. Three feet of soil was then added over the entire site to make the ground level with the adjacent park and suitable for grass.⁴⁶³ On 27 May 1935 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners appointed a firm of building surveyors, Cluttons, to organise the demolition of the church and the preparation of the crypt.⁴⁶⁴

A series of letters from Cluttons documented the process.⁴⁶⁵ In the summer of 1935, they made an inspection of the crypt and reported that the coffins were arranged on shelves or stacked on top of each other. Two photographs of the crypt, probably taken during this survey, show the coffins stacked four high and arranged haphazardly. (Figure 30) Cluttons advised that the coffins would need to be rearranged, one coffin deep, over the entire floor of the crypt.

⁴⁶² CERC, files 100581-1 and 100581-2; letters from the Office of Works dated 3 Dec 34, 4 Dec 34, 8 Dec 34, 2 Jan 35, 12 March 35, 30 April 35, 21 May 35, 10 July 35, with responses from the EC.

⁴⁶³ LMA, Q/BRN/4 is a design drawing showing the proposal for the landscaping and treatment of the site, Q/BRN/5 is a plan of the crypt.

⁴⁶⁴ Andrew Chandler, *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century; The Church Commissioners and the Politics of Reform 1948-1998* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 10. In 1898 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had moved to a purpose-built building in Millbank, Westminster. Cluttons moved to an office nearby and were described as the 'Commissioners agents'.

⁴⁶⁵ CERC, 100581-2, six letters dated 3 June 1935, 15 July 1935, 7 November 1935, 23 March 1936, 16 April 1936, 12 May 1936. Cluttons' letter head lists six names and their address (Great College Street, Westminster Abbey, SW1). John Clutton (1809-1896) started the business in 1837 and became joint founder and first president of the Surveyors' Association, later the Royal Institute of Surveyors.



Figure 30. Two views of St Mary's Church crypt c.1935 [St Alfege Church archive]

In November 1935 Cluttons took custody of the church building and wrote to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners concerning the 'eighteen mural tablets, mainly referring to persons buried in the vaults' and 'an oil painting which originally acted as a reredos, but which is now in bad condition, and the canvas is torn in one or two places'.⁴⁶⁷ All were taken to St Alfege Church and some of the stone murals are in the crypt of St Alfege Church today. During the demolition, Cluttons found a glass vase, containing coins, and the silver memorial plaque, underneath a foundation stone. These items were handed over to the Vicar and relocated to St Alfege Church. The inscribed silver plaque commemorating the laying of the first stone has been mounted in a window reveal in the north aisle.⁴⁶⁸ The coat of arms in the Vicar's vestry is also likely to have come from St Mary's Church.⁴⁶⁹ So, St Alfege Church received and accommodated the memorial remnants of St Mary's Church.

While St Mary's Church was being demolished, its loss was memorialised in a series of photographs taken by a local press photographer with an office nearby. His photographic record of the demolition process is now part of the Greenwich Heritage Trust collection.⁴⁷⁰ They form a poignant record of St Mary's Church, while also illustrating the construction of the church building, because hidden areas were revealed as it was dismantled. The open crypt, with broken arches, is shown in one of the photographs (Figure 31) demonstrating how the arches were broken and rubble filled the void.

⁴⁶⁷ CERC, 100581-2, letter from Cluttons dated 7 November 1935.

⁴⁶⁸ During the restoration of St Alfege church after the Second World War side chapels were created at the east end of the north and south aisle. The north chapel commemorates the church of St Mary and the south chapel commemorates the church of St Peter, the nearby parish church that was destroyed by bombing during the Second World War.

⁴⁶⁹ W. E. L. Fletcher, 'Royal Heraldry in Greenwich Parish Church', *Transactions of the Greenwich and Lewisham Antiquarian Society* 9, no. 1 (1979): 29–34.

⁴⁷⁰ RGHT hold prints of these photographs; on the reverse of the prints is a stamp naming the photographer as Charles Quarrell, who had a studio opposite St Mary's Church in Silver Street (now Nevada Street).



Figure 31. Demolition of St Mary's Church, 1936; (top) view of west portico being dismantled; (bottom) view showing the covered crypt and the base of the tower.
[RGHT, Charles Quarrell, Press Photographer, 12, Crooms Hill, Greenwich]

By March 1936 the church building was gone and the method agreed with Mr Roberts for creating an accurate memorial for those now buried beneath the new grass was implemented. Cluttons had provided a draft copy of their survey of the coffins in the crypt:

The enclosed plan indicates the position of the 357 coffins by reference numbers, and in the accompanying schedule the names on as many of the coffins as could be identified are written against the appropriate reference numbers.⁴⁷⁴

Mr Robertson was sent a copy of Clutton's schedule and plan for his comment and provided corrections in relation to his family.⁴⁷⁵ He was particularly concerned that Cluttons had numbered the vaults at random, rather than using the same numbers that had been used when the vaults were first sold. He also asked that the schedule be cross-referenced with the parish burial registers, to add middle names and confirm the correct title. The Vicar was not obliging in this regard, so Robertson drafted his own 'Memorandum' to accompany the schedule and plan in the parish safe, which described the methodology and its limitations.⁴⁷⁶ The two paper documents, the schedule of coffins and the annotated plan of the crypt became the code that enabled visitors to approximately locate the buried coffins on this site once it was grassed over. This schedule and plan were held at St Alfege Church for consultation should anyone ask to locate a friend's or relative's grave within the footprint of the (now absent) St Mary's Church.⁴⁷⁷ Four corner stones were positioned on St Mary's site marking the position of the underground crypt. These cornerstones were also shown on the plan drawing, so the visitor could correlate the plan drawing with the actual site. With the use of a long tape measure and a scale ruler, the individual numbered coffins could then be approximately located above ground. The coffin numbers on the plan could be cross-referenced with the schedule to identify the body in a particular coffin. This was a complicated – and, as it turned out, short-lived – compromise that was practically invisible to the passer-by, and

⁴⁷⁴ CERC, 100581-2, letter dated 23 March 1936, Cluttons to the Secretary of The Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

⁴⁷⁵ CERC, 100581-2, Robertson letter dated 11 April 1936.

⁴⁷⁶ CERC, 100581-2, Robertson letters dated 8 July, 13 August, 31 August 1936 and 6 January, 26 April 1937.

⁴⁷⁷ These documents are no longer available at St Alfege Church but copies are held by both CERC, file 100581-2, and the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA); Q/BRN/6 is the plan of the crypt and Q/BRN/7 is the schedule of coffins.

severely limited any individual memorial activity or more general memory of the church and graves being preserved.

The St Mary's crypt of the 1930s, with its crowded coffins, trespassers and thieves, seems to have been a far from dignified resting place.⁴⁷⁸ The identity and memorialisation of the individuals interred in the crypt was lost in the general atmosphere of death and decay. During the nineteenth century public attitudes towards corpses had changed. Overcrowding in city churchyards and mid-nineteenth-century public health concerns had initiated calls for sanitary reform and urban churchyard closures. Led particularly by Edwin Chadwick and George Alfred Walker, these highlighted the unsanitary nature of the 'miasma' and other health risks emanating from churchyards full of decomposing bodies.⁴⁷⁹ The resulting Burial Acts passed between 1852 and 1885 led to the closure of most burial grounds and crypts in London to new burials (St Mary's crypt was a rare exception). Private and municipal cemeteries were established away from urban areas.⁴⁸⁰ The Royal Hospital Burial Ground was declared full and closed in 1857 and a new site for burials was created in East Greenwich, where land had been purchased for 'The Mount Pleasaunce Burial Ground'.⁴⁸¹ By the twentieth century, the burials in St Mary's crypt were an uncomfortable anomaly.

Above ground, the memorialising of the church described above, was also short-lived. The Office of Works implemented the landscaping scheme, which included the installation of the William IV statue, and the Seamen's Hospital Society then bought the site, with its restrictions, for a nominal sum. They erected a bronze plaque on the site, which read:

Here stood the Church of St Mary, built in 1823 and demolished in 1936 when the vaults were filled in. A plan and register of the vaults showing their position and

⁴⁷⁸ '5 Arrests among Old Coffins,' *Daily Telegraph*, April 30, 1932; Tony Lord, 'Boys Would Lie in the Graves and Be Scared', *The Mercury* (London, June 4, 2008).

⁴⁷⁹ Peter Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London', *Environmental History* 16, no. 1 (January 2011): 40–47; Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, 219–223.

⁴⁸⁰ James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000), 136–142.

⁴⁸¹ Ceridwen Boston, *Safe Moor'd in Greenwich Tier: A Study of the Skeletons of Royal Navy Sailors and Marines Excavated at the Royal Hospital Greenwich* (Oxford: Oxford Archaeology, 2008), 7–8. When a railway tunnel was built through the old Royal Hospital Burial Ground in the 1870s, 1400 bodies were exhumed and relocated to the Pleasaunce.

the names of the bodies they contain is deposited in the Church of St Alfege Greenwich.⁴⁸²

The site was fenced off and surrounded by a rosemary hedge; the herb was associated with remembrance, most famously by Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.⁴⁸³ Relatives of the 'bodies' could access the site by stepping over a low fence that separated it from Greenwich Park. The church site was converted into a distinct landscaped area, which resembled a memorial garden. However, although the area was given some protection, it was not unambiguously designated a burial ground, but appeared to be an annex to Greenwich Park. The footprint of the demolished church building, its memory, was still discernible in the outline of the hedge and the four corner stones.⁴⁸⁴ Whilst the local inhabitants remembered St Mary's Church the site's identity was secure. However, as time passed the local memory of the church faded and the memorial garden proved a weak reminder. Basevi's church had taken the form of a Greek temple monument within a picturesque landscape, but, as Forty noted, 'the power of monuments to resist the fragility of human memory' is 'mediocre' at best.⁴⁸⁵ Were it not for the Robertsons' objections, St Mary's site would have become anonymous more quickly, and Pollmann's 'act of oblivion' would have been completed in 1936.⁴⁸⁶

The collective memory of the graves was further eroded by the insertion of an alternative memorial statue of William IV on the St Mary's site.⁴⁸⁷ The decision-making process for the treatment of the crypt in 1935, involving the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Seamen's Society, and the Office of Works, sought a practical solution to the problem of the crypt. The coffins were buried in situ and the memorialisation of the bodies, through the identification of individual graves, was somewhat covert and complex. The Office of Works were eager to relocate a statue of King William IV from King William Street in the

⁴⁸² CERC, 100581-2, letter dated 23rd November 1937.

⁴⁸³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 4, scene 5.

⁴⁸⁴ CERC, 100581-2, A1 print of a drawing entitled 'St Mary's Church Greenwich – Site Development' produced by Her Majesty's Office of Works, London, May 1936, showing the proposed layout of the site with construction details. A copy of an earlier version of this drawing is held by the LMA, Barnes Collection, Q/BRN/004, December 1935.

⁴⁸⁵ Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, 206.

⁴⁸⁶ Pollmann, *Memory in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800*, 140–158. 'What acts of oblivion effectively helped to produce, then, was a narrative that, by bracketing off and 'forgetting' one part of the past, encouraged people to reinvent a new form of continuity between the past and present.' 154

⁴⁸⁷ Arthur Byron, *London Statues: A Guide to London's Outdoor Statues and Sculpture* (London: Constable and Company, 1981), 217.

City, where it was hindering a road improvement scheme.⁴⁸⁸ This convenient move, justified by William IV's associations with Greenwich during his naval career and as Ranger of the Park, had a significant impact on the memory of St Mary's Church. The large stone statue was a far more emphatic memorial than the vacant, rectangular garden where it stood. William IV gradually overshadowed the lost church and eventually replaced it altogether.

Forgetting St Mary's

During the twentieth century St Mary's Church faded further from local memory and the site underwent further landscaping work. The garden on the site underwent restoration work in 1997, which was supported by the Friends of Greenwich Park. As a result of this project, the history of the site was investigated by William Clarke, who noted the local distaste for the coffins within the vaults below St Mary's Church.⁴⁹⁰ He considered that the garden had become 'a full part of the Park for the first time since 1825' because a gap had been made in the hedge around the site providing access from the park. Clarke was keen to establish the ownership of the land and consequently responsibility for the maintenance of the site, but the ambiguity concerning the status and ownership of the site persisted. After the restoration of the garden, the footprint of St Mary's Church could still be discerned because the 1936 layout of the memorial garden was retained. The corner stones and plaque were still present on the site and 'the original plaque confirming the vaults and bodies now faces the William IV statue'.⁴⁹¹

In 2011 an extension to the National Maritime Museum was opened that incorporated the site of St Mary's Church. Danish architects C F Møller had won the architectural competition for the extension, which was a contemporary design that re-orientated the museum by moving the main entrance to face Greenwich Park and the Royal Observatory on the promontory above. The statue of King William IV remained in situ, but the memorial markers that recorded the previous existence of St Mary's Church

⁴⁸⁸ CERC, correspondence in files 100581-1 and 100581-2, 1933-1936, documents the development of the scheme for the site of St Mary's, as described above.

⁴⁹⁰ Clarke, 'William IV and the Coffins of St Mary's', 2.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1, 7.

on the site disappeared, such as the plaque, the corner stones and the hedge outline. The area was paved with carefully designed ramps, hedges and water features that navigated the level difference between King William Street and the lower entrance to the museum. This space now gives the impression of being a public square or, indeed, part of Greenwich Park. The museum extension was reviewed by *Building* magazine soon after it opened, and the article contained the following light-hearted comment:

During the construction of the wing 800m² of earth was excavated, a process that also yielded the unexpected booty of 20 scurvy-ridden sailors' corpses and several lead coffins, standard fare in Greenwich. The latter remain in place due to their tendency to explode upon touch.⁴⁹²

In all probability the lead coffins belonged to St Mary's crypt. The Royal Hospital Burial Ground adjacent to the site of St Mary's Church, probably the source of the sailors' corpses, had been subject to archaeological scrutiny in preparation for its development in 2008. As a result, there is a thorough record of the human remains found on this site and the relocation of corpses that had occurred.⁴⁹³ In 1925, four thousand bodies were relocated from the Hospital Burial Ground to the Mount Pleasaunce burial ground in East Greenwich to enable the construction of Devonport Nurses Home.⁴⁹⁴ As discussed above, ten years later, the decision was made not to relocate the coffins in St Mary's Church crypt. Cluttons had reported that the lead coffins were 'friable' and the logistical problems moving them would have posed seemed to be insurmountable.⁴⁹⁵ The unpleasant prospect of moving these fragile coffins was tempered by the fact that there was no intention to disturb the ground after the demolition of St Mary's was complete, by building anything else on the site. In 1936 the 'peaceful garden for nurses' scenario posited by the new owners, the Seamen's Hospital Society, was judged to provide these graves with a suitable resting place.⁴⁹⁶ The private ownership of the burial vaults had also presented a significant legal problem, which was eased by retaining the burials in their original location and the creation of a memorial garden. But by 2010 the crypt, the freehold vaults and the burials within had seemingly been entirely forgotten. The site of

⁴⁹² Ijeh, 'The National Maritime Museum.'

⁴⁹³ Boston, *Safe Moor'd in Greenwich Tier*.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁹⁵ CERC, 100581-2, letter from Cluttons to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 3 June 1935.

⁴⁹⁶ CERC, 100581-1, letter from the Vicar, the Rev. O H Thomas, 9 November 1934.

St Mary's Church, at the time of writing, has no memorial or reference point to mark its previous existence, or the crypt location, apart from the adopted statue of William IV.

Conclusion

St Mary's Church, chapel of ease to St Alfege Church from 1825 until 1919, is now almost completely forgotten. Throughout this chapter, I have shown how St Mary's was initially conceived and subsequently struggled to survive not only as a building, but also as a site of local memory and memorialisation for the 357 people interred in its crypt. I have examined how this 1823 church building project differed from the 1711 construction of Hawksmoor's St Alfege Church, to understand how and why one endured and the other did not.

The 1711 and 1818 church building Acts of Parliament were structured very differently and as a result, the two resulting churches served very different purposes. The 1711 Act and Commission paid for and built the new St Alfege Church, to satisfy national theological aspirations and political intent. The parish of Greenwich received a church that was a national architectural statement, but which had taken little account of the parish community or the local context. By contrast, the 1818 Act and Commission put far more emphasis and responsibility on the local parish, by granting financial aid to projects that fulfilled their criteria. The 1818 Commission did not directly organise the construction of any churches. St Mary's was created within a framework defined by an additional Local Act of Parliament, which defined the mechanisms that controlled the management of the church's construction and operation. This project required robust local participation and motivation.

The 1711 St Alfege Church was an architectural *tour de force* by a renowned architect. Hawksmoor had perceived a much wider architectural and political context for the church than the parish it served, imagining it in relation to the grand architecture of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and St Paul's Cathedral. By contrast, the architecture of St Mary's Church was concerned with good taste, gentility and efficiency. It referred to ancient classical Grecian temples, which emulated an ideal (non-Christian) society, and created a picturesque landscape composition within central Greenwich. The proximity of

affluent Croom's Hill and the identities of the trustees suggest that the church was conceived not only as a vehicle for the moral improvement of the Greenwich population but also as a promotional tool for the parish and its vestry. The architect, Basevi, was not an architectural giant on a par with Hawksmoor, but he was a talented and well-educated architect with a mentor (Soane) who was amongst the most prominent architects in England in 1822.⁴⁹⁷ In the early twentieth-century Basevi's reputation could not protect St Mary's Church in the same way that Hawksmoor's reputation was to sustain St Alfege Church, and indeed Soane's reputation was at a low ebb, as demonstrated by the demolition of his Bank of England buildings in 1925-27.⁴⁹⁸

The architectural style of both St Mary's Church and St Alfege Church fell out of fashion shortly after they had been completed. St Mary's church failed to survive the threshold between the first generation of people to use the church and the following generations who lived roughly 100 years later, when any direct personal memories of the church in its prime had disappeared. This threshold was critical because, at that point, the church needed to be considered meaningful by a different social group. Ecclesiological developments within the Church of England, which connected strongly with architectural theory, had caused St Mary's Greek Revival architectural style and the priorities of the 1818 Commission's Churches to be decried and undervalued. Similarly, in 1730, the English Baroque architecture of Wren, Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor had been equally unpopular and John James had designed the contrasting tower for St Alfege Church in a Palladian style. In 1825, when St Mary's Church was new, St Alfege Church was again out of favour, but again managed to survive this ignominy. It was still recognised as the repository of the local dead and home to significant memorials. As the main parish church, St Alfege Church also had seniority over St Mary's and occupied a site with a lengthy and indisputable religious connection to the church's patronal saint.

The site of St Alfege Church had been in ecclesiastical use for many centuries and had a precise connection to the patron saint. This provided a strong ecclesiastical identity for the church on that specific site, through the story of St Alfege. By contrast, St

⁴⁹⁷ Sir John Soane's Museum hold many drawings by Basevi, although not of St Mary's Church.

⁴⁹⁸ Mary Beard, 'Half-Wrecked; What's Left of John Soane', *London Review of Books*, February 17, 2000, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v22/n04/mary-beard/half-wrecked>. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v22/n04/mary-beard/half-wrecked> (accessed 13 July 2020).

Mary's Church had a far more precarious relationship with its site. The land that formed the site straddled a boundary between two national institutions and had no previous relevant history or memorial role. St Mary's was a new invention, surrounded by historic and prestigious neighbours who had donated the land, and they could conceivably reclaim the land at a later date. The patronal St Mary had no specific connection to the new church site, so St Mary's Church was not tethered to its site by the memorialisation of a historic incident. In 1935, the church dedication offered no defence against the demolition. The church had been closed since 1919; from that point onwards St Alfege Church's capacity had been adequate for the reduced congregation and its seniority prevailed. St Mary's architectural style was not valued, so there was no desire to preserve the building for aesthetic reasons. As a result, by 1936, St Mary's seemed expendable and it was the crypt, with its independently owned burial vaults, that provided the most tenacious hold on the site.

The First World War was a cultural and ideological watershed for the whole nation and the closure of St Mary's Church in 1919, shortly after the end of hostilities, must be seen in relation to this. It was in this post-war social climate that an alternative use was sought for the church building: however, the large size of the building and the presence of the crypt limited the available options. Once the demolition of the church had been agreed, the task of memorialising the 357 nineteenth-century corpses in the crypt was overshadowed by practical concerns about the safety of the coffins and the crypt. A type of memorial garden was formed but the complicated process of recording the graves' identity was implemented only to placate one man, whose ancestors were amongst those who had been interred in the crypt in a private burial vault. He had made the connection to the memorialisation of the fallen of the First World War, and it seems likely that the large-scale memorialisation of the dead from the First World War, which was within the living memory of all those involved, influenced the pragmatic attitude adopted by the authorities.⁴⁹⁹ Locally, there were already several memorials to the Great War and possibly this memorialisation took priority. In St Alfege Church three memorial plaques had been installed in 1920 and 1921 commemorating parishioners who died during the

⁴⁹⁹ J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Great War, members of the London Field Ambulance who lost their lives and the gallantry of the Canadian forces. At a secular level, in 1922, the Borough of Greenwich had erected a large Portland stone monument on the corner of Greenwich Park, to honour over 1000 local men lost in the Great War. So, after the First World War there was a strong impulse to create local memorials to the recent dead and, in comparison, the occupants of St Mary's crypt seemed less important.

The effective physical erasure of St Mary's Church, and the consequential erasure of the associated local heritage story, has left the unmarked crypt of St Mary's Church in a peculiar position. After the closure of the church in 1919, the actions of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the parish church and the Office of Works produced a memorial garden that required visitors to decode the site using paper documents and cornerstone markers. The statue of William IV installed in 1936 disguised this local memorial function of the site still further, causing confusion about the meaning and significance of the site. The muddled memorial role of the site gradually led to a lack of local interest or engagement and by 2010, during the extension of the National Maritime Museum, the removal of the memorial elements associated with St Mary's Church was not controversial and went unremarked. However, William IV was carefully retained during the extension project and today the proximity of buried bodies around the base of the statue is unacknowledged and largely unknown.

The lost and mostly forgotten church of St Mary also offers insights into how St Alfege Church has been protected and remained relevant to Greenwich inhabitants through the promotion of its many historical connections and the memorialisation of St Alfege's death, which specifically relates to church's site. Five years after the demolition of St Mary's Church, St Alfege Church was severely damaged by World War II incendiary devices landing on its roof. This attack attracted local outrage and, while St Mary's was quickly forgotten, St Alfege Church became the subject of a major, state-funded, restoration project that rebuilt its historic reputation: the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 - St Alfege Church 1941 – 1958: The rebirth of Hawksmoor’s Greenwich Church

Five years after the demolition of St Mary’s Church, on 19 March 1941, several incendiary bombs landed on the roof of St Alfege Church, starting a fire that caused the burning roof to collapse into the church interior. The masonry external walls and the tower survived intact, but the church interior was devastated by the fire. The complex process of restoring the church interior following this calamity is the subject of this chapter. I will argue that the restoration project recalibrated the memorial role of the church building. The role of St Alfege Church in memorialising the people and activities of the parish of Greenwich receded, whilst the aspects that contributed to a developing national, and international, sense of architectural heritage came to the fore. I have drawn on original material found in the archive of the restoration architect, Albert Richardson’s architectural practice, which includes many drawings and correspondence files, as well as the Dove Brothers archive of construction drawings.⁵⁰⁰ These collections provided ample detailed architectural information about this project, which was not available for either St Mary’s Church or Hawksmoor’s 1711 St Alfege Church. This has enabled me to analyse the lengthy construction process in greater depth and understand to what extent the project sought to restore, or memorialise, Hawksmoor’s church building and the eighteenth-century church. The church interior we see today is largely a result of this restoration project and forms the basis of the current *Heart of Greenwich; Place and People* development project being carried out at the church (and the focus of the next chapter).⁵⁰¹

The restoration of St Alfege Church occurred during a time when the reconstruction of post-war London was the subject of much debate and published plans. In this post-war process of reconstruction surviving churches were valued for their historic character and their contribution to the configuration of local town plans. There

⁵⁰⁰ Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service, Richardson Archive [hereafter BA], St Alphege Church [sic], Greenwich, RGH4 (drawings) and RGH2 (correspondence files); RIBA Drawings & Archives Collection, London (Greenwich): Church of Saint Alphege, design for alterations & additions [Dove, Shelf VIII/63-65].

⁵⁰¹ Launched in 2015 by the Rev. Chris Moody and Gill Moody, this project aims to ‘create a step change in how audiences experience the church that is enduring in the long term’. A successful bid for support from the Heritage Lottery Fund attracted a grant of £1,836,800, which has been matched by private donations.

was an awareness of parish churches' social importance amid the political enthusiasm to reconstruct and reorganise London. However, many historic churches in London suffered war damage and only a minority were restored in a way that claimed historic accuracy. Some bombed churches, for example, were retained as picturesque ruins to act as war memorials.⁵⁰² This chapter positions the restoration of St Alfege Church in relation to its peers and the post-war reconstruction ambitions in London. It asks why St Alfege Church inspired a costly and rigorous restoration project, which started relatively promptly after the end of the Second World War, when other churches did not.

The restoration of St Alfege Church was led by Professor Albert Richardson (1880-1964), a prominent architect with a passion for the Georgian era. Richardson's career as an architect, educator and writer is well-documented. He was the subject of an exhibition at the RIBA Heinz Gallery in 1999 and the accompanying book offers the most thorough record of his life and career.⁵⁰³ In 1914 he published the widely acclaimed *Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland* which described and celebrated neoclassical architecture between 1730 and the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁴ Richardson later published *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture* while the restoration project at St Alfege church was underway, in 1949.⁵⁰⁵ Richardson made a significant contribution to published architectural history and his enthusiasm for the Georgian era extended to all areas of his life, including his home in Ampthill, Bedfordshire, which housed his collection of drawings, paintings, sculpture and furniture.⁵⁰⁶ Richardson was a flamboyant character who inspired his students at the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL) and later the Royal Academy. He was awarded the RIBA Royal Gold Medal in 1947, shortly before the restoration commenced.

⁵⁰² *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* (Cheam, Surrey: The Architectural Press, 1945).

⁵⁰³ Houfe, Powers, and Wilton-Ely, *Sir Albert Richardson 1880-1964*. Simon Houfe, Richardson's grandson, also wrote a biography *Sir Albert Richardson: The Professor* (Luton: White Crescent Press, 1980).

⁵⁰⁴ Richardson, *Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland during the Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries*; Crook, *The Greek Revival*, ix. Crook notes that Richardson's book was 'for a long time the only overall survey of Britain's later classical tradition'.

⁵⁰⁵ Richardson, *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture*.

⁵⁰⁶ Gavin Stamp, 'Rejected Riches: Sir Albert Richardson's Collection at Avenue House', *Apollo Magazine*, last modified September 18, 2013, accessed August 31, 2018, <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/avenue-house/>.

As a proponent of Georgian architecture, Richardson chose to concentrate on the architectural merit and history of St Alfege Church by emphasising the connection with Nicholas Hawksmoor, along with the craftsmanship and aesthetic of the early eighteenth-century church. This was a new interpretation of St Alfege Church and Richardson's conceptual approach was part of the larger, national, debate concerning the treatment of war-damaged churches. The restoration of St Alfege Church and St James Church, Piccadilly (carried out by Richardson's practice at the same time) constituted Richardson's principal contributions to that debate. This was supported by his published opinion on the treatment of the bomb-damaged City churches, most of which were seventeenth-century Wren churches.⁵⁰⁷ At St Alfege Church, Richardson's focus on Hawksmoor's architecture and the building's original appearance sought to eliminate the accumulated adaptations and additions of the intervening two hundred years. The differences between the pre- and post-war church interiors, evident from surviving photographs, show how Richardson's restoration was highly selective and reflected the twentieth-century architectural taste for a restrained neo-Georgian style. Mid-century architectural opinion in England favoured the style advocated by modernists such as Le Corbusier, but Richardson's proclaimed admiration for the Georgian era echoed a growing appreciation for its rational approach to design, in contrast to the scorned Victorian era.⁵⁰⁸ Richardson's focus on Hawksmoor's authorship established an architectural pedigree that has continued to attract charitable funding, notably from the Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) in 2016.⁵⁰⁹

The restoration project changed the way St Alfege Church accommodated both local and national memories, and memorials. Unlike the two previous projects, the restoration was not directly related to an Act of Parliament created to boost the Church of England. It was nevertheless funded by government grants generated by the War

⁵⁰⁷ A. E. Richardson, 'The Future of the City Churches', *The Builder* (June 21, 1946): 615; Andrew Derrick, 'The Post-War Reconstruction of Wren's City Churches', *AA Files*, no. 26 (1993): 27–35; Peter J. Larkham and Joe L. Nasr, 'Decision-Making under Duress: The Treatment of Churches in the City of London during and after World War II', *Urban History* 39, no. 2 (2012): 285–309.

⁵⁰⁸ Summerson, *Georgian London*; Richardson, *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture*; Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, World of Art (London; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 224, 262; William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 2nd ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1991), 317.

⁵⁰⁹ The Heritage Lottery Fund was renamed the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2019, which intentionally increased the emphasis on the National Lottery as the source of the funds.

Damage Act 1941, which were intended to repair the country's damaged buildings, largely regardless of function.⁵¹⁰ The ecclesiastical motivation for this project came from the Diocese of Southwark, rather than a nationally appointed Church Commission. So, the project was not part of a national effort to reinforce the practice of Anglicanism in England, unlike the Greenwich church-building projects of 1711 and 1823. After the project was complete, the restoration process was celebrated and portrayed as a patriotic example of fine British ingenuity and craftsmanship. Attention was focused squarely on the construction process and, although Richardson spoke reverentially of Hawksmoor's genius and the restoration work, it was this building process that he venerated, rather than church's role as a place of worship. The scholarly endeavour to recreate accurately the detailed wood carving, decorative plasterwork and chancel painting of Hawksmoor's church also amplified the importance of the church's fabric. This chapter therefore asserts that the restoration of St Alfege Church was an early built example of the growing national awareness of building heritage, which soon after led to the listing of historic buildings and the creation of national organisations such as English Heritage.⁵¹¹

Both the fire caused by the bombs in 1941 and the restoration project caused significant disruption of the memorials inside and outside the church. The restoration project went on to recreate the memorial purpose of St Alfege Church through specific acts of memorialisation that focused on one particular era. Many memorials and monuments mounted on the walls within the church and located in the churchyard were moved or removed during the restoration project. Although no bodies had been buried or interred at the church since the 1850s, this affected the way that the parish dead could be remembered locally. During the ten years of the restoration project the architectural memorialisation at St Alfege Church was brought to the fore, while the local memorialisation of the dead faded further into the background. Many of the buildings surrounding St Alfege Church were also badly damaged during the Blitz and extensive reconstruction work was necessary in Greenwich town centre after the Second World

⁵¹⁰ The War Damage Act 1941 and subsequent amending Acts of 1942 and 1943 were consolidated in the War Damage Act 1943 and supplemented by the War Damage (Public Utility Undertakings etc.) Act 1949. <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C1035> (accessed 13 July 2020)

⁵¹¹ Thurley, *Men from the Ministry: How Britain Saved Its Heritage*.

War. The extent of the bomb damage in the immediate area around St Alfege Church can be seen on the local bomb map, which is colour coded to indicate the level of damage. Black signifies total destruction; purple, damaged beyond repair; red, seriously damaged, doubtful if repairable (St Alfege Church is this colour); peach, seriously damaged, repairable at cost; orange, general blast damage, not structural; yellow, blast damage, minor in nature; green, clearance areas (Figure 32). The circles indicate where V-1 flying bombs landed. The destruction is also apparent in contemporary aerial photographs (Figure 33).⁵¹²

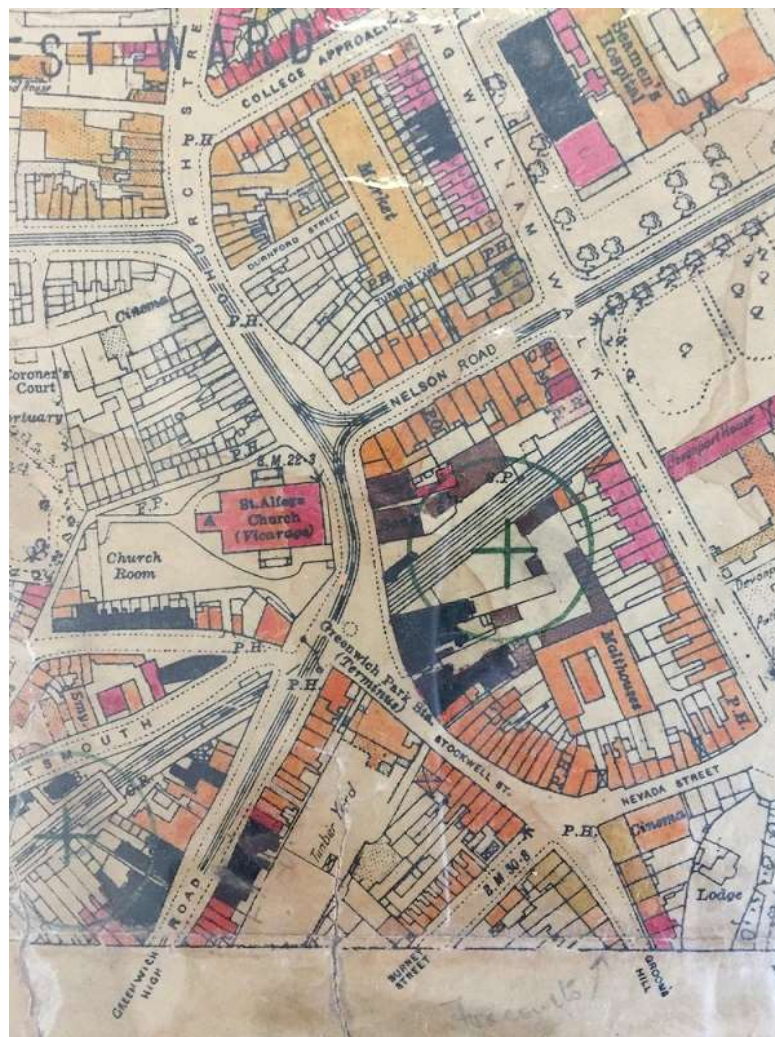


Figure 32. Extract from the LCC bomb damage map for Greenwich (sheet 92, 1939-45) showing the extent of the wartime damage. [RGHT]

⁵¹² The bomb map is held by RGHT. Aerial photographs can be found at www.britainfromabove.org.uk (accessed 17 Nov 2017) image numbers EAW002293, EAW016223, EPW055316.



Figure 33. View of Greenwich looking east, with the ruined roof of St Alfege Church shown mid left. [RGHT]

So, this was a time of huge local upheaval that was to transform the layout of Greenwich town centre, and the church exterior became a visual anchor in this shifting townscape. Its role as an identifying feature for the bomb-damaged town became more important at this time, and the church's restoration made a positive contribution to the reconstruction of the town.

Approaches to the post-war treatment of damaged London churches

St Alfege Church was only one of many buildings in London that suffered extensive bomb and fire damage during the Second World War. Plans for the reconstruction of the city quickly became the subject of much political and architectural discussion. As a result, the *County of London Plan* was published in 1943 and the *Greater London Plan* in 1944. Both documents illustrated the high-level political drive to rebuild and reorganise London underway before the end of the war.⁵¹³ These *Plans* reflected the

⁵¹³ As discussed at the LMA symposium 'The County of London Plan: 75 Years On' 12 October 2018.

new discipline of town and country planning, and expressed highly rationalised and diagrammatic ideas about the large-scale organisation of London.

Despite the modernity of the *Plans*, they acknowledged the contribution to the townscape made by historic buildings and churches. The *County of London Plan* included a section entitled 'Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest', which stated that such buildings 'give to the metropolis its external character and interest'. As a result, the authors noted that

The destruction of so many buildings of this character during the war and the possible destruction of others, makes it more than ever a duty to preserve, as far as practicable, those remaining. Many of them deserve better display so that their qualities and artistic effect can be more readily appreciated.⁵¹⁴

This demonstrated a desire to maintain London's historic architectural character, as well as a heightened appreciation for historic buildings because they had survived the wartime destruction. Discussing churches specifically and noting the geographical and ecumenical issues, the text continued:

Many of the churches have been destroyed or damaged by enemy action and questions as to their demolition, reconstruction or redundancy, as well as future use of vacant sites, will arise and will need to be settled in collaboration with the church authorities and in conformity with the ultimate replanning schemes for the various districts.⁵¹⁵

The text placed emphasis on the setting and visual impact of a church building but made no reference to the spiritual activities inside; nor were spiritual needs acknowledged in the reconstruction plans. Two illustrated pages were dedicated to London churches deemed to be of architectural and historic interest, and 'representative of many others in the Dioceses of London and Southwark'.⁵¹⁶ St Alfege Church was not one of the three examples selected to represent Southwark, which seem to have been chosen for their riverside positions or proximity to garden areas. It was the Diocese of Southwark, rather than London County Council, which prioritised St Alfege Church for restoration. Churchyards contributed valuable green space, which helped to fulfil a key planning

⁵¹⁴ John Henry Forshaw, Abercrombie, Sir Patrick, and London County Council, *County of London Plan* (London: Macmillan, 1943), 140.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, facing pages 140-141.

objective that was vividly illustrated in the diagrammatic maps included with the Plans (Figure 34). The social role of churches was identified as ‘centres of community life’ that could invoke ‘a sense of civic pride’ and a ‘healthy corporate life’.⁵¹⁷



Figure 34. County of London Development Plan [*County of London Plan, 1943*]

In the City of London, the role of churches within these plans attracted national debate because of the large number of churches involved, as well as their specific history and architectural renown. However, these churches served a shrinking residential population and the demand for Christian, parish supervision had dwindled, whilst the perceived historical and architectural importance of the church buildings had grown. This conundrum was exacerbated by the high land values in the City resulting from the demand for office space. Larkham and Nasr locate the decision-making process relating to these City churches within the context of urban planning, and particularly the Diocese of London’s motivations and organisational methods. They show how emerging national

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 140.

building heritage concerns outweighed more pragmatic ecclesiastical considerations in many cases.⁵¹⁸ The fates of the bomb-damaged City churches varied from fastidious restorations (for example, St Lawrence Jewry) to relocation (St Mary, Aldermanbury was rebuilt in Fulton, Missouri) to 'ruination' and conversion into city gardens, as discussed below.⁵¹⁹ Opinions differed about appropriate methods for conserving the historic building fabric.

In 1945 the Architectural Press published *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* which suggested that the picturesque ruins of some City churches could be stabilised and set within a landscaped garden to become a war memorial. These ideas sought an alternative use for the bombed remnants of historic churches and were visualized by eye-catching illustrations. The Dean of St Paul's contributed the foreword where he urged:

The danger that we must guard against is that of being too exclusively "practical" or utilitarian. Beauty and dignity cannot be given a cash value, but they are necessary elements in the good life and they bring in dividends which are not the less important because they are intangible and spiritual.⁵²⁰

This romantic approach was adopted at several sites in the City, including Christchurch Greyfriars, and St Dunstan in the East (Figure 35).⁵²¹ However, the development of this memorial concept relied on the churches having no significant dependent parish or congregation. Converting derelict churches into war memorial gardens cast the remains of the church building in the role of picturesque sculpture. The religious purpose of the church was replaced by an intent to inspire reflection on the impact of war through the experience of visiting these gardens.

⁵¹⁸ Larkham and Nasr, 'Decision-Making under Duress: The Treatment of Churches in the City of London during and after World War II.'

⁵¹⁹ Derrick, 'The Post-War Reconstruction of Wren's City Churches', 28, 33, 35.

⁵²⁰ *Bombed Churches as War Memorials*.

⁵²¹ Both are now grade I listed: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1359217>; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1359173> (accessed 15 July 2020).



Figure 35. (top) Christchurch Greyfriars, Newgate; (bottom) St Dunstan in the East.
[<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6237776>;
<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3186955>, accessed 15 July 2020]

In contrast, the Friends of the City Churches, established in 1943, campaigned to restore and retain as many City churches as possible in their role as churches.⁵²²

Richardson was a leading member of the Friends and in his 1946 paper to their annual meeting he clearly stated the Friends' policy - 'we advocate replacing roofs and windows' - in a rebuttal of the idea to preserve church ruins as war memorials. He emphasised their wish to see 'churches made fit for people to use for divine worship, not restored as museum pieces, nor as picturesque features in the new plan for the City'.⁵²³

Furthermore, he stated that the Friends wished to reinforce the City parishes with support from the British empire overseas:

Our aims go even deeper than preserving the unity of the ancient parishes and wards. Our ultimate objective is to interest the Dominions in the scheme of reparation and to increase the hospitality for which the City has ever been famous.⁵²⁴

Richardson also suggested that churches should adapt to serve the office workers who populated the City during the week and hoped that the Ecclesiastical Authority would 'take up the question of relating ancient parish churches of the City with the newer requirements of those who earn their daily bread within the square mile'. For the Friends and Richardson, the task was to find new parish communities that the churches could serve, rather than demoting bombed churches to background, urban scenery. In conclusion, he said: 'I trust that in the replanning of this great City the minds of those to whom the task will fall be guided to achieve a just balance between history and modernity.'⁵²⁵ This was the balance he would aim for at St Alfege Church in the coming years.

Outside the City of London, similar challenges were faced concerning historic bomb-damaged churches. St Alfege Church was to benefit from its association with Hawksmoor, but this alone did not assure restoration. Two other Hawksmoor churches, St John, Horsleydown, and St George in the East, in Stepney, were destroyed by similar

⁵²² The Friends of the City Churches charity was revived in 1994, see <http://www.london-city-churches.org.uk/ourhistory.html> (accessed 8 September 2020).

⁵²³ A. E. Richardson, 'The Future of the City Churches', *The Builder* (June 21, 1946): 615

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 615.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*; Houfe, Powers, and Wilton-Ely, *Sir Albert Richardson 1880-1964*, 90. Also cites an earlier paper by Richardson from 1944, 'Our Heritage in the City Churches', *Friends of the City Churches*, no.1, 5-16.

incendiary bombs but not restored. Architects were first appointed to plan the repair of St George in the East in 1957 (when the St Alfege Church restoration was complete) and a scheme was completed in 1964 that included new living accommodation as well as a smaller, modern church interior that occupied the eastern half of Hawksmoor's church interior.⁵²⁶ St John, Horsleydown, was eventually demolished down to ground floor level and a new building constructed on the base.⁵²⁷

By contrast, St Alfege Church satisfied the criteria described in the published *Plans* because it was of historic interest and also a focal point for an established town and parish community. The church's restoration helped to stimulate the reconstruction of Greenwich town centre. As early as November 1947 the Rev. L. A. Brown wrote to Richardson requesting photographs and drawings of St Alfege Church for a small exhibition to 'stimulate interest' in rebuilding bombed churches. He noted that St Alfege Church 'figures as the central feature in a local exhibition of town-planning to be held at Greenwich next week.'⁵²⁸ The staging of an exhibition and the centrality of the church in it suggests that restoration of the church was pivotal to the reconstruction of Greenwich itself.

Legislative Framework for the Restoration Project

The post-war restoration project at St Alfege church was not directly commissioned by an Act of Parliament, unlike the church-building projects discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 carried out in the preceding centuries. However, it did attract government funding. After the Second World War, the War Damage Act 1941, subsequent amending Acts of 1942 and 1943, and the consolidated War Damage Act 1943, established the War Damage Commission (WDC) and its processes of operation. In response to this, the Church of England dioceses assembled dedicated committees to negotiate the treatment of war-damaged churches with the WDC.⁵²⁹ The governmental

⁵²⁶ Hopkins, *From the Shadows*, 237–239.

⁵²⁷ Gavin Stamp, *Britain's Lost Cities* (London: Aurum Press, 2007), 129.

⁵²⁸ BA, Richardson Archive, RG4-120, Diocese correspondence file, letter to Richardson from the Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee (Rev. L. A. Brown), 21 Nov 1947.

⁵²⁹ Larkham and Nasr, 'Decision-Making under Duress: The Treatment of Churches in the City of London during and after World War II', 290.

impetus for the restoration of churches was therefore not a compulsion to provide more church accommodation for worshippers, as it was with the 1711 and 1818 Acts. The national focus was on repairing the damage caused by German bombs, both physically and culturally. It is evident though, from the way this post-war legislation for construction projects was applied to the restoration of St Alfege Church, that the importance of historic church buildings was generally accepted by the authorities and their repair was prioritised.

The War Damage Act of 1941 had first established the principles of state support, or compensation, for war damage to buildings and inaugurated the War Damage Commission to administer this function. This Act covered all buildings damaged by war action and the assessment criteria had been carefully developed.⁵³⁰ A detailed definition of 'War Damage' was given in section 80 of the 140 page Act. Short references to ecclesiastical interests were grouped with utilities, the National Trust and highways in part of the Act entitled 'Special provisions as to certain classes of land'. In section 39, 'the advancement of religion' was classified as an acceptable charitable purpose to qualify for financial relief from the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. Two further sections specified that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners could pay for urgent work themselves (and presumably be refunded at a later date) and any independent liabilities for church chancels would not extend to war damage.⁵³¹ So, the wording of the Act was primarily concerned with the financial liabilities and processes relating to war damage claims, not the manner in which properties would be repaired or rebuilt.

In May 1944 the WDC published a statement defining their policy regarding the repair of damaged churches. According to the WDC, 'nearly 14,000 churches, monasteries, convents and other ecclesiastical buildings ... suffered varying degrees of damage in enemy raids on Great Britain and Northern Ireland', so there was a significant

⁵³⁰ UK Parliament, Parliamentary Archive, 'War Damage to Property. Government Compensation Scheme Final Report of the Committee on the Principles of Assessment of Damage.' 16 April 1940, catalogue ref. HL/PO/JO/10/10/1232/513 (accessed 8 Sept 2020).

https://archives.parliament.uk/collections/getrecord/GB61_HL_PO_JO_10_10_1232_513

⁵³¹ England, *War Damage Act*, vol. 4 & 5 Geo 6, chap.12, 1941, 33, 47, 48.

amount of ecclesiastical building work required throughout the country.⁵³² This statement represented the outcome of negotiations with the Churches' Main War Damage Committee, which was chaired by the Bishop of London, Geoffrey Fisher (1887-1972), but included representatives from other Christian denominations and churches.⁵³³ The methodology for allocating costs for repair or reconstruction was also outlined:

It is agreed, therefore, that in place of the cost of works or value payment which would have been appropriate in any ordinary case there shall be awarded a "church payment," to be assessed as the smaller of the two following amounts:-

- (1) The reasonable net cost of "plain repair" of the war damage.
- (2) The reasonable net cost of building a "plain substitute church."⁵³⁴

However, they added that exceptions would be made where the war-damaged church was of 'special importance' for 'architectural, historic or other reasons', and 'exact reinstatement' was desirable. The text of this statement almost behaved as an addendum to the Act of Parliament and carefully stipulated how ecclesiastical buildings were to be assessed fairly, but differently. National resources to be used for the repair of ecclesiastical buildings were carefully negotiated between the WDC and the Churches' Main War Damage Committee. The WDC scrutinised applications for funding, assessing the extent of the war damage within each project and allocating grants accordingly. The Churches' Committee secured special treatment for church buildings and in 1948 a further agreement was reached that established a standard payment per square foot for stained glass windows, which increased in 1952.⁵³⁵ Richardson's negotiations with the WDC, throughout the project to restore St Alfege Church, benefited from this earlier lobbying on behalf of ecclesiastical buildings.

The post-war shortage of building materials was managed by the government through the mechanism of building licences, issued by the Ministry of Works. Contractors

⁵³² War Damage Commission, 'War Damaged and Destroyed Churches: Scheme for Rebuilding and Repair', *The Builder* (May 19, 1944): 400; War Damage Commission, 'War Damaged and Destroyed Churches: Scheme for Rebuilding and Repair', *Architect and Building News* (May 19, 1944): 111.

⁵³³ Andrew Chandler and David Hein, *Archbishop Fisher, 1945–1961: Church, State and World* (Routledge, 2016), 31–32.

⁵³⁴ War Damage Commission, 'War Damaged and Destroyed Churches: Scheme for Rebuilding and Repair'; War Damage Commission, 'War Damaged and Destroyed Churches: Scheme for Rebuilding and Repair.'

⁵³⁵ BA, Richardson Archive, RG4-120, Diocese correspondence file, letter from 'The Churches Main Committee', 26 Feb 1952.

required a licence to purchase certain materials, notably hardwood and steel, until 1954. The Diocese of Southwark had an annual allocation of building licences, which were shared between their construction projects. The flow of these licences was a constant challenge throughout the project to restore St Alfege Church and Richardson's navigation of the bureaucratic procedures is well documented in the correspondence files. He was continually lobbying for more funds or licences in order to keep work progressing on site. The gradual release of WDC funds and building licences prolonged the St Alfege restoration project, but this also had advantages. The slow rate of progress allowed ample time for careful planning and consideration of the construction work.

The Initiation of Restoration Work to St Alfege Church

In 1946 Richardson was asked by the Diocese of Southwark to carry out the restoration of St Alfege Church. In a speech made at the church, after the restoration was complete, Richardson gave this account of his appointment:

I remember in 1946 walking through these grounds with the Bishop of Kingston and members of the Southwark Diocesan Committee never thinking I should be asked to repair it, when the Bishop turned to me and said 'I want you to repair this church' and I said 'Be merciful my Lord Bishop I may not be alive to do it, it is a tremendous task and a great honour, I will do it', and I was rather overcome by the thought of it and wondered how it could be done.⁵³⁶

The *Memoir of the Restoration*, a booklet published to accompany the rededication service, describes how 'in 1946 the Advisory Council for the Care of Churches came to examine the ruins, and plan the restoration, and they asked Professor A E Richardson, RA, to undertake the work.'⁵³⁷ Presumably these texts are describing the same events. They suggest that Richardson was advising the Committee more generally in the assessment of damaged churches and was particularly impressed by St Alfege Church. By this date, it is perhaps also crucial that he was already involved with St James, Piccadilly, for the Diocese of London, as well as an active member of the Friends of the City Churches.

⁵³⁶ From a typed transcript found in the St Alfege Church archive, Box 7.

⁵³⁷ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 3.

However, in an echo of the 1711 church building project, it seems that St Alfege Church Council had an architect and an embryonic strategy for the reinstatement of the church before Richardson and the Diocese of Southwark took control. In 1943 architect Thomas T. Ford had prepared a proposal to reinstate St Alfege Church for the Parochial Church Council (PCC), which had not aimed to restore the eighteenth-century interior. Entitled 'Summary of points for consideration in connection with any proposals for restoration after the war', this contained some quite drastic ideas, including cutting back the galleries to a reduced depth.⁵³⁸ Ford had previously organised the erection of the temporary roof over the church after the fire. He was clearly still in contact with the church council and interested in continuing work on the church after the war. It was not to be, however, and in December 1946 Ford wrote to Richardson (at the Bartlett School of Architecture), stating that the Vicar had informed him that Richardson was now the architect for the restoration. He offered his drawings and 'any information in connection with the War Damage claim', noting that the church had been classified by the WDC as 'a case for Plain Repair'.⁵³⁹ Ford's proposals certainly did not proclaim the extensive history of the church or intend to recreate an earlier interior that had architectural resonance. Instead, he had concentrated on a practical, economical solution that satisfied the WDC description of 'plain repair' and was therefore affordable for the St Alfege PCC. The architectural revival concept that Richardson later adopted required the WDC to consider St Alfege Church a special case, which overrode their 'plain repair' policy.

Once the Diocese had taken over responsibility for the restoration project in 1946 it was administered by the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee (DSRC). Richardson's early, conceptual stage of the design process did not formally involve the church council or the Vicar at that time, the Rev. O. H. Thomas. The two earliest letters in the Richardson archive hint at possible reasons for the two-year delay that followed. In September 1947 Richardson requested an estimate for the cost of a new roof for the church from the contractors Dove Brothers, based on a drawing he had provided. They provided an approximate estimate and commented that they trusted the estimate would enable Richardson to obtain a licence for the work, which suggests they suspected the

⁵³⁸ St Alfege Church, archive Box 7, report and annotated drawing.

⁵³⁹ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich RG4/120, Various file, letter from Thomas F. Ford FRIBA to Professor Richardson, 6 Dec 1946.

building licence might be difficult to obtain.⁵⁴⁰ The other letter from the autumn of 1947 (also referred to above) was from Canon L. A. Brown (Secretary of the DSRC) to Richardson, requesting drawings of St Alfege Church to display in an exhibition he was organising 'to stimulate interest in the replanning and rebuilding of our bombed churches' at the Southwark Diocese Conference in November.⁵⁴¹ The Secretary was keen to promote the church building projects to the wider diocesan governing body, which suggests that the projects needed greater support.

Nonetheless, it was the PCC, not the diocese which finally seemed to get the project off the ground. By September 1948, St Alfege PCC were frustrated by the lack of progress and requested a meeting with the Bishop of Woolwich to discuss the restoration. No work had started at the church and the outcome of this meeting was a letter to Richardson from the DSRC indicating that the PCC were eager for the restoration work to commence. The letter contained three points. Firstly, that the glazing should be repaired as soon as possible to improve the appearance of the church, prevent further rain damage and deter intruders. Secondly, a small repair should be made to the roof where it met the tower, again to prevent further rain damage. The third point was a general request to complete the restoration as soon as possible, material shortages allowing.⁵⁴² It seems that St Alfege PCC appealed to the Bishop of Woolwich to intervene and present their concerns to the diocese, possibly because they felt disempowered. Richardson responded promptly to the letter and requested estimates from Dove Brothers for the first two pieces of work. He accepted the third point as an instruction to prepare the construction drawings for the overall restoration project, launching his project to transform St Alfege's interior into a homage to Hawksmoor that constituted something well beyond a 'plain repair'.

⁵⁴⁰ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich RG4/120, Dove Bros file, letter from Dove Brothers to Richardson, 30 Oct 1947.

⁵⁴¹ BA, Richardson Archive, RG4-120, Diocese correspondence file, letter to Richardson from the Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee (Rev. L. A. Brown), 21 Nov 1947.

⁵⁴² BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich RG4/120, Diocese file, letter from The Rev. L. A. Brown (Secretary to the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee) to Professor Richardson, 9 Sept 1948.

The Construction Process (1949-1957)

By 1949, the WDC had changed their position regarding St Alfege Church, from sanctioning a 'plain repair' in 1946, to imposing measures that encouraged a more rigorous restoration of St Alfege Church. They instructed Richardson to carry out a thorough survey of the damage to the church and carefully store any surviving carving, at their expense:

With regard to serviceable salvage, I have to inform you that all valuable carved panels, frets, pilasters, finials, carved console brackets and the like in wood, iron or stone should be protected from any further consequential damage and should be selected, catalogued and stored in a safe place and visits made available to the Commission. Such work will be considered as part of the proper [illegible].⁵⁴⁴

Detailed survey drawings, made of the church interior before restoration work commenced, survive in the Richardson archive.⁵⁴⁵ They were carefully labelled, and clarified which parts of the building had survived the fire. For the WDC, the preservation and reuse of surviving fragments of the decorative wood carving was important. In response, Richardson's practice laboriously co-ordinated old and new sections of woodcarving in their quest for an authentic Hawksmoor interior that satisfied the WDC funding requirements.

The first construction contract to rebuild the roof and repair the windows commenced in July 1949. Dove Brothers started work on site later that year, although Richardson was still discussing the detail design of the roof trusses, with the structural engineers, in November. The engineers devised a composite design for the trusses that minimised the need for hardwood, in short supply at that time and controlled by building licences (Figure 36).

⁵⁴⁴ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120, WDC file, handwritten letter from A. G. Plenty for the Regional Manager of the WDC to Richardson, 20 Dec 1949.

⁵⁴⁵ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH2/356/9, 10, 11, 12. In the RIBA Dove Brothers archive, a print of drawing no. 14 is dated September 1946 and shows details of the surviving wood carving.

17 JUN 1948

MINISTRY OF WORKS
CONTROL OF CIVIL BUILDING—DEFENCE REGULATION 56A

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING LICENCE AND/OR MATERIALS
(Form C.L.1136B must be used for NEW HOUSES, and FORM C.L.1136C for REBUILDING DESTROYED HOUSES)

PART I.—TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS 16618/4.

1. Full name and address of applicant(s), i.e., person(s) paying the cost of the proposed work (BLOCK LETTERS) **ALBERT EDWARD RICHARDSON**
21, Old Burlington Street London

Telephone No. (if any) **Regent 3412.**

2. Address at which the work is to be carried out (BLOCK LETTERS) **GREENWICH.**

State either Schedule "A" or Fire Insurance Value

Description of premises (e.g., house, office, factory, etc.) **ST ALPHEGE CHURCH.** Local Authority of area in which property is situated **L.I.C.C.**

3. If BUSINESS PREMISES, state Nature of business Government Dept. concerned with business No. of persons now living there No. of rooms which will be available (Bedrooms, Living rooms)

If HOUSE or FLAT, state

4. Full description of work for which licence is required (attach specification if available) **Removal of existing temporary roof opening new oak timbers, covered with 1" deal boarding underwood roofing felt & copper to form permanent roof.**

5. Reasons why the work is regarded as necessary at the present time (amplify by letter if necessary) **To adequately protect the fabric from the weather pending restoration.**

6. Name and address of Builder or Engineering Contractor **Done Bros Ltd**
Claydonley House
Islington N.1.
Telephone No. (if any) **Terminus 8151.**

Name and address of Architect **A.E. Dickason R.A.**
E.A.S. Works F.R.I.B.A.
31 Old Burlington St. W.
Telephone No. (if any) **Regent 3412.**

7. Estimated cost of proposed work (include value of all materials, new or second hand) and labour £ **10,000.** Number of Bricks required _____ Thousands
Quantity of Plate Glass required _____ sq. ft.

8. Has a previous application been made for a licence for any of this work? **No.**
(a) to whom.
(b) date of application.
(c) reference number of any communication from any licensing authority.

PART II.—TO BE COMPLETED ONLY WHERE PERMITS FOR CONTROLLED MATERIALS ARE REQUIRED

QUANTITY OF CONTROLLED MATERIALS REQUIRED

9. (A) Steel _____ tons _____ cwt. (C) Cast Iron _____ tons _____ cwt.
(B) Steel Sheets _____ tons _____ cwt. 17 JUN 1948

10. QUANTITY REQUIRED FOR CONSUMPTION DURING THREE MONTHS FROM DATE OF GRANT OF LICENCE

TIMBER AND PLYWOOD.	Unit of Measurement	Required during			TOTAL	SPECIFICATION, QUALITY AND DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF SEPARATE TIMBER LICENCES DESIRED AND QUANTITIES ON EACH
		1st Month	2nd Month	3rd Month			
A. SOFTWOOD	Standards			6	6	Boarding for roof.	
B. HARDWOOD	Cubic feet	2500	1000	-	3500	oak for trusses	
C. PLYWOOD	Square feet					roof timbers	

† To be completed where more than one timber licence covering the total requirement is desired.

I/We hereby apply for a licence to use and consume the above-mentioned material for the purpose stated above.

I/We declare that I/we have at my/our disposal an amount not exceeding **me** * standards of softwood
me * cubic feet of hardwood **me** * square feet of plywood which is suitable and available for that purpose.

I/We therefore apply for a LICENCE TO ACQUIRE **6** * standards of softwood
3500 * cubic feet of hardwood **me** * square feet of plywood to complete the quantity stated.

* These spaces MUST NOT BE LEFT BLANK. The appropriate quantities or NIL must be in.

IMPORTANT—All Applicants must complete the Declaration over!

C.L. 43408/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Figure 36. Approved Building Licence for St Alfege Church, 1948. [BA, Richardson Archive, St Alfege Church, Greenwich, RG4-120, Diocese file]

In December 1950 Richardson gained approval from the DSRC for the annual release of £25,000 worth of building licences for 1951 and 1952, to be issued in quarterly tranches of £6,250.⁵⁴⁶ The first construction contract was extended in 1950 to include the fibrous plaster ceiling and specialist plaster workers, Eaton Contractors, were nominated by Richardson and appointed by Dove Brothers. This contractual arrangement is generally considered to be costly, but suitable for specialist work because it allows the architect to retain greater control of the detail design, which indicates Richardson's determination to carry out a high-quality restoration.⁵⁴⁸

A second construction contract with Dove Brothers, for the restoration of the church interior, commenced in March 1951. St Alfege Church Council agreed to underwrite bonus payments to the contractors, which enabled them to start work as soon as possible rather than wait for a WDC decision. A temporary chapel was formed beneath the south gallery in October, enabling the congregation to worship inside the church. In November 1951 the engineers Rosser and Russell Ltd issued layout drawings for the underfloor heating in the church nave and the associated builders' work.

In March 1952, when the first contract was complete and the second underway, the project was publicized in *The Builder*, through Richardson's contacts, by a report that paid particular attention to the technical achievements of the completed roof and ceiling. The article stated that:

Technically as well as aesthetically, the ceiling is a work of great interest, showing how modern technique can combine depth and richness of effect with lightness of materials and great strength of construction.⁵⁴⁹

Photographs of the work in progress accompanied the text, as well as three architectural drawings. The writer admired the use of modern construction techniques to recreate the appearance of the eighteenth-century roof and ceiling. The content of the article is likely to have been based on Richardson's description of the project because the author wrote

⁵⁴⁶ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120, Diocese file, letter from Richardson to the Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee, 28 Sept 1950; letter to Richardson from the Secretary (Rev. L. A. Brown) 11 Dec 1950. £25,000 in 1951 corresponded to approximately £791,180 in 2019.

⁵⁴⁸ David Chappell and Andrew Willis, *The Architect in Practice*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Science, 2000), 6.

⁵⁴⁹ G. J. Howling, 'Restoration of St. Alfege's Church, Greenwich; Architects: A. E. Richardson & E. A. S. Houfe. Original Architect: N. Hawksmoor', *Builder* (March 14, 1952): 401–405.

to Richardson in December 1951 requesting an interview, with a view to publishing an article.⁵⁵⁰ Richardson himself had written many articles for the *Builder* so was a respected source. One anomaly in the article was the description of the pulpit as ‘broken into fragments, which are being carefully pieced back together again.’ Perhaps at this point it seemed the pulpit could be restored, but it was later entirely remade with simplified wood carving.

From the outset, Richardson seems to have regarded St Alfege Church as a special project and he strove to obtain special treatment from the authorities. For the remainder of 1952, specialist craftsmen concentrated on the wood carving, paint restoration and the eastern stained-glass window for the church. But by December 1952 the project had exhausted its annual allowance of building licences from the diocese and Richardson was driven to make an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a licence ‘off allocation’. In response to Richardson’s written request that some specialist building work should fall outside the Diocese’s annual allocation, Mr James W. Hill, a Licensing Officer for London and the South East at the Ministry of Works, wrote in a letter dated 20th December 1952:

The arrangement whereby a special allocation is made for church work is one which does not apply to any other interest and is regarded as a generous one. If the amount thus ear-marked is augmented by “off allocation” licences it can only be done at the expense of other interests which are already less generously treated.⁵⁵¹

Richardson had by this means attempted to re-apply a precedent that had occurred during his restoration project at St James, Piccadilly. This exception had apparently involved the intervention of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works.⁵⁵² The failure of this tactic at St Alfege caused work to be suspended between mid-December 1952 and January 1953. This incident illustrates firstly, that the Church of England were

⁵⁵⁰ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120G, ‘Various’ correspondence file: letter from G. J. Howling, 9 December 1951.

⁵⁵¹ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120, Diocese file, Letter from James W Hill, Ministry of Works, Building Control Licensing Officer for London and the South East, to the Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee, 20 Dec 1952.

⁵⁵² BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120, WDC file, file note recording a meeting between Richardson and a WDC Officer, 28 Nov 1952; Diocese file, letter from Richardson to the Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee, 13 Nov 1952 and the Secretary’s letter in response, 23 Dec 1952.

receiving preferential treatment from the Ministry of Works through a special allocation of building licences to the Dioceses, and secondly that Richardson felt justified in appealing to the government for additional special treatment for St Alfege Church.

Richardson may have felt under time pressure because in March 1953, there was a rush to complete the pews and standard lamps for the rededication service.⁵⁵³ Held on Saturday 18th April 1953, the rededication was a triumphant occasion judging from the accompanying booklet, entitled *A Memoir of the Restoration*.⁵⁵⁴ The date was selected as the eve of St Alfege's Day (19 April) - reputedly the date of the saint's death - rather than because the restoration project was entirely finished. A symbolic memorial connection was thus made between the origins of the church and the rebirth of the restored church. A parallel could be drawn between St Alfege's eleventh-century attackers (invading Danish Vikings) and the country's more recent foe, the German Nazis. This co-ordination of memorial dates put significant pressure on the contractors but ensured a poignant reminder of the church's patron saint. The Order of Service for the Re-dedication listed the attendees and the content of the service.⁵⁵⁵ The event was reported nationally in *The Times*, which published a short report of the service and noted the unveiling of a 'commemorative tablet' to General Wolfe.⁵⁵⁶ At this point in 1953 the church was returned to the full custody of the vicar, the Rev. Stephen Nason, and the PCC, who continued the restoration work.

At this point the local Vicar and PCC took responsibility for the continuing restoration project and Richardson began discussing the ongoing work directly with them, rather than with the diocese of Southwark. In October 1953 scaffolding was erected around the tower and repairs to the stonework continued throughout 1954. The bells were removed for repair by Mears and Stainbank in March and did not return until September. Richardson was still administering the project, although he was now corresponding with Nason and the St Alfege Church Council, rather than the DSRC. The

⁵⁵³ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120, Dove Brothers correspondence file.

⁵⁵⁴ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*.

⁵⁵⁵ RGHT, *The Order and Form of Service, for the Re-dedication of the Restored Church of St Alfege, Greenwich*, 18th April 1953, ref. G270.

⁵⁵⁶ 'Greenwich Parish Church Rededicated; Links with General Wolfe', *The Times* (London, April 20, 1953), 52600 edition, 8.

local parish funded the repairs to the tower, with a small contribution from the WDC. During the construction project, vehicular access to the west churchyard from Roan Street had been opened up, following the clearance of bombed houses. This new entrance to the churchyard inspired a proposal to develop the area west of the church. However, Richardson's initial proposal proved too costly for the PCC and in April 1954 Dove Brothers provided a revised estimate for the external landscaping work. This more conservative scheme was implemented, using granite setts for the roadway that were salvaged from tram tracks that had been taken up elsewhere in the borough.⁵⁵⁸

As the St Alfege restoration progressed, the parish vicar became more involved in the management of the project, which may have partly been because there had been a change of incumbent. The Rev. Oliver Thomas (vicar from 1930-50) had overseen the substantial restoration work on the church gallery and organ carried out in 1934, as well as the demolition of St Mary's Church in 1936. He must have found the destruction of the church interior in 1941 particularly disheartening and was not prominent in the restoration project. When the new Vicar, Rev. Nason, arrived in 1950 he became more involved in the restoration and had regular correspondence with Richardson.⁵⁵⁹ The Vicar and congregation were also regularly inside the church during the construction process and in direct contact with the craftsmen and labourers on site, because of their temporary chapel (or 'church within a church') beneath the south gallery.⁵⁶⁰ As control of the project transferred from the DSRC to the Vicar the parish reclaimed ownership of the church building and took responsibility for its historic status. Nason was a staunch supporter of the project; his published account of the restoration stated: 'The restoration of the historic Parish Church of Greenwich has been a triumph of modern craftsmen, and posterity will owe a great debt to them, and to Professor A. E. Richardson, R.A.'⁵⁶¹ His enthusiasm and ambition inspired the continuation of the restoration work after the

⁵⁵⁸ RIBA Drawings & Archives Collection, London (Greenwich): Church of St Alfege, design for alterations & additions [Dove, Shelf VIII, 63-65], letter to the Clerk of Works dated 1 Jan 1953. Richardson refers to the western courtyard as 'the proposed recreation ground'.

⁵⁵⁹ The Rev. (George) Stephen Nason had served as a chaplain in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve during the Second World War and was Dean of Gibraltar 1945-1950.

⁵⁶⁰ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 5. This photograph illustrates how surviving church fittings were reused to create a temporary worship space.

⁵⁶¹ Nason, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich (An Account of the Restoration) By the Vicar of St Alfege's', 308.

Diocese and WDC funding had ended. The repairs to the tower, clock and bells were almost wholly paid for by the St Alfege Church Council. Having completed the lengthy restoration project in 1957, Nason left the parish in 1958 and was replaced by the Rev. John Higgins.⁵⁶²

This lengthy construction process highlights the physical and administrative effort that was exerted, during a time of shortages, to create a church interior that memorialised Hawksmoor. In so doing, it offered an interpretation of St Alfege's that firmly positioned the church as a heritage asset, at a time when national appreciation of historic buildings was increasing. Although the bulk of this project was carried out by a professional team, organised at diocesan level and funded by the WDC, the local parish community continued the work for a further four years, financing repairs to the tower that were outside the remit of the WDC. The church that Richardson had so carefully crafted became a local project. The restoration of St Alfege Church was conducted slowly and stretched over eight years. The work was largely funded by the WDC; in 1953 they had contributed the entire cost of the project to that date (approximately £72,000), but by 1956 this amount had risen to £97,572, and the parish had paid £10,428.⁵⁶³

The Expert Construction Team and their 'Restoration' Techniques

The high standard of workmanship throughout the restoration project indicates the intentions of Richardson, the diocese and the WDC for the church's future existence as a landmark. The *Memoir* published to coincide with the rededication service concentrated on the skilled craftsmanship involved in the restoration project, and included photographs of the workmen and their processes.⁵⁶⁴ The achievements of both architect and contractor were celebrated in this promotional booklet, which was aimed at a national and academic audience. Similar photographs accompanied articles about the

⁵⁶² NADFAS, *Record of Church Furnishings*, 1984; 'List of Vicars from 1189-1973', item 505.

⁵⁶³ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 14.; RGHT archive, 'The Restoration of the church of Saint Alfege, Greenwich', a leaflet appealing for donations written by the Rev. Stephen Nason and dated March 1956.

⁵⁶⁴ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*.

restoration published in *Country Life* and *The Builder* (discussed above).⁵⁶⁵ Kerry Downes' influential 1959 monograph on Hawksmoor also featured some of the post-restoration publicity photographs of the church interior, further endorsing Richardson's project.⁵⁶⁶

The complexity of the construction process for St Alfege Church is illustrated by the correspondence files and drawings in the Richardson archive, and further drawings held by the RIBA.⁵⁶⁷ The slow pace of the construction work allowed time for the design work to be meticulously considered. There are over a hundred drawings for the project, by several different draughtsmen, many of them large-scale joinery details. Richardson's practice was carrying out both the St James, Piccadilly and the St Alfege restorations at the same time, and from 1951 onwards the two projects shared a Clerk of Works.⁵⁶⁸ Although they were carried out in different dioceses by different contractors, within the architect's office the two projects were developed in parallel. The project to restore St Alfege Church received a generous and thorough contribution from its architects.

Dove Brothers were a large, experienced firm led by Lt. Colonel William Dove (1897-1967) and their appointment makes it clear that this project did not constitute 'plain repair'.⁵⁶⁹ Established in 1781, they worked on St Paul's Cathedral in 1915 and by the 1920s were considered 'ecclesiastical specialists'.⁵⁷⁰ In the 1930s they had carried out restoration work on a number of notable churches in London, including St Mary-le-Bow (1931), St Martin in the Fields (1932) and St Mary-le-Strand (1933). They had worked with Richardson on several projects at University College London during the 1930s, and did so again in 1947 following bomb damage.⁵⁷¹ After the Second World War they were employed on the reconstruction of several war-damaged London churches including, in

⁵⁶⁵ A. S. O., 'Two London Churches Restored; St James, Piccadilly and St Alfege's, Greenwich,' *Country Life*, February 9, 1956; Howling, 'Restoration of St. Alfege's Church, Greenwich; Architects.'

⁵⁶⁶ Downes, *Hawksmoor*; A. S. O., 'Two London Churches Restored; St James, Piccadilly and St Alfege's, Greenwich.'

⁵⁶⁷ RIBA Drawings and Archive Collection, *London (Greenwich): Church of Saint Alphege, design for alterations & additions*, Dove, Shelf VIII/63-65.

⁵⁶⁸ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4-120, WDC file, letter from the WDC to Richardson dated 30 Nov 1950. The WDC approved this arrangement and a Clerk of Works was employed by the client. A Clerk of Works inspects construction work on site and checks the work is in accordance with the contract drawings and specification.

⁵⁶⁹ David Braithwaite, *Building in the Blood: Story of Dove Brothers in Islington, 1781-1981* (London: Godfrey Cave Associates Ltd, 1981), 90-109.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 72, 74.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 80-83.

addition to St Alfege Church, the Church of All-Hallows-by-the-Tower (1948), The Temple Church (1948), St Olave's Church (1951) and St Mary's Church, Islington (1952). They returned to St Mary-le-Bow in 1956 to restore the church following war damage.⁵⁷² The Richardson archive contains a full correspondence file between the architect and contractor for St Alfege Church, and from this it appears Richardson and Lt. Col. Dove appear were on friendly terms. As well-known, established contractors with a reputation for high quality ecclesiastical work, the appointment of Dove Brothers for the restoration of St Alfege Church bestowed further prestige on the project.

The appointment of both expert architect and experienced contractor by the Diocese of Southwark to carry out the restoration of St Alfege Church indicates that they intended the restoration to be comprehensive and a high-quality project. The status of the historic building fabric was elevated by this approach, and specialist craftsmen were required. For example, the reinstatement of the paintwork in the chancel was carried out by the artist Glyn Jones (1906-1984). Richardson asked Jones for his opinion concerning the condition of the 'East Wall murals' by Thornhill, and Jones responded in a letter dated 16 July 1951.⁵⁷³ He studied the remains of the paintwork and concluded that it was 'beyond repair and would require to be entirely redone'. He proceeded to gather as much information about the original as possible through measurements, samples and sketches. He described how the 'plaster was in the process of demolition' and he 'did not see the main arch before it was remade in plaster;' but he did see 'the oak panels removed from it (the main arch) and these were painted in a continuation of the adjacent coffering.' So, Jones was under some time pressure because the main contractor was dismantling the arch and stripping out the fire damaged plaster. Jones carried out a detailed analysis of the paint from the chancel and researched Thornhill's technique. He concluded:

The colouring and gilding, like the decorative paraphernalia employed, were purely conventional – a stock in trade to meet all requirements of embellishment

⁵⁷² Ibid., 97. 'Carved keystones commemorating the architect, Lt. Colonel W. W. Dove, his general foreman, Bill Webster, and church officials are angled towards the twin pulpits;'

⁵⁷³ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4/120, 'Various' correspondence file, 6-page letter from Jones to Richardson, 16 July 1951.

– and would constitute no more than a cheaper alternative to carving, but for the fact that the shadow patterns introduce an aesthetic of their own.⁵⁷⁴

So, in this initial letter, Jones felt that the painted decoration of the chancel was accomplished but not particularly outstanding. He also felt a ‘good stained-glass window’ was essential to complete the effect. The removal and replacement of the oak panels which lined the chancel arch seems slightly wanton, given that Jones could still discern the painted pattern on the timber. He went on to successfully remove the layers of varnish from the giant pilasters either side of the chancel arch and preserved some of the original paintwork. The remainder he recreated on fresh plaster.

Richardson took Jones’ advice on the window and in April 1952 approached the stained-glass artist, Francis Spear (1902-1979), about the design and fabrication of a suitable window. Spear responded in May, asking about the church interior and whether Richardson had any particular colours in mind. Spear also confirmed that ‘St Alphege’ (sic) was to be depicted and referred to the window as a ‘stained glass Reredos’, implying that he thought of it as a backdrop to the altar. Reredos is a pre-reformation term for an ornate screen behind the altar, often depicting saints or biblical scenes, which magnified the visual importance of the altar. In England, the term was revived during the nineteenth-century medieval revival.⁵⁷⁵ Spear sent Richardson a drawing of his proposed design two weeks later. He had struggled with the composition:

When I set out the Reredos from the engraving it was too long & thin for the shape that contained it. Also the architecture of it at that scale as seen in relationship to that of the building looked too small & toy-like so I put in a burst of rays coming from the figure of the Risen Christ.⁵⁷⁶

He had altered the design of the window to co-ordinate with the surrounding architecture, and the restored paintwork by Jones. The design was approved by the Diocese in November 1952, and in December Spear made a full-size cartoon of the

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁷⁵ Denis R. McNamara, *How to Read Churches; a Crash Course in Ecclesiastical Architecture* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 216–217.

⁵⁷⁶ BA, Richardson Archive, Bedfordshire Archives and Records, RG4/120, ‘Francis Spear’ correspondence file, letter to Richardson, 17 May 1952.

window design, quoting a cost of £1,350.⁵⁷⁷ The window was installed in time for the re-dedication service in April 1953.

Richardson seemed to ignore his restoration concept when it came to the stained-glass window. It seems that some of the church's stained-glass windows had been removed for safe keeping soon after the 1941 bomb damage. In a letter sent to the Vicar shortly after the re-dedication service, Richardson requested his assistance in recalling what stained-glass had been removed from the church because:

We are trying to establish what the position is with regard to stained glass and decorated glass windows, and exactly what can be claimed from the War Damage Commission.⁵⁷⁸

He referred to a set of 21 photographs of the church interior taken in 1948, before Dove Brothers arrived on site. Of the eight gallery-level arched stained-glass windows, installed between 1890 and 1940, he observed from the photographs that the window depicting General Gordon was intact and he suspected that four others had been 'taken down for preservation'.⁵⁷⁹ Indeed, the Greenwich Parish Church Magazine of May 1941 quoted a *Kentish Mercury* article stating that the east window had been only slightly damaged; two of the south windows had survived and, on the north side, the Gordon window was only slightly damaged.⁵⁸⁰ But neither the Gordon window or any other surviving gallery memorial windows were reinstated, and the gallery windows were re-glazed with clear glass. Spear later made eight small stained-glass murals that were mounted in front of the ground floor windows, which repeated the memorial dedications of the lost Victorian stained-glass windows.

The WDC had informed Richardson that the pre-war east window (visible in Figure 41) had been removed and crated in 1944 by a specialist firm, but then seemingly forgotten. Richardson demonstrated to the WDC that Spears' new east stained-glass

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid. Letter to Richardson, 15 Dec 1952, (£1350 equates to £39,136 in 2019).

⁵⁷⁸ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RG4/120, 'Vicar' correspondence file, letter from Richardson to Nason, 30 April 1953.

⁵⁷⁹ Leaflet guide books published by St Alfege Church in 1933 and 1951 (to accompany donation appeals) include illustrations of the Tallis and Gordon windows. The 1951 guide says 'There were four on the north side, depicting General Wolfe, St Alfege, Thomas Tallis, and General Gordon ... those on the south side represented the baptism of Henry VIII, the marriage of Thomas Brandon, Duke of Suffolk to Princess Mary, and the Churching of Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I', p. 8.

⁵⁸⁰ From notes compiled by David Larkin, volunteer at St Alfege Church.

window cost less than it would have cost to reconstruct the Victorian stained-glass window by obtaining a quotation for the reinstatement of the Victorian east window, after the new window had been installed.⁵⁸¹ This economy was used by Richardson to justify the replacement of the Victorian stained-glass window, rather than its restoration. His tactic persuaded the WDC to contribute to the new window, but also enabled Richardson to retain control over the design of the east window and prevent a Victorian adaptation reappearing in the church. He also chose not to emulate Hawksmoor, who prioritised the provision natural daylight in line with Wren's recommendation; in 1718 the east window at St Alfege Church would probably have been clear glass.⁵⁸² In contrast, Spear's final design for the east window was dramatic and baroque, featuring Jesus Christ crowned amidst sunbursts, four angels and St Alfege kneeling at Christ's feet. The composition included a columned canopy (or baldaquin) framing the central figure, which echoed Hawksmoor's carved wooden Corinthian columns positioned either side of the window (Figure 37). Richardson and Spear did not attempt to recreate either the Hawksmoor east window or restore the pre-war Victorian window, but instead created a twentieth-century stained-glass design that was rooted in the architecture of the church and conveyed a triumphant theme.

Another example of how specialist craftsmen were employed to create Richardson's new church interior can be seen in the great emphasis that was placed on the accuracy of the joinery and woodcarving inside the church. After the fire, surviving fragments of the Grinling Gibbons wood carving had been collected from the debris and carefully stored so that they could be incorporated into the new woodwork at a later date. The eighteenth-century wood carving on the galleries, pulpit and organ surround were carefully drawn and recorded by the architects in order to achieve a successful amalgamation of the old and new carving. Indeed, Lt Col Dove later described the difficult and time-consuming task of identifying and positioning surviving fragments of woodcarving, and then making new pieces of wood carving to fit around them.

⁵⁸¹BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RG4/120, WDC file, letter from Richardson to Mr Russell, WDC Regional Manager, 25 Nov 1953.

⁵⁸² Bill, *The Queen Anne Churches*, 219–220. There is no mention of a stained-glass window for St Alfege Church in the 1711 Church Commissioners records.



Figure 37. St Alfege Church, east window: (top) Francis Spear 1953; (bottom) postcard depicting the pre-war east window from 1849 [RGHT].

This was a highly laborious process. The woodwork was a patchwork of old and new, so to achieve an even wood colour the old wood was stripped of its varnish. Dove bemoaned the Victorian's 'craze for covering everything that was good with Varnish' and described how all the surviving timber was 'pickled'. This removed the varnish and revealed the 'gold colour of the wood'; he felt that the timber was 'better than it ever was in the last 200 years'.⁵⁸³ This change of timber colour made a huge difference to the appearance of the interior and expressed the aversion to Victorian taste felt by Richardson, which was seemingly commonplace.

Although the work at St Alfege Church was clearly labelled as a 'restoration' during the project and in the publicity surrounding the church's re-dedication, there are details of the construction process which show that Richardson substantially modernised the church building at the same time, and created a more robust and uniform church interior. The rigorous attention paid to the visible eighteenth-century details was accompanied by twentieth-century taste and construction methods, and full use was made of efficient modern construction methods in out of sight areas. The apparently eighteenth-century wooden gallery was supported by a concealed framework of steel beams and posts. In the nave, the textured eighteenth-century stone floor was removed and replaced with a new smooth Portland stone floor and underfloor heating designed by specialist engineers.

The structure and exterior finish of the roof was another good example, which is recorded in the architect's drawings that survive in the Richardson archive. The new roof structure comprised six carefully engineered composite roof trusses that minimised the amount of timber required. The decorative plasterwork on the ceiling was carefully reproduced by specialist craftsmen using new fibrous plaster which was suspended from a light-weight metal framework attached to the underside of the roof trusses (Figure 38).

⁵⁸³ St Alfege Church archive, box 7, transcript of a speech Lt. Col. Dove gave at an event hosted by the Rev. Stephen Nason at the church, undated but the text suggests late 1952.



Figure 38. St Alfege Church roof space; view showing the roof structure and the suspended frame supporting the decorative plaster ceiling. [AF June 2017]

The process of building the roof was also described by Lt Colonel Dove in his 1952 speech.⁵⁸⁶ He described the large timbers that they worked hard to procure for the main tie beams of the roof, and how they were lifted into position and jointed.⁵⁸⁷ Dove emphasised the limitations of building licences and said they used copper for the roof because it was impossible to get a licence for a lead roof finish. This allowed the roof structure to be designed for the lighter weight copper finish, which was efficient (given the shortage of timber) but meant that the roof structure could not support a lead finish

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RG4/120, letter from the Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark Reorganisation Committee to Richardson, 17 May 1949. The Secretary passed on the business card of a company who could possibly supply timber for the project. He wrote 'the Secretary of the Fourth Sea Lord has suggested that the husband of his wife's cousin, a Mr Schlesinger, might be able to help.'

in the future without significant reinforcement. So, this characteristic church feature was changed fairly permanently. Whilst the roof was treated more as an engineering challenge rather than a restoration process, Dove described how the decorative plaster ceiling was recreated using a painstaking and onerous process that produced an accurate replica of the former ceiling. Where an eighteenth-century decorative precedent did not exist, such as for electrical lighting, Richardson seized the opportunity to add his own imaginative designs. He designed electrical light fittings for the nave and gallery, which he called 'Torchieres' and the form may have been inspired by Hawksmoor's unusual gallery support columns. However, they had a contrasting design style, which was slightly art deco and reminiscent of a cinema or theatre (Figure 39).



Figure 39. 'Sketch for Torchiers in Gallery': Richardson design for electrical light fittings at St Alfege Church. [BA, RGH2-356/135]

Richardson's restoration: memorial or reimagining Hawksmoor?

The appearance of the St Alfege Church interior immediately before the incendiary device hit was very different from the church interior created by Richardson's restoration. If we focus on what was destroyed by the device and what was removed, or not reinstated, during the restoration project, the nature of Richardson's restoration project emerges more clearly. Close examination of surviving photographs taken of the church interior before and immediately after the 1941 fire provide visual evidence of the pre-restoration church. Later photographs taken during the restoration project and in the newly restored interior in 1953 show the process and result of the project. This analysis, undertaken for the first time for this research, brings into focus this decision-making process and demonstrates how Richardson selected which aspects of the church's history to memorialise, in judging what was of most interest and relevance in the mid-twentieth century. In black and white photographs of the St Alfege interior taken before 1941 the woodwork appears darkly coloured, with a sheen to the surface, and light reflected off the chancel wall murals due to a heavy coating of varnish. Densely spaced pews surrounded a central, carpeted aisle leading to an imposing brass lectern, adorned with an eagle. The Victorian black and white patterned marble floor, between the ornate choir stalls, led the eye to the altar and reredos. The pulpit (probably by Grinling Gibbons) was very richly carved and one of four different reading or preaching positions.⁵⁸⁸ There were prominent wall-mounted memorial plaques visible on either side of the chancel and between the windows at gallery level. Stained-glass windows were also visible in the north and south walls, as well as the earlier design for the stained glass in the east window (Figure 40).⁵⁸⁹ To the mid-twentieth-century eye this interior must have looked very sombre, ornate and densely furnished.

⁵⁸⁸ LPL, MS 2697, Book of Works including St. Alphege (sic) Greenwich, 1713-1720, 221-336.

⁵⁸⁹ Historic England Archive, Architectural 'Red Box' Collection, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/>, (accessed 5 December 2018), Greater London: Greenwich, Churches A – ST. AL; in this box there are seven cards with photographs of the pre-1941 St Alfege church interior, including the long view looking east towards the chancel and details of the pulpit and other woodcarving. Reference numbers: 3256_125, 131, 133, 140, 142, 144, 146. RGHT also holds a box of photographs of St Alfege Church, which contains copies of two of these photographs.



Figure 40. (top) St Alfege Church, c. 1940 view of the c.1712 pulpit and the 1880 Champneys choir stalls; (bottom) c. 1940 view looking towards the chancel. [RGHT]

As mentioned in chapter 3, the architect Basil Champneys had prepared a report on St Alfege Church in 1881, with a range of comments and proposals.⁵⁹⁰ It was clear from Champneys' *Report* that he greatly admired the grandeur of the architecture and felt a responsibility not to compromise its stature. His *Report* had strongly recommended improvements to the lighting, heating and ventilation, which involved the introduction of new equipment. This indicated a desire to make the internal environment more comfortable and up to date, but his proposals for the choir area were more liturgical. In Champneys' opinion:

It would be a great advantage, both to the appearance of the Church and for the conduct of the service, if the seats of the Clergy and Choir could be more conveniently placed and slightly raised ...

His aim was to make the choir area a more elaborate and rarefied zone located immediately in front of the chancel. In 1888 the church vestry's final report detailed the alterations that had actually been carried out in response to Champneys' recommendations.⁵⁹¹ In addition to general repairs, 'hot water warming apparatus' and gas lighting had been installed. New church furniture, a curtain at the western entrance and screens to western gallery windows (to reduce draughts) were also installed. These nineteenth-century alterations and additions to St Alfege Church had all been intended to make the congregation more comfortable. In the choir area 'new choir seats and marble floor, including wrought iron railings to choir' had been installed at a cost of £318 8s 4d (£41,644 in 2019), with the carving to the choir stalls listed as a separate cost of £47 (£6,155 in 2019). The total cost of the project was £2,535 7s 4d (£331,968 in 2019).⁵⁹² Champneys had also advocated the removal of the east stained-glass window, to be replaced with a suitable painting, and the 'completion' of the reredos, which he felt was incomplete, but these ideas had not been adopted by the Church Council.

⁵⁹⁰ St Alfege Church Archive, Box 7, Basil Champneys, *Report of Mr. Basil Champneys on St Alfege Church, Greenwich*, 1881, 1. Champneys is best known for John Ryland's Library in Manchester, and university buildings in Oxford and Cambridge.

⁵⁹¹ St Alfege Church archive, Box 7, Parish Church of St Alphege, Greenwich, *Final Report of the Renovation Committee*, July 1888,

⁵⁹² All amounts converted using the Bank of England online inflation calculator, accessed 8 September 2020, <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>.

The richly detailed choir stalls raised on a platform, added by the parish as part of this project, are evident in the pre-war photographs of the church interior.⁵⁹³ The alterations to the choir area effectively extended the chancel and increased the apparent size of the sacred floor space, which became more stage-like. The choir would have contributed a rich spectacle from their ornate performance space. In line with nineteenth-century Ecclesiological ideas, these alterations enhanced the choral presence and increased the conceptual separation between the congregation in the nave and the clergy around the communion table in the chancel. Nonetheless, during the twentieth-century restoration Champneys architectural alterations to the choir area were forgotten and its liturgical approach to the choir area was almost entirely opposed to Champneys' vision, as we shall see.

St Alfege Church underwent further repair work in 1934, this time to the gallery and the organ (as mentioned in Chapter 3). Following an exhaustive campaign by Rev. O. H. Thomas and the church wardens to attract donations at a time of economic hardship, the work was completed at a cost of £3,050 (£219,928 in 2019).⁵⁹⁴ A guide book produced to assist the campaign in 1933 had established the church's importance before outlining the current problems, along with a preface appealing for donations.⁵⁹⁵ This sixteen-page booklet provided a history of Greenwich. It briefly mentioned Hawksmoor (page 7) as 'the architect of the present building', but focused on his connection to Wren and St Paul's Cathedral, noting that the church was 'characteristic of Wren's style'. Hawksmoor's name was not important enough in itself. In contrast, the organ and its connection to Thomas Tallis (1515-1585) filled three pages of text. Similarly, the connection to General James Wolfe (1727-39) was referred to several times and a

⁵⁹³ A drawing in the Richardson Archive, which is a rubbing taken from some wood carving at St Alfege Church probably as part of the survey work carried out after the fire, could be from the Victorian choir stalls.

⁵⁹⁴ In 1933 the Churchwarden (Mr Sewell) and the Rev. O. H. Thomas launched a postal appeal for funds that was worldwide. Mr Sewell's correspondence is in the St Alfege Church Archive, Box 7. A Thanksgiving service was reported in the *Kentish Mercury*, 'Greenwich Parish Church Restored', 29 June 1934.

⁵⁹⁵ 'St Alfege Greenwich', May 1933. Death watch beetle was attacking the gallery woodwork and the aged organ required an overhaul. Interestingly, (on page 10) they proposed to incorporate 'two complete stops with their accompanying ranks of pipes taken from the Father Willis organ of St Mary's Church, Greenwich when it closed in 1919.'

photograph of 'Wolfe's Corner', with a Canadian flag, was included on page six. The connection to Canada was further elaborated with the statement:

A fact that is very little known is that when the first English settlements were planted on the North American Continent the whole of the vast territory was included in the Manor of East Greenwich. There is, therefore, a doubly-forged link between Greenwich and the Dominion of Canada; first, that of General Wolfe, the victor of Quebec, who lived in Greenwich and whose remains are buried there, and secondly, that Canada was in its early days included in the Manor of East Greenwich.

The focus of this guide book, and what it omits, suggests that the church's architectural qualities were not perceived to be central to the church's historic importance in 1933, nor what the public might find most interesting about it. However, in 1930, an architectural description of St Alfege Church published as part of a national inventory of historic buildings had noted that 'the church is interesting as an important example of 18th-century work' and included a detailed description with photographs, which indicated that the church's architectural value was recognised outside the parish.⁵⁹⁶

The photographs taken of the interior of St Alfege shortly after the incendiary bomb landed highlight that, despite extensive damage, on close inspection some Victorian and later alterations survived the bomb.⁵⁹⁷ Two are press photographs with typed labels on their reverse, expressing outrage at the church's bombing:

'ANOTHER HISTORIC CHURCH WRECKED BY THE NAZIS (Central Press 3156a)

The ruins of an historic church in a London district which was destroyed by fire bombs during a recent heavy blitz. (March 19th, 1941)⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁶ RCHME, 'Greenwich,' in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in London, Volume 5, East London* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), 12, accessed May 26, 2020, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/london/vol5/pp12-43>.

⁵⁹⁷ RGHT, 'St Alfege Church' box of photographs, numbers 19, 21, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178 are photographs of the 1941 bomb damage.

⁵⁹⁸ Historic England Archive, Architectural 'Red Box' Collection, Greater London: Greenwich, Churches A – ST. AL; 'St Alfege Church' box includes two photographs of the bomb damage, 3256_127, 3256_129.

'CHURCH BOMBED IN LAST NIGHT'S RAID

Roof of a London Church crashed down over the pews. Firemen work among the wreckage. Picture made this morning, after the Church was bombed last night. R. Keystone. 440756.' (see below)



These and other photographs of the ruined interior mainly show the collapsed and charred remains of the massive roof timbers that had formed John James' eighteenth-century roof structure, which was not restored (Figure 41). The bomb damage is however perhaps not as extensive as might have been assumed from the restoration. In the background you can see the internal wall surfaces and arches, as well as some of the gallery structure. The extent of the surviving woodcarving to the gallery and chancel is visible, and gives an idea of the complex blend of new and old woodcarving that the architects and contractors achieved. Surviving stone memorial tablets are visible mounted on the piers between the windows at gallery level. These photographs showed that some rows of pews survived and the eastern stained-glass window appeared to be intact. The discrepancies suggest that some elements of the church that were relatively undamaged were subsequently removed, possibly because they were not considered appropriate for the 'restored' church interior.⁶⁰⁰ Richardson's restoration project seems to have purged the surviving interior both of Champneys' Victorian adaptations and the

⁶⁰⁰ Larkham and Nasr, 'Decision-Making under Duress: The Treatment of Churches in the City of London during and after World War II', 302–304.

wall mounted memorials in-situ. This approach to the building accretions that had accumulated inside the church between Hawksmoor's era and the mid-twentieth century further disrupted a complex visual record of the local parish inhabitants that had accumulated over the two preceding centuries. Richardson's restored church interior was a simplified version, where the memorial intentions had become more architectural and more directed toward the church's re-imagined eighteenth-century origins.



Figure 41. St Alfege Church ruined interior, March 1941: (top) view looking east showing the east window and the intact memorial to the right-hand side (now located in the crypt); (bottom) view looking north west showing intact memorials at gallery level between the windows. [RGHT]

The photographs taken of the church interior in 1953, following the completion of the restoration work, are dramatically lit and show a pristine and vacant interior (Figure 42). It is much plainer than its immediate predecessor. The new oak woodwork is a much lighter shade and has a matte finish. The wood carving on the new pulpit was simplified as an acceptable cost saving. Previously the pulpit had been decorated with highly detailed wood carving by Grinling Gibbons and was far more ornate than the gallery front and supporting columns. The plainer pulpit of the restoration, along with the uniform wood finish, made the pulpit carving similar to the galleries and created a uniform appearance where previously the decoration had emphasised the pulpit. Plain pews replaced the ornate choir stalls and the patterned, marble floor has gone. Throughout the church the new, smooth Portland stone floor provided a uniform backdrop, making the church seem very spacious. The surviving eighteenth-century stone floor in the west, south and north porch areas today give an idea of how the floor must have appeared in the body of the church before the fire. The stone is worn and uneven suggesting many years of use, and many footsteps. A stone floor in churches or cathedrals is often highly evocative of its age and the installation of a new, smooth stone floor to St Alfege Church contradicts this expectation. Similarly, the gallery walls were now blank, the surviving memorials removed and the walls re-plastered. Richardson installed his idiosyncratic 'Torchieres' in these locations. The only wall decoration at gallery level were the relocated benefaction boards on the east wall, which had survived the fire because they had previously been hung in the north and south stairwells. These boards memorialise charitable donations to the church throughout the ages. Their repositioning, on either side of the chancel, promoted their monetary subject and competed visually with the chancel arch. Richardson's standard lamps attached to the new pews in the nave were also eye-catching in the restored interior.



Figure 42. St Alfege Church interior, 1953: (top) view looking south west at gallery level; (bottom) view looking south west at ground level. [RGHT]

Finally, from the west entrance the visitor now had a direct view of the altar, which before the fire had been blocked by the imposing eagle lectern. The 1953 photographs of the restored church interior give the impression of a new unused space, which has retained little evidence of the previous church users or local inhabitants.

A comparison between architectural floor plan drawings of the St Alfege Church made before and during the restoration also reveals a distinct change of approach spatially. The plan drawings of St Alfege Church dating from before 1941 include those made by Frank Collard (published in 1909) and those in the Richardson archive, which are undated but are possibly by C. Lovett Gill, Richardson's professional partner from 1906 to 1939 (Figure 43).⁶⁰¹ The ground and gallery floor layouts shown in these two sets of drawings broadly correlate with each other. There are many more fixed pews, arranged at different angles so as to fill every available space, particularly to the north and south of the choir. The ornate and fixed layout of the choir area (described by Champneys in 1881) is clearly shown, as is the centrally located lectern. Lovett Gill has carefully drawn the pattern of the floor tiles in the chancel and choir, and the old stone floor to the rest of the ground floor. This appears as a bold pattern, suggesting the floor was an important and evocative surface. Indeed, a note was added to the drawing stating 'all tile patterns measured on the spot'. The floor surface must have made a significant contribution to the overall character of the pre-war church interior. To the west of the nave are three spaces, the choir vestry, the clergy vestry and the vestibule, which the drawings depict in a slightly different configuration from that in the post-1953 church. The vestries have doorways here, and perhaps windows, connecting them directly with the back of the nave. In between the vestries, the west vestibule is shown to have had an additional screen with doors, probably to reduce draughts, which divides the space in two.

⁶⁰¹ Frank Allen Collard, 'Parish Church of St. Alfege, Greenwich. Measured Drawings by Frank A. Collard. Attributed to Nicholas Hawksmoor, & the Tower to John James', *The Builders Journal and Architectural Engineer*, July 21, 1909, 64–68; Horsfall Turner, 'Collections in Focus: "A Piece of Good Fortune for the Museum"', 14. This article includes an illustration of a drawing of St James Church, Piccadilly by C. Lovett Gill, which is reminiscent of the drawings of St Alfege Church in the Richardson archive (RGH2/356B, 1-3).

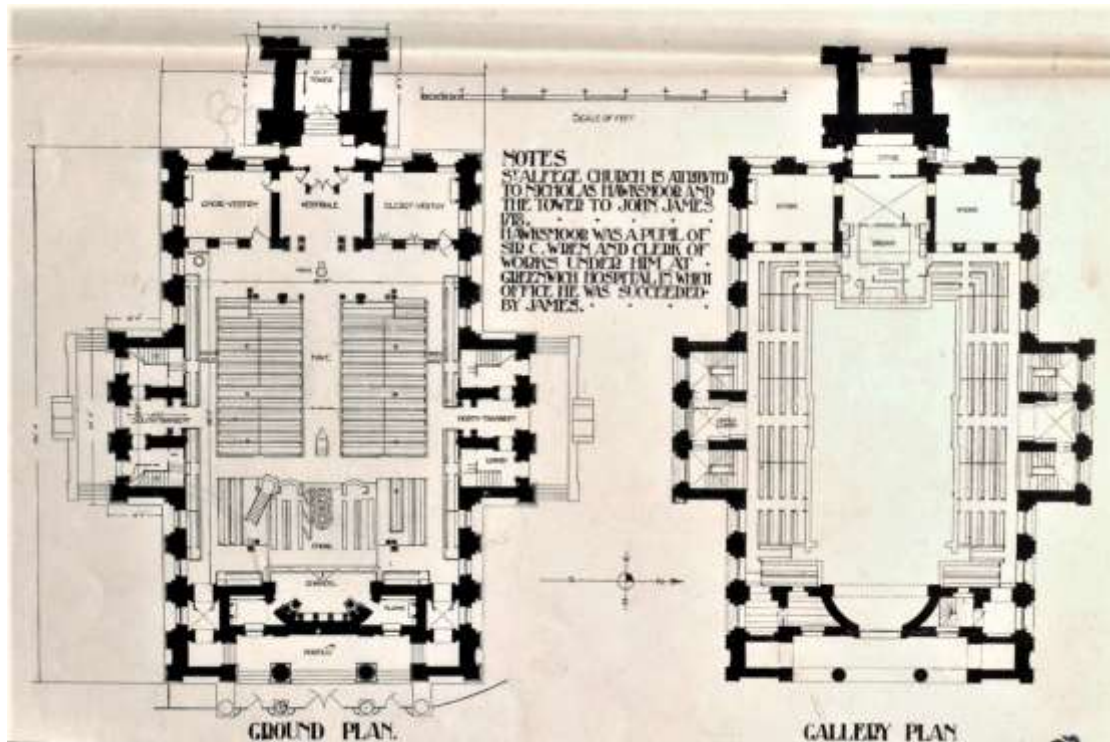
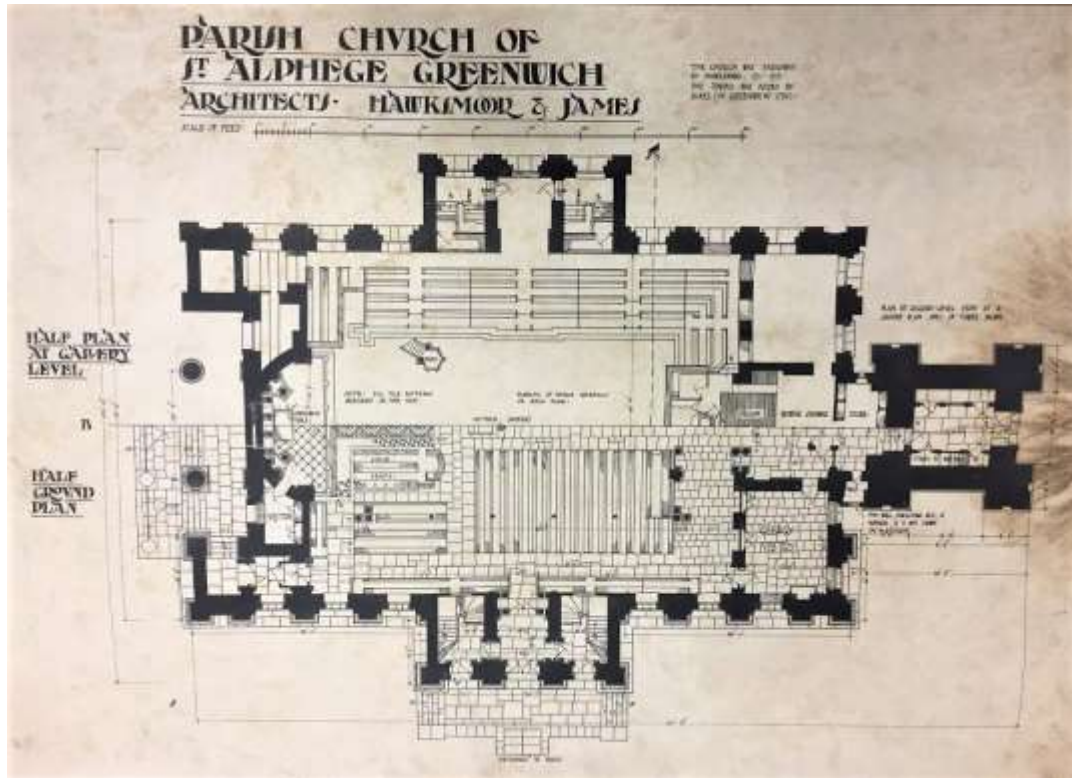


Figure 43. St Alfege Church: (top) undated Floor plan from the Richardson archive, possibly by C. Lovett Gill, c. 1909-39; (bottom) Floor plans drawn by Frank Collard, *The Builders Journal and Architectural Engineer*, 21 July 1909.

So, when compared to the present-day church, the west wall of the nave was more permeable and the west vestibule was a smaller access space. The result was that this western zone served the nave to a greater extent than post-1953, when it was separated into three more independent spaces.

The Richardson archive contains the two plan drawings for the ground floor (numbered 32 and 32a) and two plan drawings for the gallery (numbered 33 and 33a), undated but made during the restoration project (Figure 44).⁶⁰² The Dove Brothers archive contains a print of a Richardson drawing number 91 entitled 'Plan of proposed seating layout' dated 29 May 1952.⁶⁰³ These drawings offer an insight into the development of the internal layout and seating plan for the restored St Alfege Church. One of the key changes Richardson made was to create two side chapels at the east end of the north and south aisles, either side of the choir. He achieved this by adding modern oak screens across the east end of both aisles. This organisational strategy is clear on all three drawings of the layout, but the number of seats associated with the chapels varies. These chapels were named after, and commemorated, the lost churches of St Mary and St Peter.⁶⁰⁴ The chapel of St Mary was in the north aisle, with the silver plaque commemorating the laying of its first stone (discussed in chapter 3) mounted in the adjacent window reveal. This was a deliberate attempt not to forget these two churches, through the dedication of space within St Alfege Church to their memory. The first layout drawings of the ground floor and the gallery level (numbers 32 and 33) showed the choir located in the gallery, near the organ. In front of the chancel an empty, railed space where the choir had been is outlined. However, the next revision of these layout drawings show the choir returned to the previous, and current, position in front of the chancel. A wide central corridor, allowing an open view of the chancel from the nave, was created by moving the choir stalls back towards the sides of the chancel. The nave pews also became wider, increasing the seating capacity.

⁶⁰² BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, reference RGH2/356/32, 32a, 33, 33a.

⁶⁰³ RIBA Drawings & Archives Collection, London (Greenwich): Church of Saint Alphege, design for alterations & additions [Dove, Shelf VIII/63-65], drawing number 91.

⁶⁰⁴ St Peter's Church was built in 1866 and served a separate parish. It was hit by incendiary bombs on 18 September 1940, which caused a substantial fire and the remaining structure was demolished in 1951. The church was located in the playground of the current St Alfege with St Peter's Church of England Primary School in Greenwich.

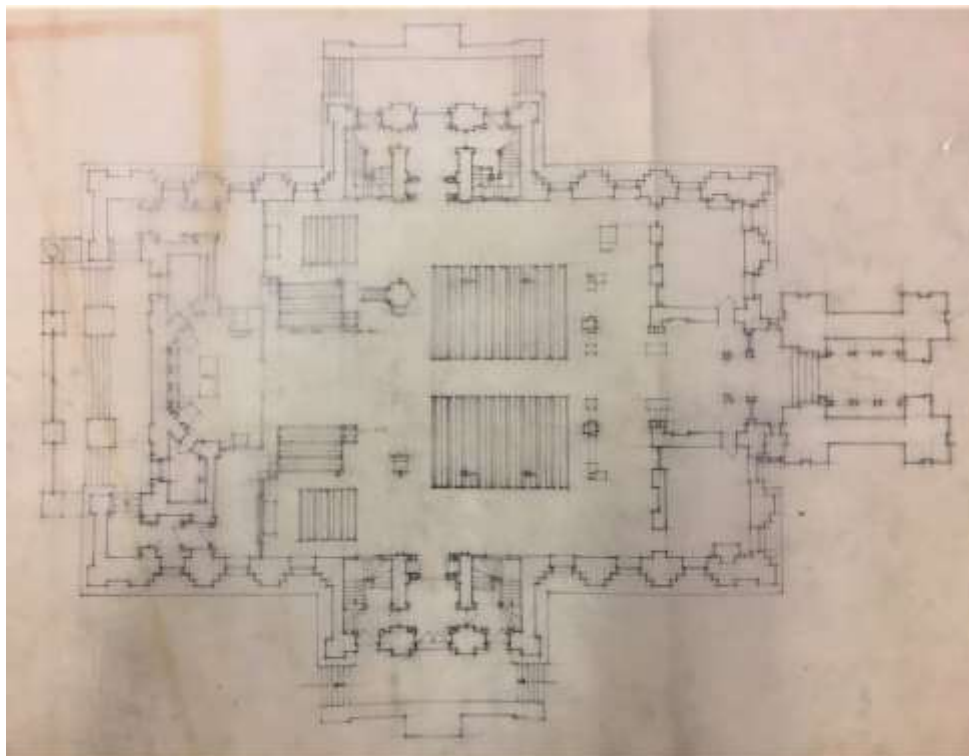
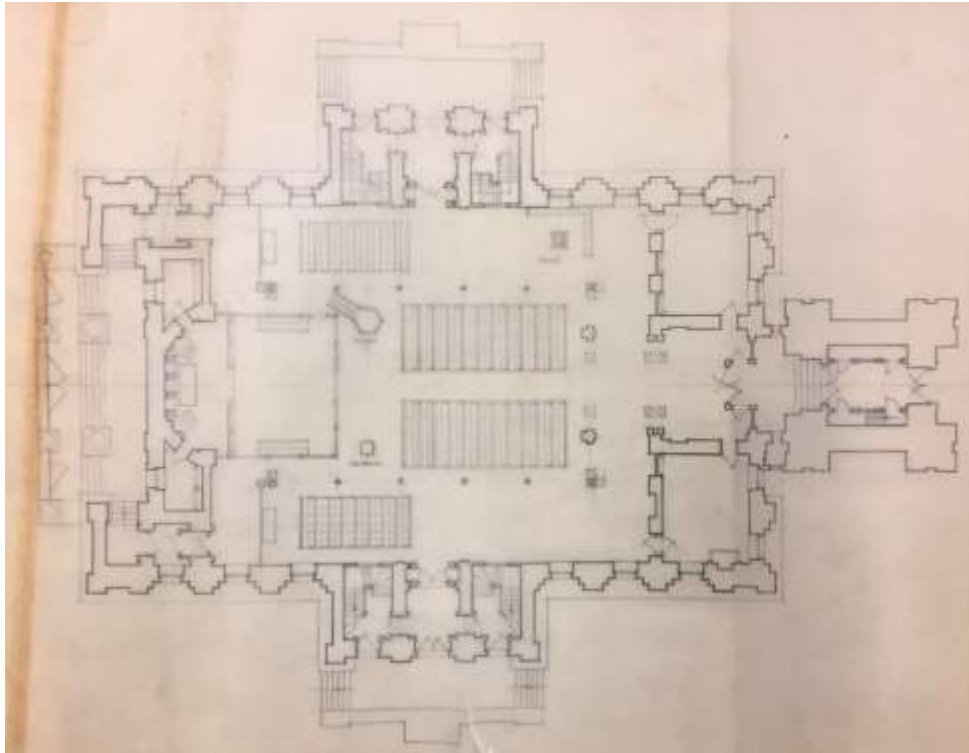


Figure 44. Proposed floor plans for St Alfege Church, (top) dwg no. 32 shows an enclosure in front of the chancel, with the choir located upstairs in the west gallery; (bottom) dwg no. 32a shows choir stalls in front of the chancel and alterations to the pews in the nave and side chapels. [BA, RGH2/356/ 32 and 32a]

The later drawing 'Plan of proposed seating layout' is a larger scale and contains more detail about the furniture and seating layout. It also shows the temporary 'church within a church' and notes that the pews intended for the chapels are to be used in the temporary church. The capacity of the nave is stated as 234, with an additional twenty-five seats in each of the side chapels. Three rows of pews were positioned on each side of the choir area, facing each other across a viewing corridor that had been slightly reduced. The new choir stalls were as plain as the fixed pews in the nave and the new plain stone floor continued up to the chancel rail. A single step level difference between the nave and the choir was introduced, marking the boundary between the two zones. Champneys' Victorian additions to the choir area had sought to extend the sanctified chancel space and emphasised the separation of the nave and choir. In contrast, the 1950s restoration project created a choir that was more a continuation of the nave, thereby reducing the visual separation of nave and chancel.

This sequence of layout drawings illustrated the deliberation over the balance between the different zones on the ground floor of the church, the side chapels, choir and nave. There was no attempt or desire to recreate the pre-war layout of the church. Instead, there was a decisive change in the way the church interior was arranged for worship. The overall transformation of the internal layout of the church was designed to accommodate a smaller congregation. In 1947 Mass Observation published their survey of 'London semi-suburban borough' that investigated *Attitudes to Religion*. Calder summarised their finding that about two-thirds of men and four-fifths of women said they believed in God, although only one person in twenty was ready to profess atheism. A third of the under forties were non-believers. Only four out of ten people said they went to church and, of those who had recently attended an Anglican church, less than a third believed in the key points of church dogma.⁶⁰⁵ This survey painted a picture of decreasing interest in the Anglican church, with church attendance in London declining despite the majority of the population still considering themselves Christian. In Greenwich, St Mary's Church had become redundant as early as 1919 seemingly because of a shrinking congregation, and a local 1958 investigation into the Greenwich Parish

⁶⁰⁵ Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945*, New Ed. (London: Pimlico, 1992), 478; *Puzzled People: A Study in Popular Attitudes to Religion, Ethics, Progress and Politics* (London: Gollancz, 1947), 21–22, 42–52.

Electoral Roll estimated that the congregation was only approximately 2.5% of the local population.⁶⁰⁶

The changes to the interior layout made the church a more adaptable space enabling it to be used for different types of worship and other, secular, activities associated with cultural tourism and the nascent heritage industry. The reduction in seating served to encourage a more varied liturgical use of the space, as well as its use beyond worship. The social positioning reflected in the pew seating allocation seen in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century churches (and discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) was gone. All the pew seating was free seating and the number of fixed pews was severely reduced, by approximately half.⁶⁰⁷ The fixed pews around the perimeter of the nave were omitted, allowing greater access to the internal face of walls so that they could become effective display surfaces. Similarly, movement around the church interior was less constrained by fixed furniture, which encouraged exploration of the building much like a tourist might explore an historic building. Richardson's internal layout was far more flexible, with the rigid Victorian seating plan replaced by more temporary seating that allowed a variety of worship patterns.

Richardson's architectural emphasis on the English Baroque, eighteenth-century, version of St Alfege church eclipsed many accumulated alterations and additions which had previously served a memorial purpose. The alterations to the floor plan of the church also represented a transformation in the operation of the church; the space was more flexible and offered opportunities for new types of use. In 1953 the newly constructed church interior appeared almost as a blank canvas offering a fresh start. The Victorian and Edwardian clutter had been cleared away to reveal the architectural glory of the wood carving and a new spatial arrangement for the church interior, which allowed the focus to be on the iconic architecture.

⁶⁰⁶ St Alfege Church Archive, box 6, 1958 analysis of the Parish Electoral Roll with annotated map.

⁶⁰⁷ John Charles Bennett, 'The English Anglian Practice of Pew Renting, 1800-1960' (d_ph, University of Birmingham, 2011), 80, accessed July 16, 2020, <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk//id/eprint/2864/>. Table 1 includes a record of pew rental returns for St Alfege Church between 1881 and 1924; source documents are held by the LMA.

Commemoration of the Restoration Project

The publicity surrounding the St Alfege restoration celebrated the project as a triumph of modern ingenuity and craftsmanship, framed as qualities that expressed British strength and resilience. Richardson promoted the restoration story in a light-hearted but momentous fashion, encouraging an historic appreciation of the church that would attract visitors. Both the 1953 *Memoir* booklet and the transcripts of speeches, found in the St Alfege Church archive, illustrate this form of patriotic memorialisation. The speeches were given at an event held inside St Alfege Church for a 'famous society', as the Rev. Stephen Nason addressed the audience, and were later quoted in the *Memoir*.⁶⁰⁸ The audience might have been the Blackheath Historical Society, because the vicar made several references to Blackheath, rather than Greenwich. Nason introduced Lt. Col. Dove, Glyn Jones and Professor Richardson as his fellow speakers. He announced that:

This church stands and will stand as a great monument to British craftsmanship. This work of restoration which I have watched with such growing enthusiasm and zeal during the last 2½ years, is an abiding witness to what can be accomplished in our own day and generation.

(As Nason arrived at St Alfege Church in 1950, this suggests a date for the event in late 1952.) Dove described the stage of the project they had reached, which also gives an indication of the date:

The Contract 2, as I said, was for the remainder of the work, much of which has not unfortunately been completed, but there have been terrific difficulties, and the Professor knows that better than I do;

He was anxious to reassure the audience that his firm were working diligently on the project, suggesting he felt under pressure to complete the job. Continuing the celebration of the work force and the craftsmanship at St Alfege Church, Dove adapted Wren's epitaph at St Paul's Cathedral: 'If you want to see the work of the modern-day craftsman, have a look round this church'.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ St Alfege archives: Box 7: talks given by the Rev. Stephen Nason, Lt Col Dove, Glyn Jones and Richardson (venue St Alfege Church; undated but approx. November 1952; 7 pages). The typed sheets match in terms of typeface and paper and they refer to each other in the text.

⁶⁰⁹ The text on Wren's tomb in St Paul's Cathedral is 'Lector, si monumentum requiris circumspice' or 'Reader if you seek his monument look around you'.

Glyn Jones described his recreation of Thornhill's decoration of the chancel, but unfortunately the transcript of his talk is missing the first part. He discussed the technical qualities of the paint employed by Thornhill (egg tempura) and the detective work he carried out to establish the exact configuration of the chancel apse coffering.⁶¹⁰ Setting out the detailed dimensions of the coffering in the apse, so as reproduce Thornhill's optical illusion of greater depth, was a complex task that took six weeks. Jones tried to convey a sense of the 'Thornhill feeling' and his understanding of the logic of the composition:

I got the sensation that I was doing something in a particular place attacking that particular problem in the precise place where someone had attacked that same problem before and I felt myself being moulded into the right answer.

He was clearly very absorbed by his work and felt it was important to emphasise the connection to Thornhill, inferring that he experienced a spiritual affinity with the previous artist and enhancing the authenticity of his work. The *Memoir* also gave a detailed description of Jones' work, as part of the 'romance of this resurrection'.⁶¹¹ Richardson humorously remarked

There is no doubt in my mind that Hawksmore [sic] rather hoped that Thornhill would paint the ceiling. Whether Mr Glyn Jones had any further consultation on that with Thornhill I don't know.

He gave a colourful version of the project, mentioning the intention to 'discuss the first stage' (which again indicates a date in 1952), when the first contract for the roof and ceiling was complete but the second contract for the interior work was still underway. Interestingly the texts make it clear that the event was being held inside the church, despite it still being a building site. Richardson referred to the WDC reluctance to pay for the reinstatement of the Thornhill mural painting in defiant terms and with reference to Nelson's famous quotation:

But we have discovered the original painting underneath and we have defied the War Damage people. The great thing in life especially in these times is defying the

⁶¹⁰ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RG4/120, 'Various' correspondence file, 6-page letter from Jones to Richardson, 16 July 1951. Jones description correlates with his earlier letter to Richardson.

⁶¹¹ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 6, 9–10. There is a photograph of Glyn Jones at work on p.9.

Authorities. It is a very good thing. You want to use a telescope, put it to the blind eye and say you see no signal and you generally get around the right way.

He considered St Alfege Church better than anything in Rome (he had recently visited the city) and a 'symbol of the British character'. The restoration project was a 'message of hope for the future'. Richardson was effusive in his praise for Hawksmoor – the church was a 'masterpiece', equal to a cathedral, 'a giant design' and Hawksmoor's 'best work' - despite barely mentioning Hawksmoor in *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture* published three years earlier.⁶¹² He praised the 'clean fresh' appearance of the new oak and considered the previous Victorian dark varnish finish to the woodwork oppressive.⁶¹³ Richardson reassured the audience that everything was in hand, including the fabrication of the new pulpit, the casing and the pews, although none of these items were on site. The standard lamps in the galleries, or 'torchieres', he described as 'very fine but very expensive', acknowledging that they were an extravagance; their vaguely art deco appearance bore no relation to any restoration criteria.

The overwhelming impression conveyed by these speeches was the celebration and veneration of the labourers and craftsmen who had carried out the physical tasks associated with the restoration of the church. Richardson at one point said:

The destruction of this building during the late war filled everyone with dismay, the glass was destroyed, the roof was burned and was wrecked, but by this miracle of the craftsmen and everyone concerned it has been restored.

This desire to memorialise the physical work and the working man meant emphasising the fabric of the building and elevating it to an almost holy position (note the use of the word 'miracle'). The idea of teamwork had been central to public information about the war effort and this stance had a patriotic flavour.⁶¹⁴ For several years after the Second World War, the British population continued to experience significant shortages and austerity, requiring a similar fortitude to the war years.⁶¹⁵ So, the veneration of the working man was a politically astute position during this post-war era.⁶¹⁶ Richardson

⁶¹² Richardson, *An Introduction to Georgian Architecture*.

⁶¹³ Derrick, 'The Post-War Reconstruction of Wren's City Churches', 34. Discusses the 1953 restoration of St Vedast in the City, where the architect (Dykes Bower) made the unusual choice to use a dark wood stain 'redolent of Wren's interiors, which few other architects bothered to emulate'.

⁶¹⁴ Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 1991).

⁶¹⁵ David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945-1951* (A&C Black, 2008).

⁶¹⁶ Roy Strong, *The Story of Britain; A People's History* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 504–511.

finished his talk by extending this thought process to contemplate the anonymous members of Wren's workforce:

What do we know of the Craftsmen employed by Wren? The makers of wood, carvers, hewers of stone all have gone without a trace, with the exception of the master mason Strong, and of course the Grinling Gibbons, and Bird the sculptor and Tijou the French iron worker. Nothing is known of the vast numbers of craftsmen who built for Sir Christopher Wren.

By connecting the workers on the restoration to those of Hawksmoor's era, Richardson was making a claim for the restored church as a national monument worthy of the huge effort its restoration had entailed and possibly as a patriotic memorial to the civilian war effort.

The Reconfiguration of National Memorialisation Processes

Richardson's restoration project at St Alfege Church contributed to a national debate on the treatment of churches damaged during the Blitz. The cause of the damage to these churches (by German aggressors threatening the country as a whole) had generated a public response that focused on the building fabric of the churches, and their architectural role within an urban area. Contemplation of the role of war-damaged historic buildings within towns or cities stimulated new ideas about heritage, a concept that is discussed further in chapter 5. The government had responded to the wartime destruction by enlarging the Ministry of Works from 6,000 staff in 1939 to 22,000 in 1946.⁶¹⁷ The Ancient Monuments Department became concerned with 'post-medieval urban buildings' for the first time and they instigated a national building survey (the 'Salvage Scheme') carried out by local architects who compiled lists of notable buildings. Local authorities were then required to consult the Ministry of Works about alterations to any of these listed buildings. This survey work was treated as urgent both during and following the war. The creation of the National Buildings Record (NBR), started in 1941, ran in parallel to this survey. Initiated by the RIBA and supported by the Georgian Group (Richardson was an active member of both organisations), the NBR endeavoured to compile a photographic database of historic buildings.⁶¹⁸ These nationally-instigated

⁶¹⁷ Thurley, *Men from the Ministry: How Britain Saved Its Heritage*, 197.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 200; Houfe, Powers, and Wilton-Ely, *Sir Albert Richardson 1880-1964*, 19, 72.

projects were generated by a heightened desire to rescue or save these historic, sometimes damaged, buildings in response to the physical and cultural impacts of the war.

Within this developing national awareness of Britain's built heritage, Richardson's celebration and memorialisation of the eighteenth-century St Alfege Church emphasised its connection to Nicholas Hawksmoor, who had only recently become a highly regarded figure within architectural history.⁶¹⁹ Summerson's admiration of Hawksmoor's London churches in his 1945 *Georgian London* had prompted a new appreciation for Hawksmoor's buildings amongst scholars.⁶²⁰ Another influential publication that boosted Hawksmoor's reputation was *Old London Churches* published in 1953 by Elizabeth and Wayland Young, partly in support of their campaign to restore Hawksmoor's Christchurch, Spitalfields.⁶²² The Youngs greatly admired Hawksmoor's six London churches; as they wrote:

... they are the much the most purely architectural of all London's churches, bombed, decayed, altered though they may be. In them one is not aware of the parishioners, nor very much the Church of England. They are heroic, monumental, and unconstructed; utterly without meanness or gaudy pride; occasionally with a soaring certainty.⁶²³

They firmly positioned Hawksmoor's churches as national architectural icons and considered their role as parish churches to be a secondary purpose. The Youngs praised Richardson's restoration of St Alfege Church as 'so careful that the church is now, with the exception of the spire, nearer Hawksmoor's [sic] intention than are any of his others'.⁶²⁴ Richardson had used similar heroic language both in the 1953 *Memoir* and his 1952 public speech, when describing Hawksmoor's talents and St Alfege Church:

... such a building must be preserved as a national possession, a source of inspiration to craftsmen down the ages, for it marks the greatest achievement of the English development of the Baroque style, and shows how the individuality of Hawksmoor, so thoroughly English and masculine, breaks through the elegance

⁶¹⁹ Hopkins, *From the Shadows*, 194–232. Chapter Five 'Into the Light'.

⁶²⁰ Summerson, *Georgian London*, 58–61.

⁶²² Elizabeth Young and Wayland Young, *Old London Churches* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1956).

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

and superficiality of the French and Italian influences, to produce a building in all its majestic strength and simplicity.⁶²⁵

Richardson successfully promoted the restoration of St Alfege Church as a historic landmark that memorialised Hawksmoor's genius. His reinterpretation of the church interior strengthened St Alfege Church's affiliation to Hawksmoor's wider oeuvre, including the national monuments of the nearby Royal Hospital for Seamen and St Paul's Cathedral. But he also set Hawksmoor up as a thoroughly English genius: symbol of stalwart Britishness.

Despite this focus on Hawksmoor, Richardson was selective about which elements of the church building he chose to restore accurately. He curated the church interior in such a way that enabled him to define it as a restoration of Hawksmoor's work (which was equally important for the WDC claim) but also to create an interior that chimed with contemporary architectural taste, incorporated modern engineering and provided a more flexible space allowing different modes of worship and encouraging secular visitors. The restored interior of St Alfege Church was detached from its recent past and reformulated as a composite design that incorporated early eighteenth-century elements and twentieth-century materials and techniques. This was no doubt often caused by the scarcity of materials and the need to prioritise resources. Richardson, however, adopted an approach that lavished attention on the visible surfaces (the woodcarving and plasterwork were both meticulously reproduced) while the hidden structural challenges, and heating and lighting provision, were all solved using contemporary methods and materials. So, the extent to which the Hawksmoor church was memorialised through the construction process was limited to certain key elements. The restoration of the church interior bore little resemblance to the pre-war church interior and its Victorian aspects, as demonstrated by the comparison between the publicity photographs taken of the completed, unoccupied church in 1953 (published in *Country Life* and in Downes's monograph on Hawksmoor) and the photographs of the interior taken before 1941.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁵ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 14.

⁶²⁶ Historic England Archive, Architectural 'Red Box' Collection, Greater London: Greenwich, Churches A – ST. AL; seven cards with photographs of the pre-1941 St Alfege church interior, 3256_125, 131, 133, 140, 142, 144, 146. RGHT holds copies of two of these photographs.

But the church interior Richardson created would have been no less unfamiliar to its eighteenth-century architect and parishioners.

St Alfege Church was first listed Grade 1 in October 1951, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1944, which formalised the building's architectural importance. The 'List Entry Description' focused mainly on the church exterior, but specifically identified the old and the new architectural elements throughout the church, implying that they had a different value.⁶²⁷ This detailed, technical approach suggests that Richardson's ideas about church building conservation and his endeavour to recreate Hawksmoor's church interior did not fully align with the new legal interpretation of building heritage. This official record of the church instead highlighted the differences in age between the various elements and emphasised the authenticity of the older building fabric.

Richardson also reconfigured the individual memorials inside the church, omitting many memorial plaques to local parishioners but reinforcing the memorial presence of two significant national figures. In the south west corner of the nave Richardson introduced a memorial display to Thomas Tallis (1505-85) and in the north west corner the memorials to General James Wolfe (1727-59) were enhanced. Both men had strong historical connections to the church that had been promoted in 1933 to aid fundraising efforts and during the restoration their memorials were further developed into historical exhibits.

The emphatic memorialisation of Wolfe in the north west corner of the nave extended the appeal of St Alfege Church beyond Greenwich, and towards Canada. Wolfe's body was (and still is) in his father's private vault in the church crypt, purchased in 1759 and located below what became 'Wolfe Corner'. In 1838 Greenwood wrote:

Here also is interred, (but if there be any monument, it must be so obscure as to be very easily overlooked,) the illustrious General Wolfe: he was buried in this

⁶²⁷ List Entry Description, Entry 1358970, Grade 1, first listed 19 October 1951, GREENWICH CHURCH STREET SE10 4412 (West Side) Church of St Alfege TQ 3877 26/G1 19.10.51. A 2. 1711-14 by Nicholas Hawksmoor. 'Interior almost completely remodelled after war damage. West organ gallery and side galleries renewed. Ceiling plasterwork with oval raised border also renewed. Corinthian columns of reredos remain. East wall repainted in imitation coffered apse. Restoration by Albert Richardson in 1950's. Original staircases remain in transepts. C17 baluster font on North-west end.' <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1358970>, accessed 6 Dec 2019.

church, near his father, who, as well as the General himself, was for some years resident at Blackheath.⁶²⁸

This signalled the first impulse towards the memorialisation that developed for General Wolfe at the church, which was to become such an important aspect of the church's history, and its international appeal, in the twentieth century. A separate plaque records that the brass memorial to Wolfe was 'raised by public subscription' and unveiled by Field Marshall Sir George White in November 1908. The text of the memorial stated that Wolfe was 'victorious on the heights above Quebec 13 September 1759 thereby adding Canada to the empire'.⁶²⁹ In 1930 Greenwich was again the focus of diplomatic relations between the Canadians, English and French, when a statue of General Wolfe was erected in Greenwich Park, in a prominent position next to the Royal Observatory.⁶³⁰

As we have already seen, Richardson endorsed this association with the former empire in his paper to the Friends of the City Churches in 1946. He was also keen to extend the symbolism of the churches worldwide by establishing these connections, which acknowledged the support these countries had provided during the Second World War. At St Alfege Church a firm historic connection with Canada was already established through the presence of Wolfe's body. During the service of re-dedication for St Alfege Church in April 1953 the restored memorial to Wolfe was unveiled by Sir Campbell Stuart, as part of the service conducted by the Lord Bishop of Southwark. A Canadian flag was then unfurled by Captain H. V. W. Groos (Senior Naval Officer, Canadian Joint Staff) 'in grateful recognition of the gallant services of the Canadian Forces during the War of 1914-18.'⁶³² The memorialisation of Wolfe was an important international historic claim for the church, which gained national attention when the re-dedication service was reported in *The Times* with a headline that mentioned Wolfe.⁶³³ The Canadian connection was eye-catching.

⁶²⁸ Greenwood, *An Epitome of County History, Wherein the Most Remarkable Objects, Persons, and Events, Are Briefly Treated of*. Vol. 1, 17.

⁶²⁹ NADFAS, Record of Church Furnishings, 1984; items 7(A), 7(B) and 8.

⁶³⁰ The statue was a gift from the Canadians and unveiled by a descendant of the Commander-in-Chief of the French forces that were Wolfe's opponents in 1759.

⁶³² Greenwich Parish Church, 'Service of Re-dedication', Saturday, 18th April, 1953 at 3.0 pm. Greenwich Heritage Trust archive, reference G270.

⁶³³ *The Times*, 'Greenwich Parish Church Rededicated; links with General Wolfe', April 20, 1953, Issue 52600, p.8.

In the opposite, south west, corner is the memorial exhibit to Tallis. He was probably buried beneath the chancel of the pre-1710 church and, according to contemporary accounts, a white marble memorial had previously been located in the east end of the chancel of that earlier church, which read:

This monument was erected to preserve the memory of the Incomparable Mr Thomas Talis (sic) who lies buried near this place, and had on his Gravestone this underwritten epitaph.⁶³⁴

In 1876, the text of his poetic epitaph from 1585 was reproduced on a gothic style brass memorial plaque and installed in St Alfege Church.⁶³⁵ Tallis has been described as a 'Father of English Church Music'.⁶³⁶ As a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal during the lifetimes of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I, he had a strong association with the Tudor monarchy. His wife, Joan Tallis was also buried at the church and her name recorded on the benefaction boards. In 1587, two years after her husband's death, she donated 10 shillings annually to 'Mr Lambard's poor'.⁶³⁷ During the 1950s restoration project the memorialisation of Tallis was renewed and developed into 'Tallis Corner'. The ancient church organ had been partially destroyed during the 1941 fire and a new one was installed during the restoration, 'which was built by Messrs. Spurden Rutt, and is to be a permanent memorial to Thomas Tallis, 1505-85, the Father of English Church Music.'⁶³⁸ The unusual keyboard of the old organ had survived the fire and was installed as an exhibit in 'Tallis Corner' inside a lit display cabinet that filled in the second doorway into the choir vestry, next to the memorial plaque.

This memorialisation of Tallis enables St Alfege Church to attract a musical audience, and is part of a well-established tradition; a tercentenary festival to

⁶³⁴ Bishop Kennet, 'Monumenta et Inscriptiones in Ecclesia Parochiali de GRENVICH in Agro Cantiano, Mense Julio 1705', 1705, 114, Lansdowne MS 938 f.150, British Library; 'Baker's Cambridge Collections; Monumenta et Inscriptiones in Ecclesia Parochiali de Greenwich in Agro Cantiano', 1715, 118, Harleian MS 7048 art.10, British Library.

⁶³⁵ NADFAS *Church Record*, items 21 and 24.

⁶³⁶ Suzanne Cole, *Thomas Tallis and His Music in Victorian England* (Boydell & Brewer, 2008). and <https://www.st-alfege.org/Groups/298238/Music.aspx> (accessed 8 September 2020).

⁶³⁷ NADFAS *Church Record*, item 502.

⁶³⁸ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 12.

commemorate Tallis was held at St Alfege Church in November 1885.⁶³⁹ In the present-day the church's memorialisation of Tallis flourishes through the performances of the Tallis Choir, who regularly hold recitals within the church that attract large audiences. 'Tallis corner' also reminds visitors of the church's strong connection to the Tudor dynasty and the royal household in the sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁰ The pre-1710 church had many memorials to members of the royal household (see below) who lived at the nearby Tudor palace during the sixteenth century. As we have seen, these memorials were lost when the church was rebuilt by Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission, but Tallis was singled out for re-commemoration.

The Reconfiguration of Local Memorialisation Processes

The reduction of the St Alfege Church congregation size during the first half of the twentieth century made the church itself less directly representative of the local population than in previous centuries. However, it still played a strong civic role within the town, and its national and international reputation thrived as a result of the focus on these national figures and the restoration. At a local level, however, the memorial functions of the church were less secure.

During the war, St Alfege Church crypt had been used as a bomb shelter for local inhabitants. On 3 March 1941, George Orwell visited the crypt and wrote in his diary:

Last night with G. to see the shelter in the crypt under Greenwich church. The usual wooden and sacking bunks, dirty (no doubt also lousy when it gets warmer), ill-lighted and smelly, but not on this particular night very crowded. The crypt is simply a system of narrow passages running between vaults on which are the names of the families buried in them, the most recent being about 1800 ... G. and the others insisted that I had not seen it at its worst, because on nights when it is crowded (about 250 people) the stench is said to be almost insupportable. I stuck to it, however, although none of the others would agree with me, that it is far worse for children to be playing about among vaults full of corpses than that they should have to put up with a certain amount of living human smell.

⁶³⁹ *Order of Service. "Tallis" Commemoration Service Held in St. Alfege Church, Greenwich, November 23rd, 1885, Being the Tercentenary Festival, Etc. [Consisting of the Litany, with Anthems, Etc.]* (Greenwich: H Richardson, 1885).

⁶⁴⁰ Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (Yale University Press, 2018), 6. It is possible that Henry VIII was baptised at St Alfege Church, but Marshall suggests not.

When the incendiary devices hit the church on 19 March the crypt was full of people, who all survived. Orwell noted in his diary that the occupants were unharmed by the fire and, in fact, reluctant to leave.⁶⁴¹ This shows that the church building was robust and was regarded as a protective building by the local inhabitants. Orwell also conveyed a general ambivalence about the presence of the dead, to which he objected.

There are 1,058 bodies in the burial vaults of St Alfege Church Crypt, which were interred between 1720 and 1814 (with one outlier in 1842).⁶⁴² The occupants of both St Alfege and St Mary's crypts were the wealthiest local inhabitants, and the crypts provided a valuable income for the churches. A price list for various services associated with the death of a parishioner, regulated by 25 Geo. II, was published in 1816 and the cost of a private vault was twenty pounds, and interment in the Parish Vault was one pound.⁶⁴³ By 1941 there were many stone memorial tablets mounted on the walls inside St Alfege Church, linked to wealthy people interred in the crypt below. This method of memorialising the dead connected the crypt with the church interior above. After the crypt was closed in 1859, however, new memorials installed within the church no longer implied an on-site burial, which changed their purpose. Rather than marking a burial place, the memorials sought to preserve a more intangible connection between the church and its parishioners. In the western vestibule, Richardson gathered together a collection of stone wall tablets that were memorials to well-known local inhabitants, creating a museum-type display. Visitors arriving at the main west entrance were greeted by this display, which proclaimed the parish's long history and famous inhabitants, such as the astronomer royal Sir George Biddell Airy (1801-92). So, Richardson edited and relocated the stone wall tablet memorials within the church to suit his 'eighteenth-century' vision for the restored church interior and promote the church's

⁶⁴¹ George Orwell, '20.3.41', *Orwell Diaries 1938-1942*, March 20, 2011, accessed June 19, 2019, <https://orwelldiaries.wordpress.com/2011/03/20/20-3-41/>.

⁶⁴² Burns and Kadwell, *Greenwich Churchyard; Monumental Inscriptions*. RGHT, unpublished, signed by G. J. Burns and dated 1923.

⁶⁴³ John Kimbell, *An Account of the Legacies, Gifts, Rents, Fees, Etc Appertaining to the Church and Poor of the Parish of St Alphege, Greenwich in the County of Kent* (Greenwich 1816, 1816), 32; England, *An Act to Enable the Parishioners of the Parish of East Greenwich in ... Kent, to Deposit Corpses in the Vaults or Arches under the Church in the Said Parish, and to Ascertain the Fees That Shall Be Paid for the Same*. [25 Geo. II c.11]. £20 in 1752 would be worth £4,381 in 2019; £20 in 1825 would be worth £1,883 in 2019; <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator> (accessed 8 September 2020).

connections to histories associated with famous local residents. As noted above, the photographic evidence shows that Richardson moved many of the stone memorials that had survived the fire, particularly at gallery level. Those which were not found an alternative position in the west vestibule were stored in the crypt corridors, alongside others from St Mary's Church, where they remain today.

As a result, the body of the church had uncluttered wall surfaces and looked renewed, but the clearance disguised the age and ancestry of the building. Two other Hawksmoor London churches, St George's Church, Bloomsbury, and St Mary Woolnoth, did not suffer such extensive war damage, and their present-day interiors include collections of stone wall tablet memorials dating from the eighteenth century onwards. These give an idea of how the interior of St Alfege Church might have looked with its full collection of stone wall tablet memorials intact. Interestingly, the removal and relocation of memorials at St Alfege Church also contrasts with Richardson's other restoration project at St James, Piccadilly where stone wall tablets from a long time span appear to have been left in their original position (Figure 45).⁶⁴⁴ In these churches, a sense of the passage of time is conveyed by the visual evidence of previous generations provided by these stone wall tablets, which has been suppressed at St Alfege Church.

Although Richardson's restoration project concentrated on the church interior, it also altered the external memorial space around the church, continuing a process that had started when the burial ground was closed to burials in 1853. The churchyard and burial ground associated with St Alfege Church had been used for thousands of burials before it was closed, following the 1852 Metropolitan Burial Act. Up until this time, it was a crucial site for parochial and congregational memory-keeping.

⁶⁴⁴ Further research into St James, Piccadilly would be necessary to establish the different circumstances that resulted in the memorials being treated differently during Richardson's restoration of that church.



Figure 45. St James, Piccadilly: surviving stone tablet memorials from 1753, 1788, 1794 and 1820, with (at the top) a replacement stone tablet memorial for a 1699 tomb destroyed by bomb damage in 1941. [AF Aug 2019]

The 1711 Act to Build Fifty New Churches had sought to prohibit burials within its new church buildings and put pressure on the parish to buy land to expand their burial ground beyond the existing church yard. The St Alfege Church burial ground had been extended in 1716, 1744 and 1808 and had received close to 45,000 bodies in that time.⁶⁴⁵ In the 1830s the churchyard was extended again, to the south of the church towards the Mitre Tavern; here five chest tombs were built. In 1711 the Church Commissioners had first tried to separate the burial of the dead from the church building, for both structural and philosophical reasons, but it was not until the nineteenth century that the law enforced the closure of the burial ground and crypt altogether.⁶⁴⁶ Both St Alfege churchyard and

⁶⁴⁵ Hasted, Streatfield, and Larking, *Hasted's History of Kent, Corrected, Enlarged, and Continued to the Present Time. Part 1 The Hundred of Blackheath*, 97.

⁶⁴⁶ Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London', 41; Toni Sutton, 'The Effect on Mortality of the 1848-1849 Cholera Epidemic in the Parish of St Alfege, within the Registration District of Greenwich' (Strathclyde, 2011), 30. In 1849, 718 people died from cholera in the parish of Greenwich.

the burial ground were closed to burials in 1853 (Figure 46). Thirty-six years later, in 1889, the management and maintenance of the western burial ground was transferred to the local authority (Greenwich District Board of Works) and the area was converted into a public park by the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association.⁶⁴⁸ To create the new park, many gravestones were relocated to the perimeter boundary – although the more substantial monuments remained in situ – and 500 trees were planted. By this time, no-one had been buried on the site for many years and it seems that the memorialisation of the numerous dead on this site was unequal to the appeal of ‘green space’ within an urban area.⁶⁴⁹

The association between the gravestones, the bodies they memorialised and the eastern orientation of the church was lost: this was part of a wider trend, which as Laqueur has suggested, seems to have marked the passing of the ‘old regime’ of burials and church building being closely integrated, with a ‘congregation of the dead’ residing in the churchyard.⁶⁵⁰ A hierarchy of grave locations had existed in the St Alfege churchyard, with the southern area being the most prestigious and the northern area the least desirable. The eastern orientation of the graves had corresponded to the orientation of the church building, which gave a strong visual connection and indicated that they were part of the same overall design. So, the position of a gravestone was significant and part of its memorial purpose. With the emergence of the ‘new regime’ and the advent of cemeteries, the ‘congregation of the dead’ were separated from the parish church and its locale and removed to an idyllic garden.⁶⁵¹ Similarly, when in 1889 the St Alfege Church burial ground (see fig. 46) was transformed into a public garden for the benefit of the living, the local dead were transported to the new Greenwich Cemetery opened in 1856 on a hillside three miles away, near Woolwich.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁸ See the website of the London Parks & Gardens Trust, www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.php?ID=GRN051# (accessed 25 Nov 2019).

⁶⁴⁹ Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London', 49–53.

⁶⁵⁰ Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, 112–141. Chapter 4, 'The Churchyard and the Old Regime'.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 211–260. Chapter 5, 'The Cemetery and the New Regime'.

⁶⁵² Greenwich Cemetery was founded in 1856 by the Greenwich Burial Board and contains two gothic chapels. www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.php?ID=GRN026 (accessed 4 December 2019).



Figure 46. St Alfege Church, plan of the churchyard and burial ground, Kimbell 1816. To the west of the church, beyond the church passage, three distinct parcels of land are shown forming the 'Burial Ground'. This area was converted into St Alfege Park in 1889. The 'Church Yard' that is immediately adjacent to the church was extended to the south, towards the Mitre Tavern, in the 1830s.

After the 1889 conversion of the burial ground into a public park, St Alfege Church retained its churchyard and the church site returned to its 1711 footprint. This area immediately around St Alfege Church, including the western courtyard, had not been touched by the 1889 alterations. During the 1950s restoration project, the transformation of the church's external setting into more generic green space continued. Before the bombing in 1941, the western churchyard between the church and the parish hall was accessible only on foot, via St Alfege Passage. The southern edge had been enclosed by houses along Roan Street, but these had also suffered bomb damage in 1941 and were demolished. Before restoration work started at the church, the church took the opportunity to purchase this newly vacant piece of land on Roan Street and created a vehicular access point from the street into the churchyard (Figure 47).



Figure 47. St Alfege Church purchase of land facing Roan Street; Plan of Conveyance dated 29 June 1948. The land being acquired is shaded red and the ‘western courtyard’ was formed to the north of the shaded area, west of the church. [RGHT]

In September 1952 Richardson produced a watercolour drawing that depicted an aerial view of the proposed new western courtyard, accessed from Roan Street. The double entrance gates had a small house either side and a driveway circled the new ‘Western Courtyard’ (Figure 48).⁶⁵⁹ This proposed scheme showed a symmetrical and rational arrangement of new buildings and landscaping that overwrote the previous ancient churchyard character of the ground.

⁶⁵⁹ Church of St Alfege Greenwich, *Greenwich Parish Church, St. Alfege. A memoir of the restoration. [With illustrations.]*, 16. The caption states that Richardson exhibited this drawing at the Royal Academy in 1952. The colour original now hangs in the Vicar’s vestry at St Alfege Church.

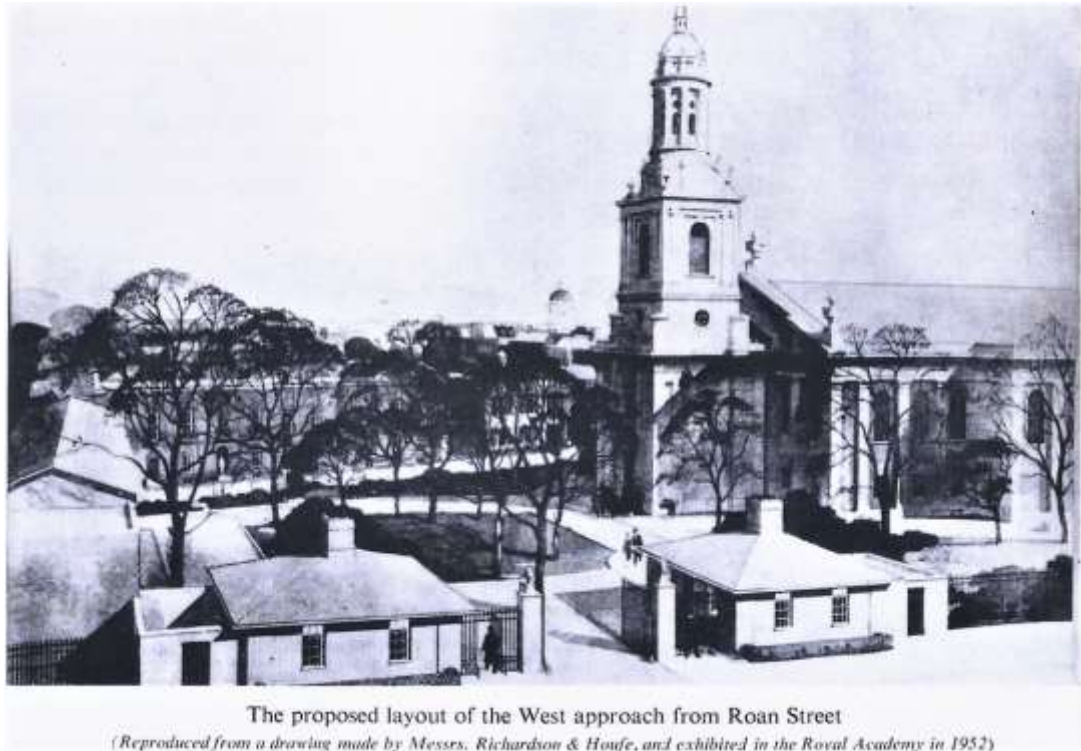


Figure 48. A. E. Richardson, View of St Alfege Church and the proposed new West Courtyard and Approach, watercolour drawing. Greenwich Parish Church, St Alfege, A memoir of the Restoration (1953).

Gravestones were moved to the perimeter (as had happened in St Alfege Park in 1889) and the area lost its memorial role as a burial site.⁶⁶⁰ The construction of the roadway to form the turning circle required excavation in an area full of pre-1853 graves, but this was not discussed in Richardson’s correspondence with either the Contractors or the Vicar. The absence of recent burials liberated the land for development and the western churchyard was converted into a more utilitarian green space. The precedent set by the 1889 conversion of the burial ground into St Alfege Park, along with the practical advantages, appears to have justified this transformation of the graveyard. Richardson’s orientation towards the national and heroic, rather than the more everyday local parish history, led to many memorials associated with the everyday local history being overlooked and eventually forgotten.

⁶⁶⁰ BA, Richardson Archive, St Alphege Church, Greenwich, RGH4/120, ‘Vicar’ file, letter from Nason to Richardson, 12 April 1951 – Nason enquired whether the ‘surplus headstones’ could be ‘used as railings’.

The reorganisation and curation of the memorials at St Alfege church included the addition of some new memorials, as part of the restoration project. These show what was important to the architect, incumbent and PCC. A stone floor tablet commemorating St Alfege provided a new, prominent, memorialisation of the church's patronal saint and reinforced the connection between the church and its location. The Rev. Stephen Nason considered the church restoration complete when, in 1957, this large inscribed slate slab was installed in the floor, directly in front of the chancel.⁶⁶¹ He had given careful thought to the wording of this memorial, though in consultation with Richardson who was, by this time, considered an authority on the church.⁶⁶² It read:

This church stands on ground hallowed by Alfege, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyred here, 19th April 1012, 'he who dies for justice dies for Christ'

This memorial is still an important feature of the church and flowers decorate the slab on St Alfege Day in April, much as flowers are left at gravestones to mark a visit.

Another memorial added in 1953 was a wall-mounted commemoration of the restoration project itself, unveiled during the 1953 rededication service.⁶⁶³ One of fifty memorials scheduled in the 1984 *Record of Church Furnishings*, this was located on the west wall and comprised a large rectangular wooden panel (1.2m x 52cm) with a shallow arched top. The 'inscribed decorative scroll work' was filled with gold, as was the incised inscription which read:

After desecration by enemy action in the year 1941 this church was re-dedicated on the 18th April, 1953 by the Rt. Reverend the Lord Bishop of Southwark in commemoration there-of this tablet was unveiled by the Rt. Hon. Earl Stanhope K. G: P. C.

Ironically, this plaque itself has now been removed and its whereabouts are unknown, indicating perhaps that someone, at some point since 1984, felt it was no longer appropriate.

⁶⁶¹ NADFAS, *Record of Church Furnishings*, 1984, no. 36, describes the floor set stone slab as 'grey slate slab with inscription of incised Roman caps. infilled gold (paint?), dimensions 1230mm x 930mm.

⁶⁶² BA, Richardson archive, RGH4-120, Vicar's correspondence file, letters dated 23 Nov 1956 and 2 Feb 1957. Nason invited Richardson to unveil the new memorial on 5 May 1957.

⁶⁶³ NADFAS, *Record of Church Furnishings*, 1984. The memorial to the restoration project is no. 39.

Conclusion

St Alfege Church received generous and prompt attention after the Second World War, and its restoration following the 1941 bomb damage was prioritised by both the Diocese of Southwark and the War Damage Commission. It is clear that the project served a patriotic and emblematic function that extended far beyond Greenwich. The concentration on the architectural merit of St Alfege Church after the Second World War, as illustrated by its heralded restoration and the tacit modernisation of the building fabric, influenced a national conversation about the purpose of church buildings, and reinforced Hawksmoor's growing reputation as a preeminent architect of the English Baroque. Through the reimagining of its eighteenth-century interior, at a crucial time in the twentieth century, the history of St Alfege Church was rearranged, and its physical memorials curated to increase its relevance to a broader audience that included architectural scholars, historians and Canadians interested in General Wolfe, and musicians interested in Tallis, as well as a new and growing audience: cultural tourists. The restoration project marked a turning point in St Alfege Church's history, when the architectural and historical value of the building became more potent than the church's parochial role.

Richardson's pristine interior, as photographed dramatically for the memorial booklet, has continued to be amended and adapted, since 1953. The electrical lighting has been changed; Richardson's pew mounted standard lamps were removed in 1997, against the advice of English Heritage, and the current elaborate chandelier was installed.⁶⁶⁵ Theatrical lighting has been added to support the use of the church as a performance space and the students from the nearby Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music hold regular, public, lunchtime concerts at the church.⁶⁶⁷ As the church entered the second decade of the 21st century, a further (and still ongoing) project was launched, the subject of the next chapter.

⁶⁶⁵ C. E. Miele, *Church of St. Alfege, London Borough of Greenwich* (London Region, August 3, 1994).

⁶⁶⁷ The Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music occupy King Charles Court of the Old Royal Naval College, while Queen Mary, King William and Queen Anne Courts are occupied by the University of Greenwich.

CHAPTER 5 - St Alfege Church 2016 – 2020:
A Local Parish Church and World Heritage Asset

The preceding chapters examined the changing aspects of memorialisation apparent at St Alfege Church in the parish of Greenwich. Evidence gathered from a range of original primary source material demonstrated how the church building(s) in Greenwich were often the site of competing concepts of memorialisation, which were national or local, or indeed individual, in origin. The connections between the population of Greenwich and their parish church, with its many memorials and meanings, has been charted through three major construction projects, which were carried out by the parish authorities in three consecutive centuries. In each case, the national and local contexts surrounding these projects was analysed and the study of ‘before and after’ material provided an assessment of what was lost or forgotten during each construction process. This chapter examines the current renewal project being carried out at St Alfege Church, called *Heart of Greenwich*, which I have witnessed first-hand. The roles of memorialisation within this project will be considered in the light of developments in memorialisation practices identified in the previous three hundred years.⁶⁶⁸ Attitudes towards the preservation of the built environment and theories about heritage have developed over the seventy years since Richardson’s restoration of St Alfege Church, and played a prominent role in the current project. National legislation has reinforced the protection of historic buildings and also established heritage organisations that monitor the status of historic buildings. The significant grant awarded to the *Heart of Greenwich* project by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) made it essential for the church to engage with the processes and objectives of this national organisation and embrace their ideas about heritage. I will examine how the changing perception of historic buildings and the influence of the NLHF on the current project have impacted the church’s memorial status.

Within current academic research the fields of memory studies and heritage studies have a close relationship. As Viejo-Rose noted ‘Memory and heritage studies

⁶⁶⁸ I have been a member of the Steering Committee since October 2016.

share a number of areas of interest that are at the heart of contemporary political debates' and 'cultural heritage is a gathering place for memory'.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, heritage scholars have demonstrated that heritage can most usefully be thought of as an experience and a dynamic process of ascribing meaning to a place, through shared memories and experiences, rather than a physical characteristic inherent to an individual building or place.⁶⁷⁰ These intangible processes associated with a place or building generate a range of heritage values (for example: social, aesthetic or spiritual values) that are then attributed to that place or building, and convert it into a tangible heritage asset. The selection process that determines what is remembered and what is forgotten about any heritage asset is produced by this ongoing social discourse.

This shift in focus towards heritage as a process that generates meaning, rather than heritage embodied in a physical building or place, is apparent to some extent in the ethos of the NLHF and within the current project at St Alfege Church. The project to improve St Alfege Church also engages with international concepts of heritage because the church is located within a UNESCO world heritage site. The high-level, international administration of world heritage sites is often seen as the epitome of 'authorized heritage discourse' and responsible for creating a bureaucratic heritage profession, which restricts more organic or spontaneous heritage experiences.⁶⁷¹ In this chapter, therefore, I will also discuss the local implications of this international heritage status for St Alfege Church.

At a national level, English parish churches have a special position within English culture that is fairly secure, despite declining church attendance. They are treasured buildings that have been the subject of much public discussion, whether through nationally-funded research into their 'sustainability' or through publications that celebrate the historic value of parish churches, by attributing them a museum-like status. The *Heart of Greenwich* project at St Alfege Church has interacted with twenty-first

⁶⁶⁹ Dacia Viejo-Rose, 'Cultural Heritage and Memory: Untangling the Ties That Bind', *Culture & History Digital Journal* 4, no. 2 (2015).

<http://cultureandhistory.revistas.csic.es/index.php/cultureandhistory/article/view/83/275> , accessed 20 January 2020.

⁶⁷⁰ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 3; Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities', 25.

⁶⁷¹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 87–114. Chapter 3, 'Authorizing Institutions of Heritage'.

century views about parish churches, and incorporated extensive local engagement and a reconsideration of its history, archive and memorials. I will discuss these processes of interaction in detail and ask what has been lost or forgotten as a result of this project, and what this might tell us about the prospects for future memorialisation processes at St Alfege Church.

National and International Heritage Contexts

The *Heart of Greenwich* project has been influenced by both the national and the international heritage status of Greenwich. Whilst the project was not directly commissioned or funded by an Act of Parliament, unlike the previous church building projects, it was conceived and operates within an extensive network of both international and national legislation designed to define and protect heritage assets.

St Alfege Church is located within the UNESCO Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, which was inscribed in 1997. UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) is an international organisation established in 1946, to 'build peace in the minds of men and women'.⁶⁷² The varied aims of UNESCO were born of the experience of the Second World War and its impact on cultural property. In support of its cultural objectives, an international treaty entitled the 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage' was adopted by UNESCO in 1972 and ratified by the UK in 1984. This convention expressed the idealistic desire to promote world peace and develop a concept of world heritage, through the introduction of a worldwide conservation and protection system for the built and natural environment. However, scholars have criticised UNESCO for a tendency to privilege 'historic, scientific and aesthetic values' in their charters rather than 'social value' and 'broader, non-expert perceptions of heritage'.⁶⁷³ A detailed process for nominating, analysing and inscribing areas that exhibit 'Outstanding Universal Value' as World

⁶⁷² Julian Huxley, *UNESCO: Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (London: Preparatory Commission of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 1946).

⁶⁷³ Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities', 23.

Heritage Sites is now in operation.⁶⁷⁴ There are 1,121 World Heritage Sites worldwide, forming the World Heritage List, of which 869 are cultural. Maritime Greenwich is one of twenty-seven cultural World Heritage Sites in the UK, and one of four in London. The World Heritage status brings international renown, and international visitors, but also entails obligations concerning the management and maintenance of the property. A steering committee for the site must submit a report to UNESCO once every four years.

The Maritime Greenwich nomination for World Heritage Status was a state-sponsored initiative that required expert evaluation; however, it also placed a significant responsibility for the preservation and maintenance of the World Heritage Site on the local authority and relevant building owners. States that are party to the World Heritage Convention are required to compile a Tentative List of heritage sites for future nomination as a World Heritage Site, which are then considered during the annual meetings of the World Heritage Committee. Maritime Greenwich was included on the first Tentative List compiled by the UK government in 1986. The site was then evaluated by special advisors who are named in the World Heritage Convention as the International Council on Monuments & Sites (ICOMOS).⁶⁷⁵ Their 'WHC Nomination Documentation' defined the aspects of Greenwich that met the requirements for inscription on the World Heritage List.⁶⁷⁶ Nominated Properties need to demonstrate 'Outstanding Universal Value' through satisfying at least one of ten criteria. Maritime Greenwich was deemed to satisfy four cultural criteria:

- (i) 'To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iv) To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

⁶⁷⁴ www.whc.unesco.org/en/about/, accessed 29 Jan 2020. Explains the UNESCO concept of World Heritage. 193 states are party to the convention and the General Assembly of States Party elects the 21 members of the World Heritage Committee.

⁶⁷⁵ www.icomos-uk.org/world-heritage, accessed 29 January 2020. Explains their role and reliance on their members and specialist committees.

⁶⁷⁶ www.greenwichworldheritage.org/maritime-greenwich/maritime-greenwich-becomes-a-whs, accessed 29 Jan 2020. Describes the process with links to key documents, including the *Nomination Document* and the *Tentative List*.

- (vi) To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.⁶⁷⁷

The seventy-three-page Nomination Document was endorsed by the government Department of National Heritage, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and English Heritage. St Alfege Church's role within the overall assessment of the site, as described in the nomination document, was twofold: firstly, as an additional example of Hawksmoor's English baroque architecture alongside the Royal Hospital; and secondly as a central feature of the town. The external, architectural contribution that St Alfege Church makes to the Greenwich ensemble was of primary importance. The outline of the churchyard was used to define part of the boundary of the World Heritage Site. One page of text on St Alfege Church was included as a sub-section of 'The town and the *Cutty Sark*', which provided an outline history of the church, and half a page in the 'The Inventory' of buildings.⁶⁷⁸ So, St Alfege Church was included in the World Heritage Site largely because of its relationship to surrounding buildings in Greenwich, not primarily on account of its individual attributes.

The vision for St Alfege Church in the twenty-first century (and its second millennium) as embodied in the current project, has been influenced by this World Heritage status. St Alfege Church has a seat on the steering committee that oversees the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. As a result, the vicar and the PCC have participated in the management of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site for several years and formed constructive relationships with other committee members. This has broadened their understanding of heritage processes in Greenwich and assisted the church's development of strong partnerships with other local institutions, such as the University of Greenwich and the Royal Borough of Greenwich, for the *Heart of Greenwich* project.

As part of the selection process, UNESCO required evidence of the national statutory framework that would protect the proposed World Heritage Site. There is now

⁶⁷⁷ www.whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/, accessed 29 Jan 2020. Lists all ten criteria and advises that 'criteria are regularly revised by the Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.'

⁶⁷⁸ WHC *Nomination Document* for Maritime Greenwich, 1996, p.19 and p.42. The bibliography suggests that this information was chiefly derived from the 1975 guidebook published by the Church, and Kerry Downes two publications titled *Hawksmoor*.

robust legislation in the UK for the protection of historic buildings, as well as a wide range of state and private charitable funding available for the development of buildings that are recognised as having a strong heritage value. This supportive legislation and funding provision developed during and after the Second World War, so the post-war restoration of St Alfege Church occurred whilst this framework was in its infancy.

A greater appreciation for the nation's historic buildings and the heritage they represented was stimulated by the risk of bomb damage during the Second World War. While the first building conservation organisations had been formed at the end of the nineteenth century, they were largely interested in protecting medieval buildings from Victorian 'restorations', and natural landscapes from urban building development. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), was formed in 1877 by William Morris and Philip Webb, and the National Trust (for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty) was formed in 1895.⁶⁷⁹ The national response to the Second World War bomb damage expanded and nationalised the protection of historic buildings and places. Although initially an emergency measure to defend damaged historic buildings from British demolition teams, a concept of a national built heritage emerged from this urgent work. As discussed in chapter 4, a nationwide survey of historic buildings was instigated in 1941 and a list compiled of the nation's most historic buildings, with a photographic record.⁶⁸⁰ The primary aim at that time was to alert local authorities to historic buildings that should be protected from demolition after a bombing raid. After the war, the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 enacted and developed local authority powers to preserve the 'listed' buildings, which had been judged to have 'special architectural or historical interest'.⁶⁸¹ Church buildings were covered by this legislation only if they were listed and St Alfege Church was listed in 1951.

⁶⁷⁹ <https://www.spab.org.uk/about-us/spab-history>; <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/our-history-1884-1945>; both accessed 27 July 2020.

⁶⁸⁰ Dan Cruikshank, 'Targets of Enemy Bombers and Our Own Demolition Men', *The Independent* (London, August 28, 1995).

⁶⁸¹ Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, 10 & 11 GEO. 6. CH. 51, Part III Control and Development of Land, etc., Permission to develop land. Section 30 outlines the purpose and obligations associated with 'Lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest', 39-41. Section 29 confers powers on the local authority to issue 'Building Preservation Orders' for buildings of special architectural or historic interest, 37-39.

The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 created three historic councils for England, Scotland and Wales, which have developed into the present-day organisations: Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland and Cadw in Wales. The councils' responsibility to give advice to local authorities with regard to listed building consent applications was added by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This Act is the current legislation for protecting and maintaining listed buildings. Consent is required from the local authority to make changes to a listed building.

The Church of England as a building owner is, however, exempt from a significant proportion of this Act, but obliged to operate its own internal building development control process. As a result, church buildings occupy an ambiguous position in relation to the national legislation. Section 60 of the 1990 Act describes the exemption from nine subsections of the Act for ecclesiastical buildings and redundant churches. Alterations to listed church buildings do not require the authorisation of the local authority (subsections 7-9); they cannot be compulsorily purchased by the state because they are in desperate need of repair (subsection 47), and the local authority does not have the power to carry out any urgent works necessary for the preservation of a listed church (subsection 54). There is also an exemption from subsection 59, which makes any person who deliberately damages a listed building guilty of a criminal offence. The management and responsibility for Church of England buildings is instead governed by the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018; part 3 describes the care of churches and part 4 describes 'faculty' jurisdiction, which is the Church of England's procedure for authorising building work to their buildings, listed or otherwise.⁶⁸² So, the Church of England has an active role in the decision-making process concerning building alterations to listed churches, unlike owners of secular listed buildings. As the 2017 Taylor Review noted, this places a significant financial burden on the Church of England:

The continuing care, maintenance and repair of Church of England parish churches represents an enormous task. 78% (12,200) of Church of England

⁶⁸² <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/church-buildings-council/how-we-manage-our-buildings> describes the approval process that the Church of England operate. The Care of Places of Worship Measure 1999 preceded the current 2018 Measure, accessed 8 September 2020.

churches are listed: nationally nearly 45% of all Grade I listed buildings in England are parish churches.⁶⁸³

Parish churches have been maintained by the local parishioners for many centuries, but previously the vestry had the power to raise funds through tithes and pew rents. Twenty-first century PCCs rely on voluntary donations, bequests and grants to maintain their buildings, and fundraising is often an onerous task. National recognition of these church buildings as heritage assets has nevertheless provided access to sources of funding outside the Church of England.

The National Heritage List for England includes listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields.⁶⁸⁴ Four National Heritage Acts have been passed since 1980, which were designed to manage and protect these identified heritage assets. The National Heritage Act 1980 created the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), which administered the Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund between 2014 and 2018, on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The fund totalled £55 million and the NHMF offered over nine hundred grants.⁶⁸⁵ This was a very specific governmental scheme that targeted listed buildings of a particular type to provide the basic necessity of a watertight roof. This indicates that an urgent need had been identified, which could not be satisfied at a local level and that parish funds were often insufficient to maintain parish church buildings.

Since 1994, the NHMF has also been the parent body of the NLHF (previously called the Heritage Lottery Fund) which distributes grants to a broad range of projects countrywide. The money is raised through the sale of national lottery tickets, not taxation. The NLHF operates a rigorous grant application process and they are the 'largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK'.⁶⁸⁶ Its policies focus on promoting

⁶⁸³ Bernard Taylor, *The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals* (London: Department for Culture, Media & Sport, December 2017), 11.

⁶⁸⁴ The National Heritage List can be found at www.historicengland.org.uk, accessed 30 January 2020. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983) governs scheduled monuments, which exclude dwellings and places of worship.

⁶⁸⁵ <http://www.nhmf.org.uk/about-nhmf#LPOW> provides additional information about the scheme, accessed 30 January 2020.

⁶⁸⁶ <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/what-we-do>, accessed 31 January 2020.

communities and stimulating activities, and its grants span a broad spectrum of projects that includes, but is not limited to, projects that improve historic buildings. For the NLHF, national heritage is a concept that includes the future *use* of the building, not simply the preservation of the building fabric because of its historic significance. They stipulate that applicants must state their intended 'project outcomes' from a list of nine. The first is mandatory: 'A wider range of people will be involved in heritage' and applicants are required to research and write an activity plan, which should contain proposals to engage as many people as possible, both during and after the project.⁶⁸⁷ NLHF grants can be spent on a wide range of projects, including landscapes, archaeology, and the purchase of specific objects, but it cannot be spent on 'promoting the causes or beliefs of political or faith organisations'.

The application procedures for both the NLHF and UNESCO World Heritage Site status demonstrate how ideas about what constitutes heritage are moulded by these organisations. Indeed, recipients of their support become, by definition, heritage assets. These overarching concepts of heritage, however flexible they may be, need to encompass a wide range of contexts so cannot be localised. Whilst the NLHF and UNESCO both emphasise their consideration of local communities, they are large national and international organisations, which judge the comparative value of locally important properties and projects. Recently, heritage scholarship has focused on a need to identify more localised and experience-based values for historic buildings. The assessment of these values can be difficult. As Siân Jones has written:

Encompassing the significance of the historic environment to contemporary communities, social values are fluid, culturally specific forms of value embedded in experience and practice. Some may align with official, state-sponsored ways of valuing the historic environment, but many aspects of social value are created through unofficial and informal modes of engagement.⁶⁸⁸

Each heritage asset has a different and changeable constellation of values, be they social, aesthetic or economic. How these values are assessed and prioritised controls what aspects are memorialised and what is forgotten.

⁶⁸⁷ <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/activity-plan-guidance> ; <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/outcomes> ,both accessed 31 January 2020.

⁶⁸⁸ Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities', 22.

English Churches, Preservation and Church Tourism

Within this heritage landscape, English parish churches have played an important and popular role, despite their anomalous position within the legislative framework and their primary role as places of worship. They have been celebrated for their architectural and artistic achievements, and as a source of historic identity for many towns and villages. A 1953 book called *English Parish Churches* comprised a collection of high-quality photographs, with accompanying notes, of each featured church and the author stated 'The parish churches of England epitomize English history and the English way of life better than any other institution.'⁶⁸⁹ Published five years later, *The Collins Guide to English Parish Churches*, edited by John Betjeman, was the first example of a national church survey that advocated a kind of church tourism. Betjeman described the purpose of the book as a small, selective guide to English parish churches, which judged the buildings 'by their atmosphere and aesthetic merit' and was a useful accompaniment when 'motoring through a district ... not hitherto explored'. He anticipated passing quickly from one county to another, 'by motor car or train', and his guide sought to provide enough information about the churches for only a 'cursory visit'.⁶⁹⁰ Organised alphabetically by county, the guide set the scene for a leisurely tour around the countryside, visiting parish churches on the way. Betjeman contributed to six of the forty-four counties and wrote the thirteen-page section on London (he was a staunch supporter of the City churches) but the overall tenor of the *Guide* favours older, rural, medieval parish churches.

This promotion of churches as a tourist destination has not diminished. In his 2012 *England's Thousand Best Churches*, Simon Jenkins used a similar approach and proclaimed that:

An English church is more than a place of denominational worship. It is the stage on which the pageant of community has been played out for a millennium. The Church of England is the true Museum of England.⁶⁹¹

Jenkins included St Alfege Church and other London churches in his selection of a thousand churches, but particularly admired rural medieval church buildings and their

⁶⁸⁹ Hutton and Smith, *English Parish Churches*, 5.

⁶⁹⁰ John Betjeman, ed., *English Parish Churches* (London: Collins, 1958), 13.

⁶⁹¹ Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*, ix.

settings.⁶⁹² In 2015 John Goodall's *Parish Church Treasures* documented a similar countrywide survey, with the assistance of the same *Country Life* photographer, which focused on the historic artefacts to be found inside English parish churches. He observed that '... parish churches tell from thousands of local perspectives the history of the nation, its people and their changing religious observance'.⁶⁹³ These books approach parish churches as places of aesthetic and historical value, encouraging tourists to take in their sights. Indeed, Jenkins is incensed that some churches might be inaccessible to such tourists.⁶⁹⁴

Both Jenkins and Goodall sought to promote the importance of English parish churches and drew attention to the financial challenges faced by many parishes with historic churches, in the twenty first century. The costly maintenance and repair of these buildings, when combined with small congregations, requires national assistance. This problem was first addressed in the middle of the twentieth century, when the general condition of parish church buildings had severely declined, partly because they had been neglected during the Second World War. Three independent, secular organisations were established by national legislation, which offered money and support to parish churches in need. They were, as we have seen in chapter 4, the National Churches Trust (NCT), the Friends of Friendless Churches, and the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). All three still exist and continue their work (although none has contributed to the current St Alfege Church project).

The NCT is an independent charitable organisation that supports church buildings of all denominations and offers practical advice and grants. They also have a wider remit to publicise and promote church tourism and encourage greater access to church buildings for local communities. It is an organisation that was formed in 2007 by the amalgamation of two older, longstanding church support bodies: the Incorporated Church Building Society, which had first been established in 1818 to help finance the 1818 Church building Act; and the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, which was established in 1953 in response to the deterioration of British church buildings. This

⁶⁹² Ibid., 430–31. St Alfege Church is only awarded 2 stars out of a possible 5 ('worth visiting for just a few features') and Jenkins dislikes the 1953 east window.

⁶⁹³ Goodall, *Parish Church Treasures: The Nation's Greatest Art Collection*, 10.

⁶⁹⁴ Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*, xxxii.

organisation came into being to fund repairs to churches that had been forgotten during the Second World War, when resources were directed to the war effort, and because of changes in the social structure of local communities. The charity was endorsed by an eminent list of trustees, including John Betjeman and John Summerson, with the Queen as patron. Churches were seen as a worthy and patriotic cause, which had been neglected. The causes of this deterioration were summarised in the 2013 NCT publication *Keeping Churches Alive* as the abolition of tithes, migration from the country to towns during the industrial revolution, urban deprivation and a lack of maintenance work during the Second World War.⁶⁹⁵

In 1957, in response to the same perceived vulnerability of parish churches, the Friends of Friendless Churches was formed to support faltering churches. The Welsh member of Parliament, Ivor Bulmer-Thomas (1905-1993), was instrumental in establishing this organisation and believed the preservation of churches was a 'benefit to the nation'.⁶⁹⁶ The 'Friends' campaigned for legislation to ensure the preservation of churches, and were successful when the Pastoral Measure 1968 and the Redundant Churches and Other Religious Buildings Act 1969 were passed. This act established the Redundant Churches Fund, which later became the CCT.⁶⁹⁷ Today, both the Friends and the CCT directly manage churches that have been threatened with closure and keep them open to the public. The Church of England has an official procedure for churches threatened with closure; they are referred to a Statutory Advisory Committee, who offer expert guidance, and a suitable course of action is agreed. One option is to transfer responsibility for the church to the CCT who now manage over 350 churches. If these organisations and procedures had existed in the 1930s, it seems likely that St Mary's Church would have survived in some form.

The Church of England is, however, identified as the main source of support for its own buildings, offering both financial and practical support to assist PCCs with the management of their church buildings. Practical guidance and grants are offered by the Church Buildings Council, which has operated since 1917, when its predecessor, the

⁶⁹⁵ NCT 60th Anniversary History document, *Keeping Churches Alive*, 2013, p. 4.

⁶⁹⁶ <http://friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk/about-us/early-history-of-the-friends/>, accessed 5 Feb 2020.

⁶⁹⁷ <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/what-we-do/about-us/our-history.html>, accessed 3 Feb 2020.

Council for the Care of Churches, was established.⁶⁹⁸ In addition, the current day organisation 'The Church Commissioners' is a charitable organisation that supports all of the Church of England's historic buildings. Established in 1948, this organisation is descended from the 1818 Church Commission and the 1704 Queen Anne's Bounty.⁶⁹⁹ They inherited and developed a substantial investment fund that provides significant funding for 'Mission Projects', the ministry of Bishops and archbishops, cathedral staff and clergy pensions.⁷⁰⁰

The services and funding provided by these organisations offer significant support for parish churches, but they are subject to conditions and the church must appear to deserve preservation. These selection processes are reliant on value judgements and, as a result, the system is not comprehensive. Recently, detailed reports carried out by the Church of England, Historic England and the government, have sought to improve the 'sustainability' of parish churches. A 2016 report, commissioned by Historic England in partnership with the Church of England, investigated the sustainability of three hundred major parish churches. To qualify as a major parish church, the building needed to be of a substantial size, listed with, 'significant heritage value', to be open daily and to contribute to the local community; by this set of criteria, 300 parish churches were included in the report study. St Alfege Church was one of 36 London churches included, but did not feature as a case study.⁷⁰¹ The report focussed on the greater challenges faced by parish churches that are physically larger, therefore costing more to maintain, but which also have more onerous responsibilities because of their historic architecture. The premise was that churches of this type faced similar maintenance issues to cathedrals but did not have the same income stream or management ethos. The author conducted an online survey inviting responses from those involved in managing the major parish churches. The tension between churches as 'museum pieces' and as places of

⁶⁹⁸ <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/church-buildings-council> describes the services offered by the Church Buildings Council, accessed 31 Jan 2020.

⁶⁹⁹ Chandler, *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century; The Church Commissioners and the Politics of Reform 1948-1998*, 8–16.

⁷⁰⁰ www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/church-commissioners , accessed 3 Feb 2020.

⁷⁰¹ Rebecca Burrows, *Sustaining Major Parish Churches; Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities* (Historic England, October 2016). A map on page 11 shows the distribution of the 300 major parish churches throughout England.

worship caused concern for many respondents. The emphasis on ‘sustainability’ expressed the search for ways to make these major parish church buildings more self-sufficient, thereby reducing the need for external funding. Additional uses for the church space were considered, which would raise income to support the building maintenance, and management structures that could efficiently organise both the additional activities and the maintenance regime were outlined.

A year later in 2017 the Taylor Review, conducted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and led by Bernard Taylor, addressed a wider scope and examined the ‘Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals’. Again, the aim was to identify acceptable ways to make churches and cathedrals more self-sufficient, whilst recognising the challenge that presented:

The long-term survival of Church of England church buildings requires a change in the way many communities regard these buildings. To survive, a church building must be both valued by, and useful to its community.⁷⁰²

The use of the word ‘community’, as opposed to parish, reduced the geographical and religious identification of the people who were envisaged using churches. As indicated by this quotation, the Taylor Review panel recommended that the Church of England, in return for government financial support, should expand their spiritual remit to accommodate other social values within their church buildings. The traditional, spiritual values embodied by a church no longer provide sufficient revenue or significance and this recommendation attempted to engage support from local, secular communities to supplement the income. A survey of the current funding streams available for parish churches and the provision of expert advice for PCCs was also examined in the report. Ten recommendations were made that advocated a ‘more coherent approach’ and addressed engaging communities, strategic planning for maintenance and repair, and the removal of legal barriers. Finally, a future funding model was proposed for the government. They suggested that the current ‘Listed Places of Worship scheme’ that offers grants equal to the VAT incurred in making repairs to such buildings, be augmented by a minor repairs fund and major repairs fund. A network of ‘Fabric Support Officers’ was also recommended, in addition to Quinquennial inspections, to help PCCs plan a

⁷⁰² Bernard Taylor, *The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals*, 15.

maintenance and repair programme.⁷⁰³ A pilot scheme testing the recommendations of the Review was implemented by DCMS and Historic England, which ran between September 2018 and March 2020 in Manchester and Suffolk. *An Interim Evaluation of the Taylor Review Pilot* has recently been published, which describes its success at distributing £441,000 in minor repair grants with the help of Fabric Support Officers and Community Development Advisors.⁷⁰⁴ The panel who compiled this review document were largely eminent names in the world of architectural heritage, so would be expected to propose a thorough regime for the management of parish church buildings.⁷⁰⁵ Churches, unlike cathedrals, do not usually charge an entry fee and are largely reliant on donations for their income.⁷⁰⁶ However, the cultural value of a church building often extends beyond its religious role, and the panel of the Taylor Review were endeavouring to find ways to convert that apparent cultural importance into financial support.

Churches have been increasingly positioned, by all these organisations, as both locations for community activities and heritage assets, in addition to places of Christian worship, to broaden their significance and accessibility to the general population. To survive in the twenty-first century, it appears that a historic church building must be adapted to welcome tourists and satisfy their curiosity with interpretive material, stimulate enough local interest to generate financial and management support, and comply with mandatory heritage and building preservation policies, whilst continuing to operate as a place of worship. This is a complex task, requiring careful management to overcome the divergent requirements of these different building users.

The *Heart of Greenwich* project at St Alfege Church has been constructed within the cultural framework described above. They have received a substantial grant from the NLHF for a project programme that included the vital construction work, but also incorporated new interpretation and a two-year activity programme. By developing

⁷⁰³ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁰⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-taylor-review-pilot-emerging-monitoring-and-evaluation-evidence-september-2018-to-march-2019>; accessed 27 July 2020.

⁷⁰⁵ Bernard Taylor, *The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals*, 38–42. Including Simon Jenkins (author and CCT trustee), Loyd Grossman (Chair of Heritage Alliance), Helen Ghosh (Director General of the National Trust), Tony Baldry (Chair of the Church Buildings Council), Peter Luff (Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund), Laurie Magnus (Chair of Historic England).

⁷⁰⁶ http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/building-on-history-project/projects/St_Pauls_case_study.pdf; accessed 27 July 2020; [St Paul's Cathedral started charging for entry in 1991.]

these heritage activities outside the church's traditional religious function, the project complied with NLHF objectives and sought to attract local residents and visitors to Greenwich. Many of the 'opportunities for major parish churches to increase sustainability', identified by the 2017 *Taylor Review* were adopted for both the management and content of the project.⁷⁰⁷ The project team fully explored opportunities to connect with other local institutions, such as schools, the University of Greenwich, the Royal Borough of Greenwich council and the Old Royal Naval College, and expanded the accessibility of the church both physically, intellectually and socially. A range of values have been addressed; however, the project has particularly enhanced the local and social values of St Alfege's by focusing on the development of the volunteer programme and providing a range of free events. The aesthetic value of the church has been preserved by the building and churchyard repairs; the church now has a stronger visual presence within the UNESCO world heritage site and appears welcoming to tourists. The historic value of the church has been orientated more towards local stories that involve past Greenwich inhabitants and events, through new interpretive material gleaned from local archives. All these aspects contribute to the most recent iteration of the memorial functions of the church, and the balance between local and national priorities.

The project at St Alfege's has been, and is being, assessed by an independent evaluator who produces annual reports for submission to the NLHF.⁷⁰⁸ These reports detail progress made according to the activity programme and give detail about feedback gathered from a variety of sources. The methods employed to assess the project, and reflect on performance, emphasise the importance attached to the process and individual experience of the church for both visitors and volunteers, as opposed to the physical outcome of the building work. Whilst this is evidence of 'social value and related forms of public participation' becoming 'increasingly prominent in international heritage frameworks and conservation policies', it is important to consider more informal

⁷⁰⁷ Burrows, *Sustaining Major Parish Churches; Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities*, 61.

⁷⁰⁸ Kayte McSweeney, 'St Alfege Church, Heart of Greenwich, Place and People Project: Evaluation and Consideration of Activity Plan Progress. Year 1: 4 May 2018 - 4 May 2019', May 2019; Kayte McSweeney, 'St Alfege Church, Heart of Greenwich, Place and People Project: Evaluation and Consideration of Activity Plan Progress. Year 2: 5 May 2019 - 1 May 2020', May 2020.

experiences of the church that might have been overlooked or beyond the scope of the assessment procedure.⁷⁰⁹

The Grant Application Process for the National Lottery Heritage Fund

The 2016 Historic England Report *Sustaining Major Parish Churches*, discussed above, included a list of 26 projects at 19 of the churches within the study, which had received funding from NLHF before the St Alfege Church project started.⁷¹⁰ Despite the NLHF embargo on ‘promoting the causes or beliefs of political or faith organisations’, they had contributed a total of nearly twenty million pounds to these large parish churches. The Rev. Chris Moody had identified the NLHF as a possible source of funding in 2015 and the first stage application for St Alfege Church was submitted in February 2016. The Vicar and the PCC were seeking funding for essential building repairs (in an echo of the 1711 petition to Parliament), but also wished to establish a future means of raising revenue and support for the church.

The application process for a NLHF grant represents the St Alfege Church project’s main interaction with a national body, other than the Church of England. For the St Alfege Church team, it was a laborious process led by the vicar and his wife, Gill Moody, with the help of a specialist project manager.⁷¹¹ Guidance and support were offered by an NLHF case officer during the selection process and the two stages of the application. The overall vision for the project was crucial and wide-ranging consultation was carried out to identify target audiences and appropriate activities. For instance, a survey was carried out on the streets of Greenwich, in January 2016, by members of the church, which established that many passers-by thought the church was closed because the door visible from the town centre, the north door, was not generally in use. The initial application stage was for development funding, which enabled the appointment of specialist consultants to develop the detailed second application. So, the application

⁷⁰⁹ Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities', 33.

⁷¹⁰ Burrows, *Sustaining Major Parish Churches; Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities*, 71. The total sum contributed by the NLHF to these parish churches was £19,883,220.

⁷¹¹ Simon Hawkins of Glevum Consulting, www.levumconsulting.co.uk, accessed 9 September 2020. 'We work hand in hand with heritage and cultural sector project teams to deliver exciting and unique projects. Together we make heritage happen.'

process itself assumed the involvement of heritage professionals. The Rev. Chris Moody and Gill Moody established the governance of the project early on when they assembled a steering committee, which comprised members of the PCC and representatives from key local partners such as the University of Greenwich and the Royal Borough of Greenwich. A design committee was also convened to organise the construction work. Following the submission of the first application in February 2016, the project received an initial grant of £150,000.

This grant enabled the appointment of professional consultants to develop the project plan in more detail and prepare the second more comprehensive NLHF grant application. Following a formal tender process, Richard Griffiths Architects (RGA) were appointed to design the church building alterations and repairs. They have been the quinquennial architects for St Alfege Church since 1996, so they have had a long relationship with the church.⁷¹² Richard Hill of RGA prepared a Conservation Management Plan (CMP), which gave an account of the history of the church that appraised the major primary sources and underpinned the church's architectural significance. RGA also prepared a Design, Access and Heritage Statement, which included drawings of their proposals for the building. In parallel, an extensive Activity Plan was prepared by specialists, which incorporated interviews carried out with a wide range of stakeholders from within the church management team, local education institutions, local community groups and heritage organisations.⁷¹³ At this development stage, a large number of people and a variety of local communities were invited to comment on St Alfege's role. This process was designed to demonstrate the social value of the church, akin to market research, but it also highlighted opportunities for collaboration.

The heritage focus and objectives of the proposed project were detailed in the second stage NLHF application form, where the church team identified three key areas with historical aspects that they felt it would be beneficial to memorialise. Firstly, the

⁷¹² Quinquennial architects are appointed to carry out obligatory inspections of the church building fabric once every five years, in accordance with the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955. The Diocesan Advisory Committee must approve their appointment.

⁷¹³ Chloe Bird and Jane Frederick, 'St Alfege Church: Heart of Greenwich, Place and People Project, 2018 to 2022, Heritage Lottery Fund Activity Plan', May 2017; Richard Griffiths Architects, 'St Alfege, Greenwich: Design, Access & Heritage Statement, HLF Stage 2 Submission', May 2017; Richard Griffiths Architects and Richard Hill, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich: Conservation Management Plan', May 2017.

architectural importance of the building; secondly, the building's associations with prominent figures in British history; and thirdly 'the church as a vital ingredient of Greenwich's importance as a locale'.⁷¹⁴ Their responses clearly communicated a new desire to make St Alfege Church a more prominent feature of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, thereby attracting more visitors, but also to reinforce the church's importance to local residents. By contrast, Richardson's post-war restoration had focused on the interior of the church and promoted the church as an architectural masterpiece, but it did not emphasise the relationship with other Greenwich landmarks or specifically aim to increase visitor numbers. In 2017, the second stage of the NLHF grant application included not only crucial building repairs and modifications, but also a comprehensive repositioning of the church's presentation to the public. In December that year, St Alfege Church were awarded a second NLHF grant of £1,836,800 and their proposed programme of work commenced.⁷¹⁵

In line with wider shifts in the understanding of heritage assets and their conservation, therefore, the twenty-first century project at St Alfege Church, carried out in accordance with the NLHF guidelines and aims, considers the heritage role of the church to be much more than the simple repair and updating of the historic building fabric. A large proportion of the programme and funding is directed towards extending the public uses of the church, by both local community organisations and international tourists. The purpose of the investment was well defined and not simply remedial work to sustain a 300-year-old building by a famous architect. The 'vision' was more ambitious and interesting in relation to the church's understanding of its memorial functions. The *Heart of Greenwich* project has expanded Richardson's post-war memorialisation of Hawksmoor's architecture, by looking beyond it to the broader social history of the church, which is in part informed by the extant physical memorials.

⁷¹⁴ Gill Moody, 'Heritage Lottery Fund, Stage 2 Grant Application Form', November 2016, 5–6.

⁷¹⁵ Wendy Foreman, 'PRESS RELEASE: Rich Heritage of St Alfege Church to Be Revealed Thanks to National Lottery Players' (St Alfege Church, December 2017).

Local Context and Memorialisation Objectives

The *Heart of Greenwich* project incorporated a strong focus on local history and instigated new research into the church archives, with local volunteers as the driving force in this research activity. This process was intended to enhance volunteer engagement and gather locally sourced material for the new interpretation installation. In early 2019 a range of historical themes were identified and researched by volunteers, co-ordinated by the new Heritage and Interpretation Manager, Rebecca Parrant. The selection of the themes reflected volunteers' personal interests, leading to a collection of microhistories suitable for incorporation into the interpretation installation, designed by architects ZMMA.⁷¹⁶ Under four broad headings, 'Inspirational Architecture', 'Extraordinary Cast of Characters', 'The Big Picture' and 'Archival Opportunities' the volunteers researched bell ringing at St Alfege Church, the Royal Watermen associated with the pre 1710 church, and the relationship between the church and John Flamsteed (1646-1719), the first Astronomer Royal. Oral histories were also gathered from people who remembered using the crypt as a bomb shelter during the Second World War. The names inscribed on the crypt burial vaults were investigated, for inclusion in the new guided tours. The church's own archive material had not previously been sorted or catalogued, and this task was also undertaken by volunteers. The exciting discovery of the James Thornhill drawing of St Alfege Church chancel discussed in chapter 2 occurred whilst Rebecca Parrant and I were searching the St Alfege Church archive boxes, and this proved to be a great source of publicity for the project.⁷¹⁷ The research incorporated into the *Heart of Greenwich* project was orientated around a process that demonstrated local engagement and aimed at producing attractive interpretive displays. This methodology was successful in retrieving new local history material; however, the selection process was driven by what was found in a certain timeframe and what presented an entertaining or eye-catching story.

Outside the church, the restoration of the external stone facades and the churchyard, during the *Heart of Greenwich* project, has increased the church's apparent importance

⁷¹⁶ ZMMA architects specialise in museums, galleries, exhibition design and historic/heritage buildings. <http://www.zmma.com/2-ExhibitionDesign/Royal-Observatory.html>, accessed 9 September 2020. Shows their project for the Royal Observatory.

⁷¹⁷ BBC London local news item (31 July 2018).

as a local monument within the town centre and part of the World Heritage Site. It no longer looks closed from the street and the spaces around the church no longer look neglected or overgrown. The repairs and stone cleaning carried out to the north and south facades have given the church a brighter appearance, and continued a restoration process started by two previous projects in 2005 and 2010, when the stonework on the east and west facades, and the tower, was cleaned. This incremental process of removing the evidence of aging from the stonework has resulted in some variation between the different church facades but the stone's appearance now belies the building's age. The gleaming white stone recalls the eighteenth-century grandeur of the church, and its relationship to the Royal Hospital, rather than the sooty parish church of later centuries that looked old (Figure 49). In the treatment of the external building fabric, the authentic quality of the stone and lead is important. For example, the repairs to the north and south transept roofs involved the lead being removed, re-smelted and re-laid over the eighteenth-century roof timbers, which had survived the 1941 fire. So, in contrast to the twentieth-century re-construction of the main roof, these side roofs retain evidence of eighteenth-century materials and workmanship.

The churchyard spaces to the north and south of the church were previously somewhat forgotten spaces, overgrown and unevenly paved, which people walked through to reach the western entrance. The landscaping of these spaces has received careful attention, and the improved external setting of the church has connected it more firmly with the town centre. Like the external facades, the gravestones have been cleaned, making the burial feature of the churchyard more prominent. To the south of the church, a large tree was removed to provide a clear view of the church from the south east. This part of the churchyard was annexed in the nineteenth century by parishioners who shared the desire to open up the southern view of the church.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁸ Henry S. Richardson, *Greenwich: Its History, Antiquities, Improvements, and Public Buildings* (London, Simpkin & Marshall; [etc., etc.], 1834).



Figure 49. (top) St Alfege Church c.1930 [RIGHT]; (bottom) St Alfege Church 2020 [Roger Mead and Richard Beck, April 2020]

The current project has enhanced this picturesque setting for St Alfege Church, in a similar way that Basevi and the local vestry members sought to position St Mary's Church within a scenic landscape in 1824. The six-foot paved margin around the base of the church, which was mandated by the 1711 Church Commission to limit burials, has also been reinstated to enhance the view of the church building.

The paved area to the north of the church was previously uneven and overgrown. The north entrance to the church was rarely used, despite being the most accessible from the town centre, and the area was quite redundant. The *Heart of Greenwich* project has transformed this space. There is evidence to suggest that the pre-1710 church had a large north porch, suggesting it was a major access point into the church. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the north door provided access to the two staircases leading to the north gallery, which served larger congregations. The recent decision to transform this north entrance into the main visitor entrance, with a new ramp, automatic doors and new WCs just inside, represents a decision to attract people into the church from the town centre, but also reinstates the earlier use of this door and its relationship to the adjacent streets. The renewed use of this north entrance into the church is a significant historic factor in the church's connection to the surrounding town. Richardson's restoration has been recalled through the reinstatement of his arched metal 'overthrow' with a suspended lantern, which has been inserted in the perimeter railings, in front of the north door. This ironwork arch had been previously removed and stored in the crypt (Figure 50). A previously 'lost' twentieth-century historic feature of the church has been adapted for its new location and used to create an eye-catching invitation to visit the church. The landscaping adaptations have, to some extent, reclaimed the space around the church to reinforce its local connections and role.



Figure 50. St Alfege Church, north entrance and Richardson's overthrow. [AF Dec 2019]

The work at the church has also stimulated communal projects nearby. To the west of St Alfege Church, a scheme to renovate the neighbouring St Alfege Park is being developed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich and local residents.

As discussed in Chapter 4, this area was formerly the extended burial ground for St Alfege Church which was closed in 1889 and converted into a park by Metropolitan Public Gardens Association.⁷¹⁹ A large number of gravestones and table monuments still remain in the park and the 'Friends of St Alfege Park' have started to compile a schedule of the inscriptions. However, many of the gravestones have been relocated to the perimeter of St Alfege Park, and arranged in rows with only one side of the stone visible. The erosion of the stone over time means that inscriptions have faded and are difficult, if not impossible, to read, resulting in anonymous slabs of stone that have evocative shapes. The presence of these recognisable stone slabs may cause a visitor to contemplate the dead in a general fashion, but it is no longer possible to visit graves of specific individuals. The gradual evolution of this churchyard landscape continues, moving away from a burial ground and towards public gardens (Figure 51).⁷²⁰



Figure 51. St Alfege Park with table monuments and perimeter gravestones. [AF 2019]

⁷¹⁹ See the website of the London Parks & Gardens Trust, www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.php?ID=GRN051# accessed 25 Nov 2019.

⁷²⁰ Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London', 56–62.

Public Engagement with the Project

As is evident from the levels of consultation and participation by volunteers, discussed above and in contrast with all the previous iterations of renewal and restoration that the church has experienced since 1700, the involvement of local people, from several different Greenwich-based communities, has been crucial to the success of the project. The St Alfege Church team have worked in partnership with the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the current occupants of the Royal Hospital for Seamen, the University of Greenwich, as well as the NLHF, to develop a project that has included a high level of consultation and local participation. Students from the University of Greenwich have participated in film and signage projects, the Royal Borough of Greenwich have assisted with the tree surgery and provided a grant for the ramp, as well as supporting the project in more intangible ways. The level of parish enterprise and local participation suggests similarities with the project to build St Mary's Church in 1821, although the rigorous efforts to engage a broad audience, for example local school pupils and general tourists, differs. A new cooperative relationship has also been established with the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust (RGHT) who care for the local history archive for the borough, which contains material on both St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church. They hold the Hawksmoor drawing found in February 2017, which was also a good source of publicity for the *Heart of Greenwich* project. The project team hope to be able to display the drawing inside St Alfege's.⁷²¹

Other forms of public engagement have been crucially embedded throughout the process, reinforcing the historical significance of the church and its social value to the local population. In 2018, while the second stage application for a NLHF grant was being prepared, a series of public memorial events were organised to celebrate the tercentenary of Hawksmoor's St Alfege Church and to promote the new project. Key anniversaries in the church's history were marked with topical events, aimed at 'different HLF partners and audiences'.⁷²² The first date to be commemorated in this way was the 14 Feb 1710/11 when the parishioners petition, requesting help to rebuild their church,

⁷²¹ A media briefing event, 'The presentation of a newly discovered Nicholas Hawksmoor Drawing', was held at St Alfege Church on 22 June 2017; when the RGHT brought the drawing to the church.

⁷²² Rev Chris Moody, 'Tercentenary Celebrations Report to the PCC', October 2017. I participated in this 'Tercentenary Working Party'.

was read in parliament. On 13 Feb 2018, a re-enactment of this reading was staged at the church, to the former MP for Greenwich, Nick Raynsford. This event was framed as a 'civic event' by the Vicar and local dignitaries were invited.⁷²³ Nick Raynsford's analysis demonstrated the petition's political astuteness (as discussed in chapter 2) and the event provided an insight into the nature of the Greenwich inhabitants 300 years previously, whilst also publicising the twenty-first century project.

The second event to be commemorated was the rededication of St Alfege's, after Richardson's restoration, on 18 April 1953. On Saturday 21 April 2018 tours of the church crypt that emphasised its wartime use as a bomb shelter were held, with an illustrated talk entitled 'St Alfege Church Parish Church: before and after the wartime bombing' afterwards.⁷²⁴ This was a public event but local volunteers from the Old Royal Naval College (ORNC) and the Cutty Sark were specifically invited. The next day the Patronal Festival Eucharist service was held and the Vicar described the weekend as 'an opportunity to focus on St Alfege's martyrdom, the long history of churches on this site and the last major reconstruction by Albert Richardson'.⁷²⁵ The final memorial event of that year marked the consecration of Hawksmoor's St Alfege Church in September of either 1718 or 1719.⁷²⁶ On 23 September 2018, the Rev. Chris Moody gave a talk entitled 'Bishop Atterbury and the political context of the new church and the 50 New Churches', which focused on the influential and controversial Bishop who performed the eighteenth-century consecration ceremony. These public engagement events were all aimed at specific interest groups within the wider Greenwich community, and tied into the church's history to emphasise the church's longevity and its historic relationship with the parish community.

These tercentenary events were organised by the Vicar, his wife and church volunteers, but after the second NLHF grant was approved, two paid expert roles were created to expand the public engagement in the project further. They interviewed

⁷²³ See <https://www.st-alfege.org/Groups/302766/Tercentenary.aspx> and <https://southwark.anglican.org/downloads/The%20Bridge/bridgeapril18.pdf>, both accessed 2 March 2020. Calum Fraser, 'Recreating 300 Years of History', *The Mercury* (London, February 20, 2018).

⁷²⁴ Given by the writer and illustrated with photographs from RGHT and drawings from the Richardson archive.

⁷²⁵ Rev Chris Moody, 'Tercentenary Celebrations Report to the PCC', October 2017.

⁷²⁶ The date is uncertain as detailed in Chapter 2.

representatives from local organisations and the information they collected contributed to a proposed two-year activity programme, which then formed part of the successful *Heart of Greenwich* NHLF proposal.⁷²⁷ During the construction work in 2019, they endeavoured to maintain public interest in the church whilst it was covered in scaffolding and the churchyard inaccessible. In May ‘Conservation Insight Tours’ were held, which offered the public the chance to climb the scaffolding and get a close view of both the stonework and the roof repairs (Figure 52).⁷²⁸ The church remained open to the public throughout the majority of the yearlong construction project, with community engagement events also held at regular intervals.

The extent and complexity of St Alfege’s *Heart of Greenwich* Activity Plan would not be achievable without the professional expertise provided by the Project Manager, Volunteers Manager and the Heritage and Interpretation Manager. The team of heritage professionals constituted another group of stakeholders, focused specifically on the heritage work stream. The Volunteer Manager previously worked at the nearby ORNC during the conservation project to restore the Painted Hall, a high-profile Greenwich project that focused on another Hawksmoor building in the Maritime Greenwich UNESCO world heritage site. The number of volunteers at St Alfege Church has increased and a training programme introduced for the new volunteer role as ‘Heritage Ambassador’. Volunteer-led weekly guided tours around the crypt and ringing chamber were planned to start in June 2020.

⁷²⁷ A Heritage and Interpretation Manager (Rebecca Parrant) and a Volunteers Manager (Anne Burton) were appointed in 2018

⁷²⁸ The conservation insight tours were contractor-led with support from the Open church volunteers. I accompanied two tours in this role. It was particularly interesting to learn about the stone-cleaning process.

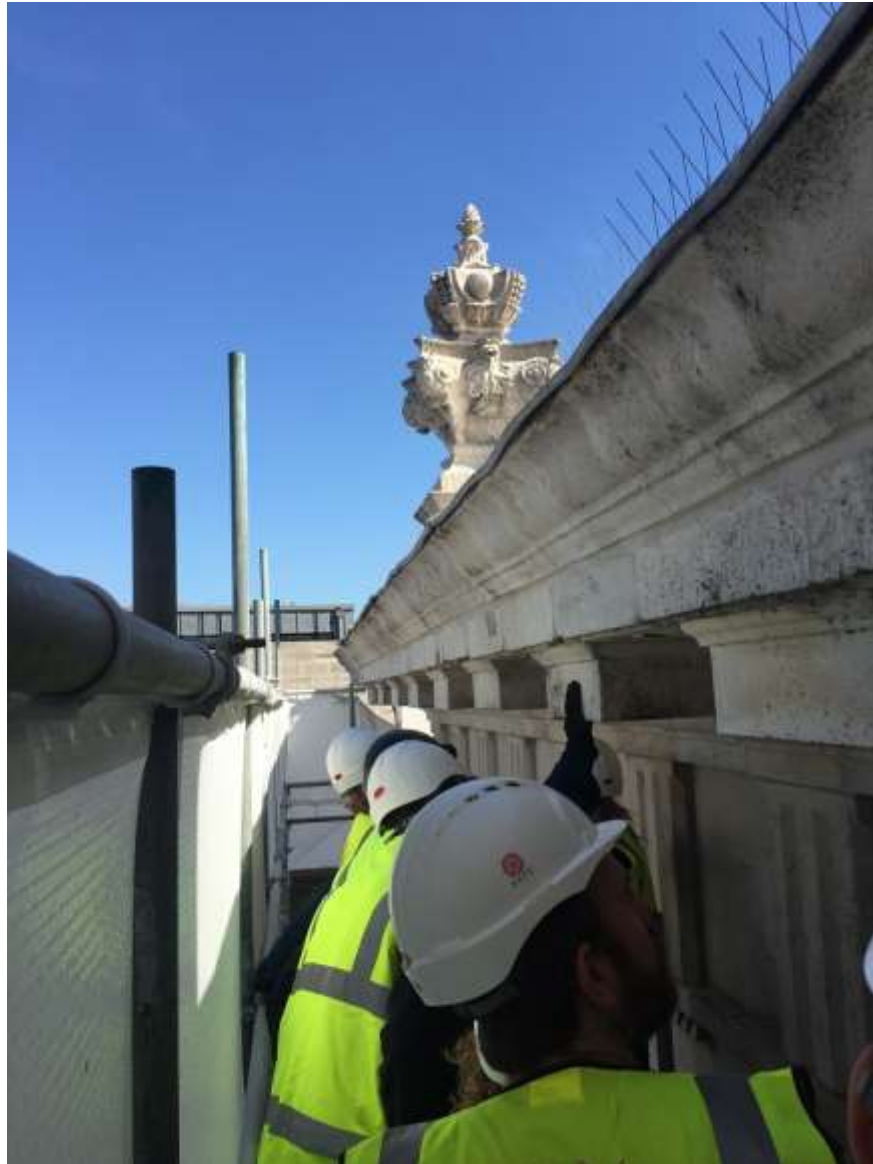


Figure 52. St Alfege Church, conservation insight tour 14 May 2019, inspecting the stone cornice at eaves level. [AF June 2019]

The Heritage and Interpretation Manager has previous experience in a museum setting and has devised the new interpretation exhibits, liaising with ZMMA, the consultant architects appointed to design the interpretation installation. She organised a 'Heritage, music and architecture programme', which comprises a series of talks on subjects related to the St Alfege's. The culmination of the Activity Plan is a 'Heritage Festival' that will constitute the launch of the church's new heritage status. These events are now delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but they give some insight into the busy heritage timetable, programmed to take place alongside the church's provision of regular Christian services, and the complexity of synchronising the heritage and religious roles of the church.

Whilst Richardson's restoration sought to promote Hawksmoor's architecture at St Alfege Church and he was conscious of the emerging heritage ideas, the three earlier church projects did not find it necessary to incorporate the in-depth analysis and manipulation of the church's significance and meaning to the wider public. By contrast twenty-first century heritage projects usually include public programmes that cultivate and support the heritage values (be they aesthetic, cultural, historical or social) associated with the building or place. The *Heart of Greenwich* project has amplified the church's monumental presence within the town, both by enhancing the appearance of the church building and its churchyard, and by organising regular heritage events and activities. A large number of local residents have contributed to the project, either through direct involvement, or through their attendance at one of the many events held by the church, or because they have participated in one of the consultation exercises. The significant local interest and commitment to the church has also been partly generated by the international recognition gained by the World Heritage Site designation in 1997 and the partnerships forged through its local steering committee. The international UNESCO governance of World Heritage Sites relies on steering committees formed from local stakeholders, which builds resilience and authority for their designations, but it can also inspire greater ambition within the local context.

Before and after: what has changed?

The historical focus of Richardson's mid-twentieth-century restoration has been developed and expanded to cover a variety of eras and topics. The current architects hold Richardson, as well as Hawksmoor, in high regard – and it is clear that he was at the vanguard of a new conservation movement.⁷²⁹ The dual purpose of a church and a museum (or heritage asset) within the St Alfege Church building was introduced during Richardson's restoration. Hawksmoor's reputation was growing and congregations were declining in the mid-twentieth century, so the additional architectural focus for the church building provided support for the traditional religious purpose.

The twenty-first century *Heart of Greenwich* project has concentrated on adding new layers of interpretation to St Alfege Church. When finally complete, the newly accessible 'hidden spaces' inside the church will offer new ways to understand and memorialise the local people associated with the church building over the years. The increased breadth of information, available in a variety of new formats, will expand the museum-like, heritage focused, function of the church and attract new visitors. Unlike in previous chapters, identifying what has been overlooked or forgotten is less straightforward because the project is not complete. The construction work involved in the current project has not been as extensive as in the previous projects discussed, so there is less physical change to the church building. However, a significant part of this project has focused on resolving how the church can be adapted to enhance its heritage content and appeal, without compromising its role as a place of worship. By considering the planned adaptations of different spaces, both inside and outside the church, it is possible to detect how the increased focus on heritage has affected other memorial functions.

In the sixty years after the post war restoration and before the current project commenced (between 1957 and 2018) not much changed in the fabric of the church interior, aside from the electrical lighting. In 1998, Richardson's idiosyncratic standard light fittings were removed from the nave and an imposing chandelier was installed,

⁷²⁹ Richard Griffiths Architects and Hill, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich: Conservation Management Plan.' This document was part of the NLHF stage 2 grant application and copies are held by St Alfege Church, RGA and NLHF.

which created a strong visual focal point for the space that is very eye-catching. The use of the church for musical performances has also necessitated the installation of specialist performance lighting. During recent years St Alfege Church has developed as a venue for regular musical performances, aided by the excellent acoustics in Hawksmoor's auditory church and the historic association with Thomas Tallis. A partnership with the nearby Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, since 2005, has enabled the church to develop a regular schedule of free lunchtime concerts. The Thomas Tallis Society choir are also based at the church and hold popular concerts throughout the year.⁷³⁰ St Alfege Church Choir is a large and accomplished ensemble who have a prominent role during church services. The east end of the church can now be flooded with light, emphasising the stage-like quality of the choir area.

There have also been some changes in the presentation of the church's memorial artefacts. In 1984 the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) made a record of St Alfege Church's fixtures and fittings.⁷³¹ This document was a comprehensive schedule of the contents of the church, which has not been previously analysed by historians. NADFAS carefully scheduled all the memorials and furniture inside the church, an interior that had been created by the 1953 restoration project but retained some items from its predecessor. This church record provides a useful benchmark because it was compiled after the 1953 restoration, so included items that survived the bombing and restoration process, but changes that have occurred since the record was made thirty-five years ago can also be identified. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 4, amongst the items listed is a memorial plaque recording the 1953 restoration, which was unveiled during the rededication ceremony. According to the church record, it was located on the west wall, but has subsequently been removed and lost. NADFAS also recorded a collection of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century silver church plate, with engraved dedications, which is now kept in a bank vault. St Mary's church plate is listed, which comprised two flagons, two cups and two patens

⁷³⁰ <http://www.thomas-tallis-society.org.uk/>, accessed 9 September 2020.

⁷³¹ National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, *Record of Church Furnishings* (Greenwich, 1984).

from 1824.⁷³² Although this silver collection is not lost, it is inaccessible because it is too valuable to be on permanent display or in regular usage, because of the risk of theft. The efficacy of memorial dedications embodied within such plate (often part of personal or institutional bequests) is therefore severely reduced.

Two earlier construction projects have been carried out in the last twenty years, but these focused on the maintenance of the building fabric and comprised cleaning and repairing stonework. So, the church interior created by Richardson's post-war restoration formed the basis for the *Heart of Greenwich* project. The adaptations of this interior have been designed by architects ZMMA with the project team. They have developed a scheme that will present the cultural visitor with an organised selection of new exhibition spaces (Figure 53). In addition, the new guided tours of the crypt and bell ringing chamber will offer visitors a 'behind the scenes' insight into the church. As a result, these heritage visitors (local or international) will experience the church in a very different way to people attending a church service or a concert, who will continue to arrive at the west entrance and enter the church through the traditional sequence of spaces aligned with the eastern chancel and altar. Although the cultural visitor experience is fairly independent of the liturgical arrangement of the interior, it has nevertheless been organised by the project design team very carefully and occupies spaces that are not critical to church services.

⁷³² Ibid., Items 100 – 114 are not kept at the church. Several of the entries reference an article in the *Greenwich Antiquarian Transactions*, volume IV, London: The Blackheath Press, 1936. See also a 1929 photograph of the St Alfege church plate in the Historic England archive, card reference 3256_146.

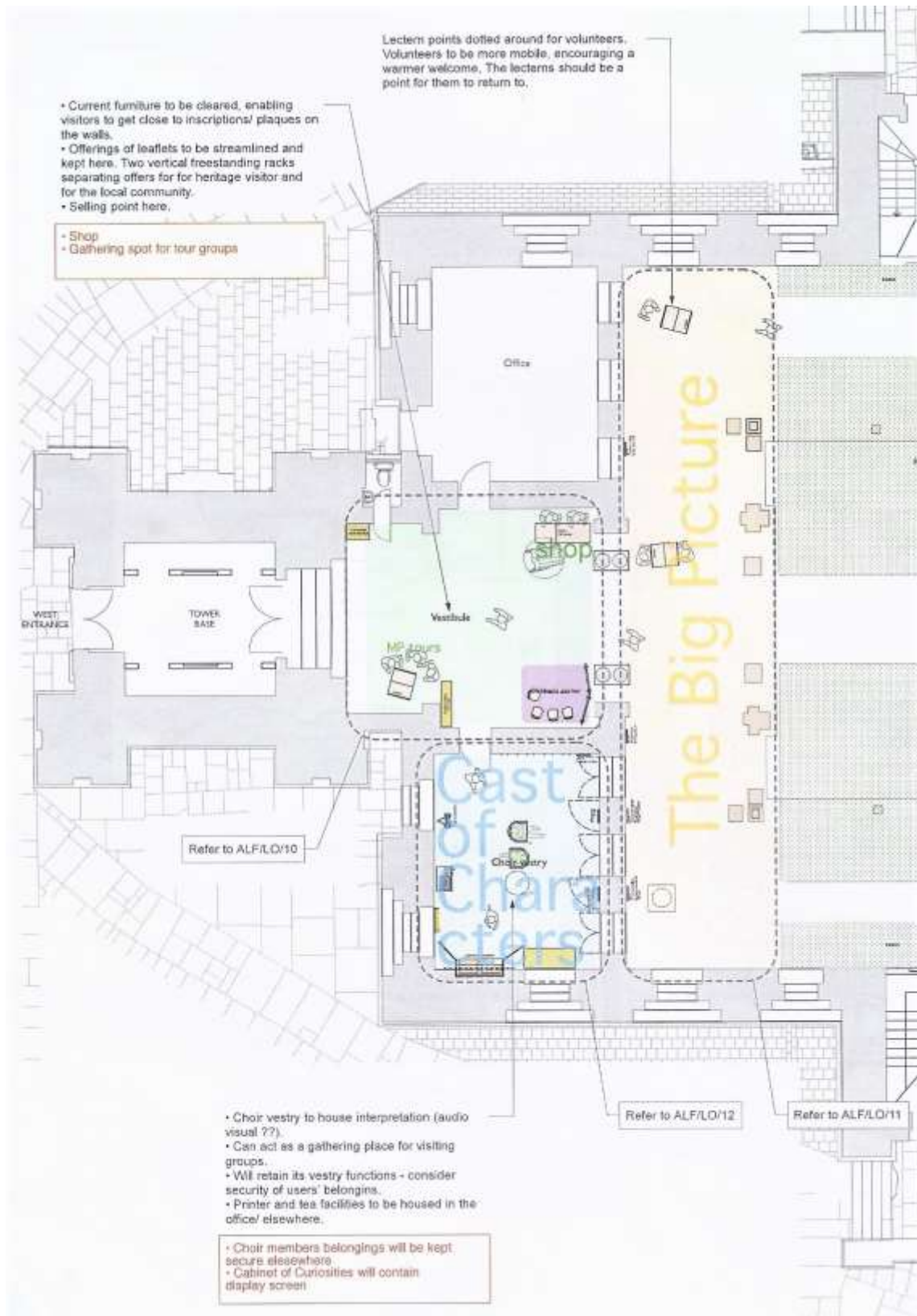


Figure 53. St Alfege Church, western rooms, excerpt from ZMMA drawing ALF/LO/01 rev B, May 2019, showing thematic zones for the new interpretation in the Choir vestry (Cast of Characters), the narthex (The Big Picture) and the west vestibule (shop, tours). [ZMMA, reproduced with permission].

From the new entry point via the north door (located at the side of the nave), cultural visitors will be encouraged to walk around the church interior by a sequence of lecterns holding further information. This new and prominent use of the north door echoes Strype's 'great north door' of the pre-1710 St Alfege Church, as well as the liturgical history of non-processional church layouts found in seventeenth-century London.⁷³³

Although visitors will be free to move about the church as they wish, the locations of the new exhibits suggest new destinations for the visitor and perhaps a circuit of the interior. This is a further development of the flexible layout for the church interior first introduced during the 1946-53 restoration. Architectural exhibits, including the Hawksmoor drawing and the Thornhill drawing, will be located in the south east corner of the church, behind a wooden screen added during Richardson's restoration. Stories about individuals, gathered by volunteer researchers, will be displayed on the pews in the nave and the south gallery on cards, so visitors can sit in a pew and read about someone who may have sat there many years before. Opening the south gallery to the public for the first time provides the opportunity to climb the Hawksmoor staircase and view the church interior from the gallery vantage point.

This project has also enabled 'hidden spaces' of the church to be made accessible to all visitors, which will offer fascinating historical insights, but also require a reduction of the private 'back of house' space available to the church workforce.⁷³⁴ The choir vestry, accessed from the west vestibule, will be opened to the public for the first time in many years. Previously it has been used as a semi-private space by the choir for changing their clothes, and by visiting musicians as a preparatory 'green room'. More mundanely, the photocopier, fridge and kettle were also kept in this room. However, the use of this vestry space has varied through the centuries. Hawksmoor designed this room to be a baptistry and the outline of a font is still visible on the stone floor. At that time, an open

⁷³³ Stow and Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, 93; Peter Guillery, 'Suburban Models, or Calvinism and Continuity in London's Seventeenth-Century Church Architecture,' *Architectural History* 48 (2005): 69–106.

⁷³⁴ 'St Alfege Church has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help develop our Heart of Greenwich project which aims to open up the church's hidden spaces and rich heritage.', promotional poster created by St Alfege Church and displayed in the church (photographed 8 August 2017).

archway connected the baptistry to the nave, but this opening was blocked up during Richardson's restoration to make the enclosed room that became the choir vestry. When the current project is complete, the choir vestry will contain several exhibits, including the touch screen displaying a scan of the church, a 'cabinet of curiosities' which will contain items found in the archive and a screen showing a short film.⁷³⁵ This room will perhaps undergo the most significant change in status.

Another previously 'hidden' area of the church that will be opened to the public for the first time is the bellringing chamber on the first floor of the church tower. A new guided tour of the bell ringing chamber will offer the public information about the history of bell ringing and the ten bells in the tower of St Alfege Church for the first time. One of the most interesting aspects of this space is the collection of peal boards (decorated signs that recorded the performance of a sequence of bellringing patterns), one of which dates from as early as 1732 (Figure 54). The bell ringing chamber is accessed from the western porch area and up a narrow wooden staircase, which is probably a remnant of the 1617 church tower. The complex history of the church tower's development during the seventeenth and eighteenth century (discussed in Chapter 2) is an integral part of the bell ringing chamber's history and another architectural story to tell.

The St Alfege Church crypt has been a source of fascination to visitors for many years, but previously it had been opened sporadically for guided tours only, partly because the access steps down to the crypt are steep with restricted headroom. The crypt has also historically been used as utilitarian space for the storage of redundant church furniture and stone memorial tablets that were removed from inside St Alfege Church (in 1950) and St Mary's Church (in 1935). The maintenance team have a workshop located in one of the side corridors and the boiler is also located in the crypt. Because it is dry, the crypt has been a useful space for the church as well as a burial location.

⁷³⁵ Simon Withers, a lecturer at the University of Greenwich School of Architecture, has made the scans of the church.

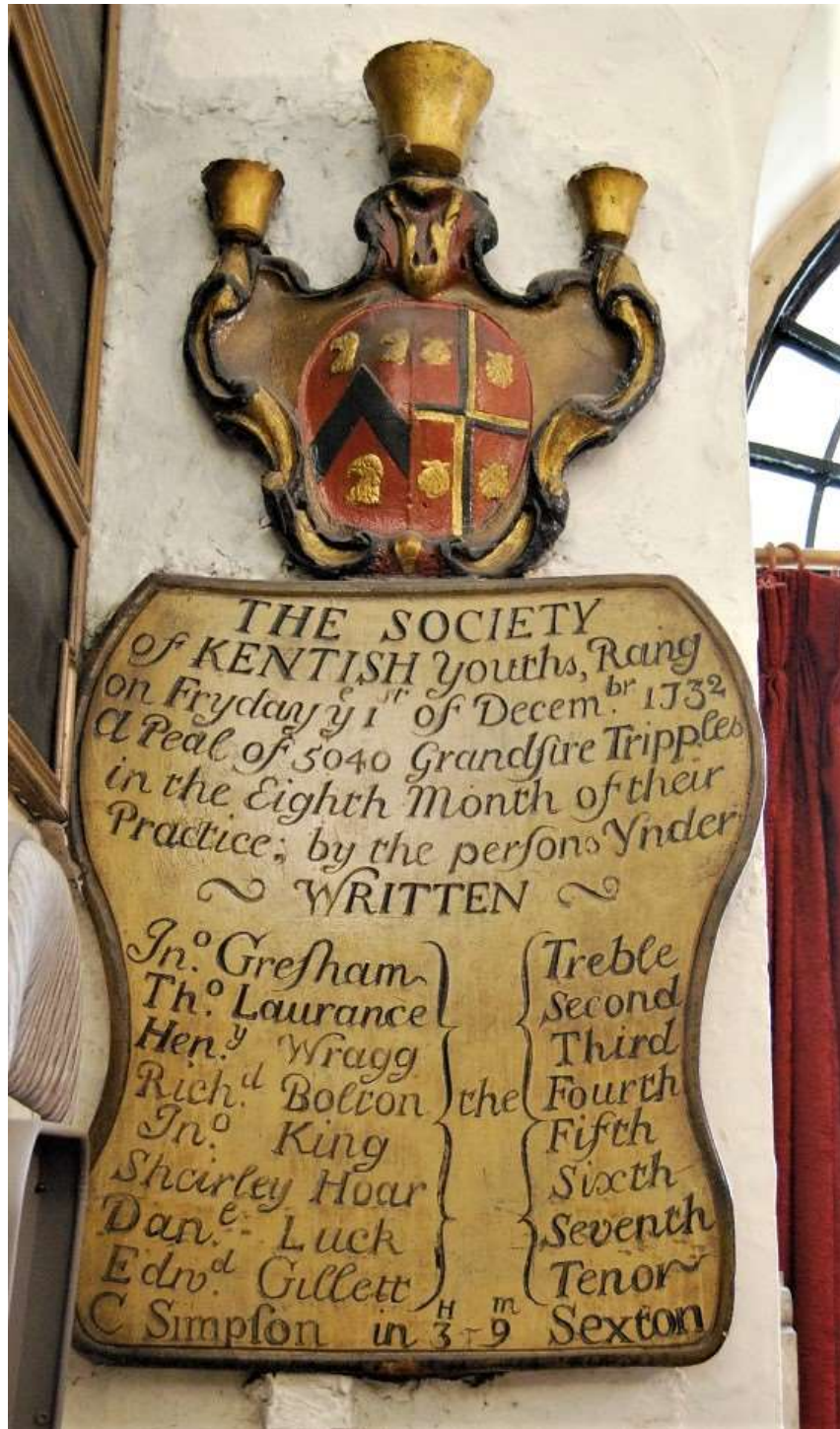


Figure 54. St Alfege Church, bell ringing chamber peal board, 1732. [AF May 2017]

The *Heart of Greenwich* project has sought to develop the guided tours of the crypt into a regular occurrence, and to create two immersive experiences for visitors to the crypt through the use of soundscapes. The public entrance into the crypt has also been moved from the south to the north door and the access route improved. The crypt corridors have undergone significant work to prepare them for public view. Following the removal of asbestos discovered in the crypt, the removal of a whitewash paint finish revealed the brickwork detail and sections of Kent Ragstone have appeared (Figure 55). This stone is likely to be a remnant of the pre-1710 church and could be either building material that was reused in 1712, or the remains of that earlier church building's foundations. Six of the stone memorial tablets that were stored in the crypt have been wall-mounted in the crypt for easier viewing, while the remaining tablets have been rearranged so that they are leaning against the walls with their inscriptions visible (Figure 56). Additional lighting has made the space brighter and highlighted the inscriptions on the burial vaults. Two soundscapes at different locations in the crypt will create immersive visitor experiences; one will evoke the Second World War use of the crypt as a bomb shelter and the second will illustrate Thomas Tallis's approximate burial location with a recording of the church choir singing one of his compositions.

The curatorial attention and the building repairs have changed the atmosphere in the crypt; it is no longer a forgotten space behind the scenes and the visitor experience has been refined. Several London churches have had their crypts cleared and the space converted into cafes and meeting rooms; Christ Church, Spitalfields and St Martin in the Field are well-known and successful examples.⁷³⁶ St Alfege Church crypt is not being converted into usable space in this way; instead, the project emphasises the crypt's use as burial site because people find that aspect interesting. Indeed, when the regular guided crypt tours start and visitor numbers increase, the memorialisation of some people buried in the crypt will be extended through the repetition of their stories to a larger audience.

⁷³⁶ Johnson, *Crypts of London*, 35–45, 51–61.



Figure 55. St Alfege Church crypt, (top) brickwork incorporating Kentish Ragstone; (bottom) brickwork vaulting and a bricked-up burial vault. [AF October 2019]



Figure 56. St Alfege Church crypt, (top) 1855 memorial to Anan-Nest located in the south gallery, where the benefaction board is now, before 1941; she was buried in the Madox burial vault; (bottom) 1872 memorial to William and Jane Wattsford, who were buried in St Mary's Church crypt, leant against the wall. [AF February 2020]

There is a stark contrast between the careful treatment that St Alfege Church crypt has received in 2019/20 and the brusque treatment of St Mary's Church crypt in 1935. The last burial in St Alfege Church crypt occurred in 1842 and, in 1859, the individual vaults were filled with Fuller's earth (a desiccating clay also used in cat litter) and the doorways sealed with brickwork, permanently hiding the coffins inside bricked up vaults, with the result that the space today is dry and odourless. By contrast and as noted in chapter 3, burials continued in St Mary's Church crypt throughout the nineteenth century, which was unusual for a London church crypt. It became crowded and disorganised, with the coffins in open view (Figure 30) and by 1935 St Mary's Church crypt was thought grotesque rather than intriguing. After the St Mary's demolition, the crypt was buried out of sight and steps taken that disguised its existence. Today, the St Alfege Church crypt is poised to become a successful Greenwich tourist attraction. With no physical evidence of decomposition, despite the 1058 bodies remaining in situ, and coffins out of view, visitors are free to be intrigued by the eighteenth-century crypt rather than repelled by any physical signs of decay.

Concepts of heritage at St Alfege Church

In the 1980s, Hawksmoor's churches were rediscovered by a new generation through the popularity of Peter Ackroyd's acclaimed novel *Hawksmoor*, which was inspired by Iain Sinclair's *Lud Heat*.⁷³⁷ In the first chapter called 'Nicholas Hawksmoor, His Churches' Sinclair constructed a poetic essay associating Hawksmoor's London churches with occult ideas. These ideas are illustrated with an annotated map of the Thames river and the locations of Hawksmoor's churches entitled 'Being a map of the 8 great churches: the lines of influence the invisible rods of force active in this city'.⁷³⁸ It showed a geometric pattern, 'a major pentacle-star', laid over the plan of London. Sinclair associated St Alfege Church with the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park: 'a major source of occult power'.⁷³⁹ Ackroyd developed and expanded this occult theme in his novel, where the chapters alternate between the present day and the eighteenth century

⁷³⁷ Peter Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor* (London: Abacus, 1985); Iain Sinclair, *Lud Heat and Suicide Bridge*, 4th ed. (London: Vintage, 1995), 13–38. *Lud Heat* first published (London: Albion Village Press, 1975).

⁷³⁸ Sinclair, *Lud Heat and Suicide Bridge*, 18–19. Sinclair spoke at the University of Greenwich, 17 Nov 2016.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

during the construction of the churches. It is a gothic murder mystery, with the eighteenth-century chapters written in a style that resembles Hawksmoor's, particularly in his 1715 letter to Dr George Clarke where he laments the missed opportunity to rebuild London after the 1666 Fire of London.⁷⁴⁰ This literary focus on Hawksmoor's churches added another creative and mysterious layer of interpretation to his architecture, and contributed another framing device to St Alfege Church's heritage potential.⁷⁴¹ Sinclair has a poetic approach to the built environment that is imaginative, free flowing, and personal.

As an old, classical stone building, St Alfege Church conforms well to more established international and national heritage value systems, as indicated by its recognition by NLHF and UNESCO. It is well aligned with the 'authorized heritage values' that have been critiqued by heritage scholars. Laurajane Smith has questioned the customary definition of heritage in terms of the fixed aesthetic value of a material object (or building) and argued that heritage is generated by a continuous process of human communication and meaning-making concerning an object (or building).⁷⁴² The incorporation of activities and public engagement events within heritage projects, to stimulate a type of meaning-making based on communication like Smith advocated, is now the norm. It is particularly important for the NLHF because their funding source is a public national lottery and they have a duty to demonstrate public value for the projects they fund. The social benefit of their projects needs to be measurable and documented evaluation is also part of their process. The administration of the St Alfege Church project was largely governed by NLHF requirements and it was a good fit with concepts of heritage developed by international and national 'Authorizing Institutions of Heritage'.⁷⁴³ However, it was a project generated at a local level when a community-based team of people worked hard to win funding from a national heritage body, for their local church. They moulded their church project to qualify for a heritage grant, but the NLHF readily adopted the project, recognising it as representative of their objectives. So, for this

⁷⁴⁰ Downes, *Hawksmoor*, 240–242; Sinclair, *Lud Heat and Suicide Bridge*, 14.

⁷⁴¹ Hopkins, *From the Shadows*, 260–268.

⁷⁴² Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 2–3.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 87–114; Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities', 23.

project a reciprocal relationship exists between the local church and the national heritage body, from which both organisations have benefitted.

Jones has written about the 'experience of authenticity in heritage education settings' and discussed 'the ability of 'old things' to mediate networks of relations across time and space'.⁷⁴⁴ Again, she emphasises the experience of the object (or building) rather than the thing itself, that creates the potency of the heritage asset. The interpretation is key, and the new scans of St Alfege Church create intriguing examples of interplay between the 'original' and a virtual model (Figure 57).⁷⁴⁵ Jones has also explored the social values of heritage and noted that 'performance and practice play a key role in the establishment of social value at heritage sites' and they 'constitute arenas for the production, negotiation and transformation of meanings, memories, identities and values.'⁷⁴⁶ So, the rich variety of heritage processes and activity encompassed in the Activity Plan and the subsequent evaluation reports represent a detailed process of redefining the heritage values associated with St Alfege Church. This is a very self-aware and organised investigation of the church's significance to visitors, participants and the congregation but it ensures that the heritage of the church is not one person's lofty vision, as was seen during Richardson's post-war restoration.

The stated ambition of the Activity Plan for the current *Heart of Greenwich* project was to 'create a step change in how audiences experience the church that is enduring in the long term.'⁷⁴⁷ This transformation aimed to 'reinforce St Alfege Church's position as a heritage asset' and set about doing this in a range of sophisticated and knowledgeable ways. This public engagement aspect of the project is being independently evaluated, according to NLHF requirements, and the associated reports assess the success of the 'Activity Plan' and its programme of events.

⁷⁴⁴ Jones, 'Unlocking Essences and Exploring Networks: Experiencing Authenticity in Heritage Education Settings', 1.

⁷⁴⁵ Neil Spiller, 'St Alfege: Hawksmoor Speaking Across Time', *Architectural Design* 90, no. 1 (February 2020): 132.

⁷⁴⁶ Jones, 'Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities', 25.

⁷⁴⁷ Activity Plan, Executive Summary, May 2017, p.3.

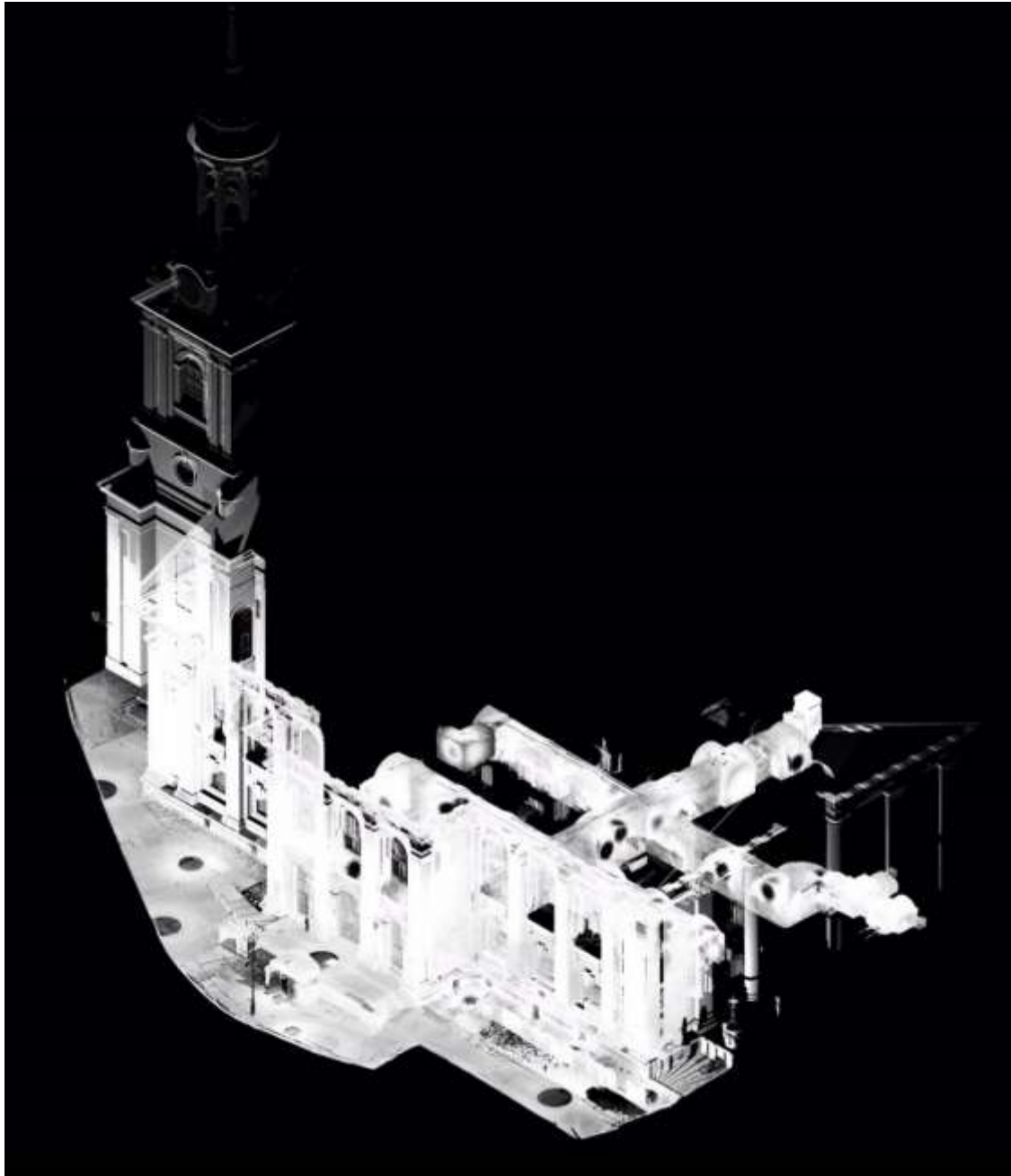


Figure 57. St Alfege Church, birds eye view of the south façade with crypt corridors shown below. [Reproduced by permission: Simon Withers, Captivate: Spatial Modelling Research Group, University of Greenwich 2018].

This is a method of assessing the ‘social value’ of the project and information was collected from a variety of sources.⁷⁴⁸ Visitors, participants, volunteers and project partners have contributed comments on their experiences, and responses on social media and to the new website were examined. Volunteer hours were recorded and used to demonstrate local support and commitment. This rigorous evaluation procedure is funded by the NLHF grant and is a specialist process designed to measure the social value of a project through responses to its activity programme.

The developing role of the volunteer workforce further illustrates the increased attention to casual visitors and their interpretation of the church, as well as a definition of heritage that focuses on an individual’s experience or response to a place, rather than a fixed, innate aesthetic value or historical meaning.⁷⁴⁹ The Volunteers Manager has organised the volunteer development programme with the aim to expand and train this workforce, increasing their expertise and encouraging camaraderie through dedicated social events. Additional training has been offered to prepare volunteers to lead the guided tours of the crypt and bell ringing chamber. The number of volunteers has grown from 35 to 51, partly as a result of volunteer recruitment days, and the role is being renamed ‘Heritage Ambassador’, which makes explicit the intention that these people will actively present the new explanatory material within the church. The previous name ‘Open Church volunteers’ conveyed the fact that the church was open, and perhaps suggested a Christian motive for increasing access to the church, rather than a heritage purpose. In line with the new use of the north door, the volunteers have been relocated to greet visitors as they arrive at this point in the church, from where they will direct visitors to the new interpretation areas of the church. The endeavour to provide educational and interpretive material, with the assistance of informed guides, is key to developing a new heritage-based persona for the building. These volunteers are an important component of the heritage tapestry presented at St Alfege’s but they also form a second supportive community for the church.

⁷⁴⁸ Kayte McSweeney is the independent evaluator who was appointed in November 2018; her first report was prepared in May 2019 and the second in May 2020.

⁷⁴⁹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 4–5; Jones, ‘Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities’, 24–26.

As we have seen, current ideas about improving the sustainability of English churches also revolve around developing multiple uses and audiences for church buildings.⁷⁵⁰ St Alfege Church has already adopted many of these diversification tactics; it is a place of worship (for both the weekly Sunday morning congregation and the Lugandan-speaking congregation, which worships monthly in the church), a music venue, a destination for school parties, a historic building sought out by architectural enthusiasts and part of a World Heritage Site. The current project has sought to populate the interior with visitor-orientated interpretation material of various kinds and although the intention is not to alter the overall ambience of the space, there will be an increased number of activities available for the visitor. The church is likely to become busier as it emerges from the current restoration in its new guise and there is a risk that the calmness currently offered by the church space will be reduced. Part of the church's charm is as a place of reflection away from the densely populated external urban environment, be that Christian reflection or more general meditation, peace and quiet.

However, the financial pressures on historic English churches in the twenty-first century, often caused by the historic building fabric, are manifold. Parochial church councils and vicars are faced with the challenge of transforming their churches into places that attract additional (and financially supportive) communities, whilst they maintain their Christian spiritual work. The focus and promotion of St Alfege Church's heritage in the current project has emphasised the church's changing relationship with the surrounding town of Greenwich. While memorialising its historic role as a parish church and fortifying the building for the next century by presenting community-focused initiatives, St Alfege's has diversified the histories it contains that are associated with the surrounding town, underpinning a new authenticity. But it remains to be seen how St Alfege's will fare after the two-year Activity Plan is complete and the professional heritage management team depart. The *Heart of Greenwich* project represents just the most recent episode in the history of St Alfege Church, throughout which the local parish

⁷⁵⁰ Burrows, *Sustaining Major Parish Churches; Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities*; National Churches Trust, *Keeping Churches Alive*, 2013. See also the vision of the CCT: <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/what-we-do/about-us/our-vision-mission.html>, accessed 9 September 2020.

community have sought to maintain the church's relevance to the parish of Greenwich and its population.

CHAPTER 6 - Conclusion

This thesis has explored the interaction between church architecture, the parish population, and the processes of memorialisation that are apparent within three church-building projects in the parish of Greenwich, which occurred in three consecutive centuries. The different priorities evident in each project denoted changing attitudes to the past and the established church, as well as the different ways that the local inhabitants were framed as a community. The current project to rejuvenate St Alfege Church for the twenty-first century represents another revision of these attitudes, through its re-interpretation of the building, its local audience and the memorials evident at the church.

All three earlier projects were transformative for the parish, and this was achieved by reconfiguring the way that memorialisation processes occurred at the church. The creation or suppression of memorials, architectural elements and performances of commemorative acts, were all constitutive parts of this recurring process of adaptation. My discussion of the changing priorities seen in the architecture, and the memories that were selected for preservation (or re-created) during each project, by a variety of local and national decision-makers, has shown how different communities generated value and meaning for the Greenwich churches. Both the memorialisation of the dead and the history of the church buildings have been repeatedly curated to reflect an ideal version of the church that promoted a sense of collective memory. Similarly, present-day concepts of heritage have played an important part of the current project at St Alfege Church and are closely related to contemporary ideas about memory and the past, but these too will one day be viewed as historically contingent to the times we live in.

For this sequence of four church-building projects, I have examined original material from a range of local and national archives that have illustrated the changing perceptions of the architecture of the Greenwich churches by national and local authorities. Local history sources have been vital to this thesis, offering an alternative viewpoint when compared to more overarching architectural and national histories. The complexity that local history provides, and how it is impacted by national policies and

legislation, has enabled a detailed examination of the interaction between national and local authorities in relation to Greenwich parish church.

The National Church: State Politics and Architecture

The wider political, ecclesiastical and cultural context of the three earlier church-building projects influenced the memorial intentions inherent to the three building designs made for the local Greenwich parish church. The legal and financial basis for all three projects was created at a national level and represented a national drive to reinforce the status of an Anglican parish church within increasingly urban and populous parishes. In 1711 and 1818 Acts of Parliament were aimed specifically at Anglican churches and generated the impetus for the new churches of St Alfege and St Mary. The restoration of St Alfege Church from 1946 onwards was funded by the 1943 War Damage Act, which made special provisions for churches. These three Acts of Parliament were all made in the wake of wartime and after significant loss of life, which brought patriotism to the fore and made the memorialisation of the dead a national concern. In 1711 the Tory government that enacted the Act to Build Fifty New Churches came to power with a mandate to end the war with France and reinforce Anglican conformity. The 1818 Church Building Act was passed after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and its churches are sometimes called Waterloo churches in acknowledgement of Britain's victory. In 1943 the focus of the War Damage Act was the repair of bomb damage to all buildings, however, at St Alfege Church Richardson transformed this practical aim into a patriotic celebration of craftsmanship and teamwork. I have shown how the state focus, represented by these Acts of Parliament, shaped the 1711, 1824 and 1946 church-building projects in Greenwich in different ways.

The population of Greenwich were not strangers to this national stage; indeed, national and local interests were mingled to an unusual extent in Greenwich and it is not a typical parish church. During the Tudor and Stuart period Greenwich had been an important Royal residence with a riverside position that provided good communication with the City of London six miles upstream and the sea routes to Europe and beyond. In the late seventeenth century extensive and prolonged building work started in Greenwich

on the site of the former Royal palace. The monumental Royal Hospital for Seamen was built here, which was a patriotic celebration of British naval power and empire. It was a charitable home for retired sailors, which followed a French model established at the Paris Hotel des Invalides, and was an architectural tour de force masterminded by Wren. By 1710, when St Alfege Church collapsed and the parishioners appealed for state assistance, Greenwich parish was in a strong position to seek support from the government. Its need for a new church was used to promote a political campaign to reinforce the Church of England, which later became the Act to Build Fifty New Churches. This close relationship between national and local interests in Greenwich fluctuated over the following two centuries, but Greenwich has retained its national significance.

The Commissions appointed to implement the three Acts imposed their own criteria onto these fundamentally local buildings, to varying degrees, through their control of the funding and the style of church architecture deployed. Different architectural styles, motifs and overall building forms, from the classical Roman and Greek eras, were re-imagined in the composition of the new St Alfege and St Mary's churches, in ways that expressed the cultural aspirations and ideological intent of both the architects and the Commissions. The architects' synthesis of these classical architectural elements conveyed their (and their clients') perception of a past civilisation and its (then-) current cultural status. These design choices were forms of architectural memorialisation that showed a creative desire to emulate aspects of these earlier civilisations. In each era, the British state's identification with these different classical civilisations, and the architect's interpretation of that scholarly code, sought to associate them with an ancient authority and learning. Richardson's neo-Georgian focus for his 1950s restoration of St Alfege Church, whilst less directly associated with the state, exemplified a national movement away from the Victorian Gothic Revival style. He championed the architectural merit of Hawksmoor's church, partly to satisfy WDC regulations and maximise their financial support, but also to reassert that classical authority and permanence.

The representation and memorialisation of the national Church of England within the town required the architects to reflect upon the Church of England's position within British society. This impetus varied for each of the three projects, but the relationship

between the state and the established Church was evident in the interior and exterior qualities of the churches. In the eighteenth-century Hawksmoor created a local church that dominated the town in its scale and monumentality, thereby emphasising its connection to the national church and monarch. Inside the church, the congregation was arranged in a rigid and hierarchical seating plan and the chancel was a shallow apse that minimised the separation of the congregation and the clergy. In 1824 Basevi's St Mary's Church was a new, elegant auditory church that contributed to a picturesque tableau where the town met the Royal Park. When it was consecrated in 1825, St Mary's provided a fashionable and acoustically efficient setting for church services, with allocated, rented pew seating. It fell from favour during the late Victorian era, when ecclesiastical taste turned towards a more spiritual and atmospheric church service. When, after the second world war, Richardson restored St Alfege Church, the Church of England's position in society had changed again, but was still synonymous with a traditional and patriotic stance. Although the size of Anglican church congregations had decreased, public appreciation for the heritage value of historic churches had increased as the twentieth century progressed. So, Richardson's project incorporated an early form of architectural conservation that responded to this renewed interest in the church building itself. His reverence for the church's architecture promoted its importance, increasing the significance of the building fabric as opposed to building's use. Inside the restored church, the rigid pre-war layout was dismissed and a new interior arrangement introduced a flexibility that allowed freer movement around the space and different modes of worship. The current building project at St Alfege Church builds on Richardson's restoration and his focus on Hawksmoor's architecture, but augments this with the museum-like presentation of further historical information about the church and stories of past parishioners. The relationship between the church as a place of worship and destination for heritage tourists has been further refined.

For the 2016-2020 *Heart of Greenwich* project, the heritage assets of St Alfege Church will be presented in a new and accessible way, with funding and guidance from the NLHF (HLF before 2019). This national body was created by the legislation that governs the National Lottery, and its heritage ethos is generated partly by a need to demonstrate public benefit. The project team has also navigated the national legislation

concerning historic buildings and the Church of England faculty process. These national authorities have influenced the development of the project and the new relationship between the church as a historic building and a place of worship. While a regular programme of Anglican church services continues, more casual visitors are invited into the church to learn about its history and experience its architecture. Richardson had sought to enhance the international appeal of St Alfege Church, through links with Canada, but now that the church is within a UNESCO world heritage site, overseas visitors are more frequent and the church's potential audience is global.

The improvement to the church's external appearance has optimised St Alfege Church's position within the UNESCO Maritime Greenwich world heritage site, which comprises the Royal Hospital for Seamen (now Old Royal Naval College), Greenwich Park and Greenwich town centre. This architectural alliance with the Royal Hospital for Seamen and Greenwich Park was first contemplated architecturally by Hawksmoor in his masterplan for the Royal Hospital drawn in 1728. Just under a hundred years later the parish vestry and vicar negotiated a civic partnership with the Royal Hospital and the Ranger of the Royal Park, which enabled them to create the new church of St Mary on a prominent Greenwich site. During Richardson's post-war restoration, he made little direct reference to the Hospital and the Park, possibly because he was focusing on the fate of a particular building type: bomb-damaged churches in London. However, when the UNESCO maritime world heritage site was instigated in 1997, it included St Alfege Church within its boundary and therefore attributed to the church 'cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.'⁷⁵¹ The current NLHF project has sought to promote this designation and raise the church's heritage profile, in order to attract more visitors and protect the longevity of the church.

⁷⁵¹ UNESCO 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, quoted in Historic England's elearning module 'Understanding and Managing World Heritage Sites': <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/training-skills/online-training/elearning-modules> (accessed 13 Jan 2020).

The Local Parish Church: Context and Community

Greenwich is an ancient parish that has possessed a church for over a thousand years, so local expectations of the parish church have deep roots, which would also have been the case in 1711, 1824 and 1946. During these three projects, the churches were used to construct communal identities that supported the instigators' points of view. These positions of power were almost always held by the wealthiest men, although it is clear that many women attended the churches. The proportion of the parish population who were actively attending the parish church was less than half even in the eighteenth century, and this shrank further in the later centuries, so there were large numbers of inhabitants who were never part of these church communities and whose perception of Greenwich church was quite different. However, until the 1850s, the parish burial ground was the only option for the majority of the population when they died, so burial practices and the associated memorials are a more widespread concern.

There local parish authorities interacted with their respective national Commissions in different ways. The pre-1710 church building was designed and built by the parishioners (although we have seen how responsibility for the St Alfege Church chancel was associated with ownership of the rectory) so the building itself was the product of a communal effort. The creation of the new Hawksmoor church could not have been more different, and was a 'national' church. Despite the visual authority of this new architecture in Greenwich, both at St Alfege Church and the nearby magnificent Royal Hospital for Seamen, the vicar and vestrymen resisted this 'new regime', as Laqueur termed it, in certain areas. The parish church had an important civic role in the task of processing the parish dead, and from 1711 local Greenwich people faced a traumatic breach in their customary use of the church building and churchyard for burials, enforced by the Church Commission and a national Act of Parliament.

The 1818 Church Commission placed a far greater onus on local parish authorities to administer their own church construction projects. As a result, a strong sense of parish ownership and pride is apparent when St Mary's Church was completed in 1824. This church was designed to seat some poorer inhabitants, however it principally appealed to the wealthier inhabitants of the 'middle sort' and incorporated a crypt burial site that was

only affordable to a minority.⁷⁵² Nicholas Vansittart's involvement with the initial parish proposal for a new church suggests that the project might have been conceived as an opportunity to access national funds that had been allocated to the 1818 Act. The need for a new church was a civic desire for a new building that expressed the social and cultural aspirations of a particular social group, represented by men such as Vansittart, Angerstein and Burney. As the population of Greenwich continued to grow during the nineteenth century, the ancient Greenwich parish was divided into smaller parishes and new Anglican churches were built nearby. Substantial non-conformist chapels also appeared in the area, giving the local population a much wider choice of places to worship and generating new communities through worship patterns. St Mary's Regency focus on a contemporary 'fashionable' church and the changing demographic profile of the local population, possibly explains why St Mary's did not attract much local loyalty in the period leading up to its closure in 1919 and afterwards, when it was threatened with demolition. St Mary's was less resilient than St Alfege Church when faced with competing places of worship and the growth of secularisation. In 1935, the private burial vaults and coffins in St Mary's crypt hindered the demolition of the church for legal reasons, but did not appear to cause any local concern. St Mary's church had served a specific social group within the local geographic area, which, once no longer in evidence, limited its popularity and the efficacy of its memorial functions.

During the post-war restoration of St Alfege Church, local needs were initially a secondary consideration, but the vicar and PCC became gradually more involved and took on greater responsibility for the building work. The reorganisation committee of the Diocese of Southwark first appointed Richardson in 1946 and between them they developed the focus on Hawksmoor's architecture. The Greenwich PCC had envisaged a far more prosaic (and affordable) reconstruction, as shown in Ford's outline proposal from 1945, that would have achieved the simple aim of reinstating a place of worship in a timely fashion. The WDC were persuaded to upgrade the church from a 'plain repair' and Richardson's vision was laboriously followed. After the rededication service in 1953, work continued to the tower and the landscaping that was funded by the PCC largely

⁷⁵² Sutton, 'The Effect on Mortality of the 1848-1849 Cholera Epidemic in the Parish of St Alfege, within the Registration District of Greenwich', 28.

without WDC assistance. This nationally orientated project successfully transitioned into a local project, which was supported by the local parish. The church's newly proclaimed architectural value encouraged local pride and support.

The recent *Heart of Greenwich* project was initially developed at a local level, by the vicar and the PCC, and with the assistance of volunteers, but within a framework of national legislation and an international heritage convention. In order to fund their project, they explored the variety of fundraising possibilities available to historic churches in the twenty first century, and decided to apply for a NLHF grant, thereby engaging with another set of nationally motivated criteria. The project had a strong focus on local history and local participation from the outset and new historical information on display in the church represents a broader range of topics and people, rather than a single narrative. A workforce of heritage volunteers has been assembled to engage with casual visitors. The steering committee for the project included representatives from local stakeholders, which connected the church with a network of local organisations. The celebration of the church's local history, and its new-found support network, have reinforced St Alfege's local status and updated the concept of a parish community. This project is not complete so its long-term success cannot be judged, but the strategies adopted focus on inspiring public support.

The Memorialisation of the Local Dead

The burial and memorialisation of the local parish dead, at or around the parish church, has historically represented a powerful connection between the parish church and the parish community. The first three projects examined in this thesis each defined a stage in a process by which that connection was dismantled in Greenwich, diminishing this specific memorial function of the parish churches. St Mary's and St Alfege's were both used as repositories for the parish dead and acted almost as mausoleums for the wealthiest parishioners, until they were closed. Today, a recently deceased body would only be present inside St Alfege Church during a funeral service, and then transported elsewhere for cremation or burial.

In 1711, Hawksmoor and the Church Commission not only disregarded the burials that had occurred in the old church and its churchyard, but also thought it unnecessary to transfer the memorials from the pre-1710 church into the new church. This 'congregation of the dead' was no longer considered an inherent part of the parish church, but rather a threat to the structural stability of the building and a memorial obstacle to their vision for the new church. The new scientific approach to dead bodies, and the priority given to the memorialisation embodied in the architectural design of the new church building, disrupted local parish burial practices and compromised the church as a site of local memory. Just over thirty years later, when Hawksmoor himself was dead and the Commission disbanded, burials in St Alfege's crypt were made lawful, and the parish succeeded in reversing this process. However, this represented the first attempt to weaken the connection between burials and the parish church.

A much-needed extension to the St Alfege Church crypt was incorporated into the new St Mary's Church in 1824, which provided an important source of income for the church through the charges levied for crypt burials and private vaults. St Mary's had no churchyard of its own, so only expensive crypt burials were available at this church. The church's imitation of a temple mausoleum in an idyllic parkland setting was enhanced by the crypt burials, and attracted wealthy Greenwich inhabitants. St Mary's was the site of an extremely elaborate funeral service and interment in 1843, for local businessman, Mr Brocklebank. This exclusivity distanced St Mary's from the large number of old and new burials in the extended burial ground next to St Alfege Church. After St Mary's church closed in 1919 the memorials inside the church went unseen, and without any memorial activity to accompany the 357 crypt burials, they faded from local memory. The official correspondence leading up to the demolition of St Mary's Church in 1936 displayed a pragmatic attitude to the crypt burials and their memorialisation, which seems astonishing to twenty-first century eyes. Although a convoluted process was devised to mark the graves, there is no record of it ever being used and it failed to sustain the memory of St Mary's church itself. The intended form of memorialisation for the dead at St Mary's church, through the connection between the crypt burials and an active church building above, failed when the church closed in 1919. By the time of the church's

demolition, any meaningful connection between the parish population and the crypt burials had been lost.

In the mid-nineteenth century, while St Mary's church was at its most popular, St Alfege church lost its burial rights through the implementation of the Metropolitan Burial Act 1852. The St Alfege churchyard and burial ground were closed to burials in 1853 and its crypt was closed in 1859, which marked the end of the 'old regime'. St Mary's crypt was now the only burial site in Greenwich and near the parish church. St Alfege church's important local role as a place for remembering the dead was undermined by the absence of burials and Champneys improvement scheme of the 1880s may have partly been motivated by a need to confirm the church's significance for the parish. The land that had previously comprised the churchyard and burial ground was gradually transformed into a public amenity space and its association with the dead receded. In 1889 the burial ground was reinvented as St Alfege Park.

When incendiary devices landed on the church roof in 1941, burials at St Alfege Church had not occurred for eighty years, and the church no longer performed that memorial function. However, there were still many memorial stone tablets mounted on its walls, which had survived the fire. Older ones related directly to bodies in the crypt and newer memorials recorded the deaths of people closely associated with the church but buried elsewhere. During the restoration of the church, Richardson treated this collection of individual stone tablet memorials as sculptural components of the interior and many were removed or repositioned. His restoration largely ignored the memorialisation of the local dead and focused on the memorialisation of Hawksmoor's church. The church crypt, with its 1058 burials, was only of structural interest, while the churchyard area in front of the parish hall was re-landscaped and converted into the functional 'western courtyard' with little concern for the ancient burials. The gravestones were relocated to act as a perimeter fence.

The transformation in the way dead bodies were treated and local people were memorialised at St Alfege Church was influenced by new knowledge about sanitation and the overcrowding caused by local population increase. But the discontinuation of burials at the parish church depleted its local significance and created the need to adapt the

memorial processes and activities carried out at the church. The focus on architectural memorialisation, introduced by Richardson during the twentieth-century restoration, contributed to this adaptation.

What was Lost or Forgotten? (Before and After)

The transience of physical memorials, both memorial tablets and the church buildings themselves, is clearly demonstrated by the first three projects which have been the focus of this thesis. By contrast, the current project has aimed to conserve the church building fabric and discover more information about the past uses of the church. It is clear that subsequent generations have had different approaches to the memorial material they inherited and Cubitt's 'arbitration' process between what is remembered and what is forgotten is evident. We have also seen how subjective 'representations of reality' were created within the parish churches to define ideal parish communities, as Gillis noted, which were not fixed and could not provide permanent memorials. The extent to which the remains of the previous church were preserved or destroyed indicated the prevailing attitude to the local history of the parish, what was thought valuable about the church and who was empowered to make those judgements.

When St Alfege Church collapsed in 1710, the many memorials inside the church were not saved. The surviving lists of the pre-1710 memorials give some insight into the people who had been memorialised at the church, with an idea of the memorials locations that give hints about the internal layout; the position inside the church was important. We know Lambarde's memorial was relocated to Sevenoaks, but the fate of the rest is unknown, illustrating the extent to which local memorial practices were wiped out by the construction of Hawksmoor's new church. Similarly, any evidence of the body of the old church was entirely obliterated because Hawksmoor only reused stone from the pre-1710 church in the new crypt, everything else was new material. The only architectural survivor was the 1617 church tower, which was eventually updated eighteen years later. The appearance of the church tower and the church's east façade at street level before 1710 are depicted in some seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century paintings and drawings of Greenwich, and the prominence of the tower suggests it was a

source of local pride. When the church building collapsed in 1710 and was cleared away to make space for the new church, the parish lost a church that had been incrementally constructed by parish communities over many years, and contained a rich collection of memorials to many generations of local inhabitants. Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission were keen to forget this earlier church and replace it with a bigger, grander church designed in an architectural style that instead memorialised a distant classical empire that associated the resurgent Anglican Church with early Christianity.

In 1797 Hasted wrote that there were no memorials in the 'new church', although it was 79 years since the consecration service. Lists of the memorials inside St Alfege Church published in 1838 and 1896, whilst not a complete record, show how St Alfege Church was only repopulated with memorials during the early nineteenth century.⁷⁵³ After Hawksmoor and the 1711 Church Commission completely reinvented Greenwich parish church, it seems that local memorials only reappeared inside the church, in any significant number, about a hundred years later. The local parishioners were slow to adopt the new church for their formal memorialisation, although more informal memorials were created by carved graffiti on the gallery window sills. The grandeur of Hawksmoor's nationally inspired architecture appears to have alienated the local parish initially, but it did provide St Alfege Church with a historical significance that attracted admiration and financial protection in later centuries.

Unlike St Alfege Church in 1711, St Mary's Church did not inherit a lengthy ecclesiastical history in 1823 and the ambiguous status of the site, along with its enviable position, made it less secure as a long-term location for a church, and indeed it has now mostly been forgotten. When construction started on the new church building, the site was empty, so Basevi and the trustees were free to invent a new church that suited the current cultural climate. However, the decision to locate the new church so close to St Alfege Church had the effect of consigning St Alfege's to the past, and made it an 'old church' facing obsolescence when St Mary's opened in 1825. The inclusion of a crypt

⁷⁵³ Greenwood, *An Epitome of County History, Wherein the Most Remarkable Objects, Persons, and Events, Are Briefly Treated of. Vol. 1*; Hasted, Streatfield, and Larking, *Hasted's History of Kent, Corrected, Enlarged, and Continued to the Present Time. Part 1 The Hundred of Blackheath*.

intended for burials started a new local memorial process at St Mary's, which flourished for over fifty years, but declined after the last interment in 1904.

When St Mary's Church was closed in 1919 the process started of forgetting and eventually losing the majority of the building, although some items were relocated to St Alfege Church. The bell, organ and clock were all sold in 1920 and the PCC also gained permission from the diocese to sell the furniture. The £611 raised was spent in 1929 on the freehold and refurbishment of the parish hall, in a poignant reallocation of parish resources.⁷⁵⁴ The most important and portable artefacts were moved to St Alfege Church and remnants of St Mary's Church still survive at St Alfege's. Shortly before the church's demolition, eighteen memorials were removed from inside St Mary's Church and taken to St Alfege Church, although the names of the people they memorialised were not recorded.⁷⁵⁵ One notable example is the Rev. George Mathew, instigator of the project to build a new church in 1821, who was buried at St Mary's when he died in 1833. His memorial stone tablet is now prominently mounted on the wall of the west vestibule in St Alfege Church, where it was possibly positioned during Richardson's restoration.⁷⁵⁶ Similarly, Mr Edward Foreman, one of the church trustees in 1824, was also interred in St Mary's crypt when he died in 1844 and his memorial stone tablet, with a lengthy inscription, is now in the St Alfege Church crypt and has been mounted on the crypt wall as part of the recent work to prepare the crypt for guided tours.⁷⁵⁷ The 1935 schedule of coffins in St Mary's crypt is itself a rich resource, previously forgotten, that could yield further family stories and reveal how this nineteenth-century group of inhabitants related to the local Greenwich population.

Other artefacts from St Mary's church that survived because they were moved to St Alfege's include the 1824 silver plate: two covered flagons, two cups and two patens, which are now stored securely with St Alfege's silver plate. The St Mary's coat of arms

⁷⁵⁴ St Alfege Church archive, box no. 7, Faculty document dated 18 December 1929 and signed by G G Hartwright, registrar for the Diocese of Southwark.

⁷⁵⁵ CERC, file 100581-2, letter from Cluttons to the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 7 Nov 1935.

⁷⁵⁶ Mathew's name is number 36 on the 'Schedule of Coffins' enclosed with Cluttons' letter of 23 March 1936 (a copy of which is also held by LMA). Mathew's memorial stone tablet is visible in figure 24, which shows the interior of St Mary's Church.

⁷⁵⁷ Edward Foreman is number 62 in the 'Schedule of Coffins'. According to his memorial inscription 'In early youth he served in India and was made prisoner by Sultan Tippoo Saib'.

now hangs in the Vicar's vestry and the silver commemorative plaque, which marked the start of construction, is mounted in a window reveal adjacent to the chapel area that was named after St Mary's church when it was created in 1953. So, remnants of St Mary's church have been absorbed into St Alfege church, and provide a faint memorial to the lost church.

The intervention of Mr Robertson between 1935 and 1937, and his insistence on the memorialisation of the site of St Mary's crypt after the church had been demolished, led to the creation of a memorial garden that marked the former position of the lost church but also received a relocated statue of William IV. This statue has deflected attention away from the absent church, but, until the extension to the National Maritime Museum in 2010, the memorial garden retained the footprint of the lost church and the outline of the church site is evident on maps made between 1936 and 2010. The redevelopment of the site has twice sought to remove any remaining evidence of St Mary's Church, regardless of what survived underground, and today St Mary's Church and crypt have been largely forgotten. It is possible to approximately locate the crypt of St Mary's Church only because the statue of William IV remains on the site. The relocation of this granite statue is unlikely, making this memorial to a monarch who reigned for seven years (1830-37) while St Mary's Church was at the height of its popularity, the most permanent, although oblique, memorial to St Mary's Church.

Had St Mary's Church survived into the mid-twentieth century, it might well have been protected from demolition as a valued example of Regency architecture and perhaps converted into a cultural venue, as other Commissioners' churches have been.⁷⁵⁸ Basevi's St Thomas's Church in Stockport is evocative of what St Mary's might have been like, if it still existed. After the Second World War, the number of historic buildings in England that had been lost to German bombs heightened the appreciation of those that survived. They were recorded, photographed and listed by government ministries and interest groups in a concerted effort to document these buildings.⁷⁵⁹ This step change in

⁷⁵⁸ For example, Soane's 1828 Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone is now 'One Marylebone' and available to hire. <https://one-events.co.uk/marylebone/>, accessed 25 July 2020.

⁷⁵⁹ Thurley, *Men from the Ministry: How Britain Saved Its Heritage*; Summerson, *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture*.

the way historic buildings were treated came too late for St Mary's, and its latent architectural value went unrecognised by all except perhaps local historian, A R Martin.⁷⁶⁰

In contrast to the muted response to St Mary's demolition, when St Alfege Church was severely damaged by incendiary devices in 1941 the destruction was met with outrage and a determination to restore the church building. The focus on the word 'restoration' throughout the project obscured a parallel agenda to reinvent and renew the church. This project is the clearest example of Cubitt's 'arbitration' process; the new and old building components were expertly collaged together to create a new version of the church. While the eighteenth-century design was being loudly celebrated, twentieth-century equipment and construction techniques were employed and the internal layout of the church was rearranged to offer greater flexibility for both worship and more secular activities. Richardson campaigned for the rigorous and expensive reconstruction of the church interior, which celebrated Hawksmoor's work but disposed of Victorian and later adaptations to the church. The restoration eschewed the dour Victorian interior (developed by the local parish vicar and church council in the preceding century) for a modern/Georgian simplicity.

Hawksmoor's reputation was rising amongst architectural historians and Richardson's insistence that he was recreating Hawksmoor's work at St Alfege Church amplified Hawksmoor's authorship, aligning the project with this emerging scholarship and attracting a new spectrum of visitors to the church. This was an early 'heritage' project, which extended the potential audience for the church and cleverly updated the church, both practically and ideologically. However, the reinforcement of Hawksmoor's memorialisation at the church existed in parallel with the parish church's local role as a site of memory and worship, and a tension between the two roles was introduced that still exists. During the restoration Richardson removed or repositioned many of the surviving memorial stone tablets, thereby changing their memorial function. Some were stored out of view in the crypt, along with the memorials that came from St Mary's Church, and have also recently been mounted on the crypt walls as part of the current project, revivifying their memorial effect.

⁷⁶⁰ Martin, 'St Mary's Church, Greenwich, and Its Architect'.

A record of St Alfege Church's fixtures and fittings, made by NADFAS in 1984, listed fifty memorials on display in the church.⁷⁶¹ Included in this list was a wooden plaque commemorating the post-war restoration project, which had been unveiled during the 1953 rededication ceremony. It was located on the west wall, but has now disappeared. It offered a reminder of the restoration that was perhaps thought inappropriate because it compromised the apparent authenticity of the church interior. However, the church interior that existed before the recent *Heart of Greenwich* project commenced, was largely the interior that Richardson created seventy years ago. The current development work continues Richardson's historical focus and the current architects hold him in high regard.⁷⁶² The necessary repairs have been made to the building fabric, whilst the interpretation and activities available to casual visitors and local volunteers have been developed by heritage professionals. The *Heart of Greenwich* project has endeavoured to 'translate and transpose' the meaning of St Alfege Church, as Whyte advocated, for twenty first century visitors and it will be interesting to see how this new version of the church fares.

In this thesis the term memorialisation has been used to explore both the use of historic architectural styles to imbue the Greenwich parish church buildings with certain characteristics, and how these churches then shaped the treatment of the dead for the purposes of the living. Laqueur's 'community of the dead' was banished from Greenwich in several stages and at each step the instigators of the new church attempted to reinvent the church's significance and value to the local inhabitants by invoking new forms of memorial authority. The latest project at St Alfege Church is heavily indebted to a concept of 'heritage', which is closely allied to memorialisation, and has shaped the representation of the interior. A new community of 'Heritage Ambassadors' supports this additional interpretation of the parish church as a tourist destination.

I started my research project with Forty's observation about the ineffectiveness of architecture as a method for prolonging the memory of an event or person and the histories of St Alfege Church and St Mary's Church corroborate this statement, despite the apparent permanence of the church building type. Greenwich is a historic place and

⁷⁶¹ National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, *Record of Church Furnishings*.

⁷⁶² Richard Griffiths Architects and Hill, 'St Alfege Church, Greenwich: Conservation Management Plan.'

was not a typical parish during the centuries under consideration, but Forty's statement still rings true. The periodic reinvention of St Alfege Church seems to have been a necessary development process that enabled the church to accommodate changing uses and appeal to new audiences over the years. This reimagining of the church has enabled it to endure, but the casualties of the process, where they can be discovered, show how physical memorials and the process of memorialisation have been manipulated to achieve the new version of the church. These lost and forgotten details offer insights into the earlier churches and how they constructed communal identities for Greenwich, and also illustrate how historic buildings are evolving artefacts with complex histories involving many people organised into differing communities.

Appendix 1 – Greenwich Parishioners' 1710 Petition

The CASE of the Inhabitants of GREENWICH in the County of Kent, and Reasons why they ask Relief for Rebuilding their Parish-Church

Shewing,

That on *Tuesday* the 28th Day of *November* last, about Midnight, the Roof of the said Parish-Church fell in, whereby the Walls of the said Church are so shaken, that by the Judgement of skillful Workmen that made a View thereof, the said Church cannot be Repaired but must be Rebuilt: The Charge whereof, by a moderate Computation, will amount to the Sum of 6000 l. and upwards, which the Inhabitants of the Parish are not able to raise; but humbly hope the Honourable HOUSE of COMMONS will compassionate their deplorable Condition, and give them such Relief therein, as they in their Wisdom shall think fit, and for the Reasons following:

- I. The Decay of the said Church was not perceiv'd by the Inhabitants, and consequently could not be prevented; and that the fall of the Roof was sudden and unexpected, occasion'd by a hidden Defect in the innermost Part of the largest and principal Pillar, that fell and brought the Roof with it, and not by the Negligence of the Parishioners, who from Time to Time constantly and diligently Repaired all Defects of the said Church as soon as discover'd, and within a few Years last past had laid out several Hundred Pounds in the Support and Decoration thereof, and did not apprehend the same in any Danger, but believed it might have stood Hundreds of Years.
- II. That the Town is within this Twenty Years mightily Depopulated and Deserted by the Richer Sort, who formerly liv'd there, and gave it the Reputation of a Wealthy Parish, as is evident by the largest and best Houses now being Empty, and having been so for some Years.
- III. That the greatest Part of the few Gentlemen that now live there, are only Tenants at Will, and therefore it cannot be expected they will be at so great an Expence as the Building of a Church in a Parish where they have no Estate, and from whence they may remove at Pleasure; so that the Burden of Building the said Church must be upon the greatest Number, which are the Poorest of the Inhabitants.
- IV. That Nine Parts of Ten of the said Parish consists of Seamen, Watermen, Fishermen, and others, who for the most part are Employ'd in Her Majesty's and the Merchants Service at Sea, and have numerous Families: And the Trading Part of the Town (consisting only in the Necessaries of Life) are in a

low Condition by the long Credit they are forc'd to give to Sea-faring-Men and their Families, which are frequently in long Arrears of Pay.

- V. So many Masters of Families, Inhabitants of the Parish, have been lost in the great Storm, Sir *Cloudsley Shovell's* Misfortune and other Accidents of War, that their Widows and Children, to the Number of 3000 and upwards, have become a Charge to the Parish, and have been Maintained and Provided for (and many of them are still so) at the Charge of the rest of the Parishioners.
- VI. That the said Parishioners having for Forty Years past, contributed to the Rebuilding of St. *Paul's* and other Churches by the Taxes on Coals, the greatest Number of the Inhabitants (and upon whom the insupportable Burden of Building the Parish-Church must lie) being Persons that Daily venture their Lives in Her Majesty's Service, and for the Defence of their Country, It is Humbly Presumed they may be entitled to the Compassion of the Honourable HOUSE of COMMONS for some Relief in this their Deplorable Calamity; and that as the Town hath hitherto been without Dissenting Meeting-House, so the Hopes of such who (taking Advantage of the want of a fit Place for the Service of God) endeavour to reduce the Inhabitants from their former zeal for the Church of *England* to Schism and Enthusiasm may be frustrated.

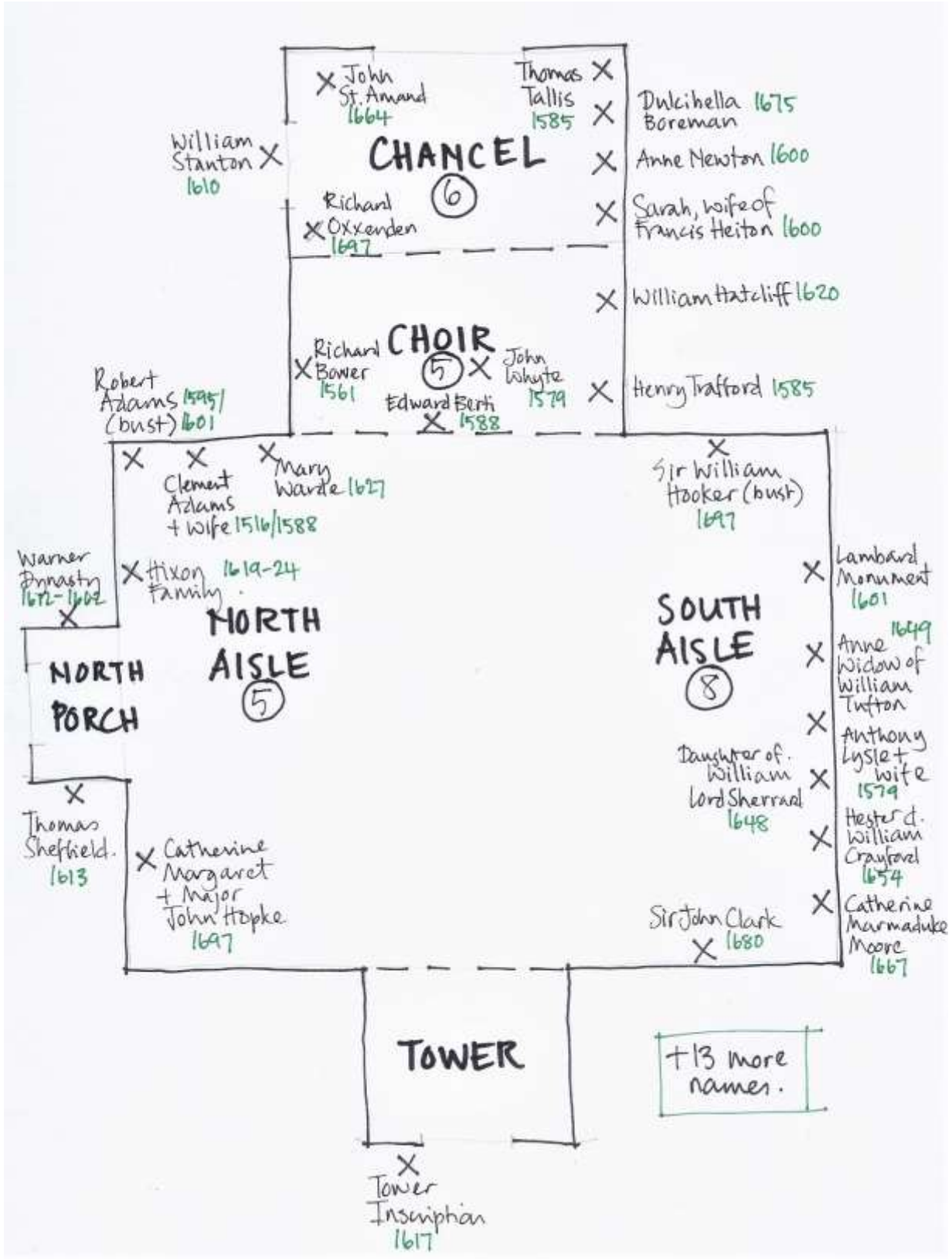
And as St. Paul's is now finish'd, or near it, and the Duties granted on Coals for that Purpose have several Years yet to come, and may probably produce much more than will pay all Debts and Charges of the said Building, and also all Monies borrowed on that Account.

Therefore they Humbly Pray, that the said Sum of 6000 l. or what other Sum your Honours shall think fit for Rebuilding the said Parish-Church of Greenwich, may be assigned out of the Overplus of the said Duties which shall remain over and above defraying all Debts and Charges depending thereon, or such other Relief as to your Honours shall seem meet.

Appendix 2 – Memorials in the pre-1710 St Alfege Church

Diagrammatic floor plan for the pre-1710 St Alfege Church, incorporating memorial names, dates and locations compiled from information provided by four sources:

- British Library, Lansdowne MS 938 f.150, Bishop Kennets Collections, Vol IV (1705);
- British Library, Harleian MS 7048 art. 10, Baker's Cambridge Collections, Vol XXI (1715);
- Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 1*, (Canterbury 1797), 372-420;
- Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London; Volume IV Herts, Kent and Essex*, (London, 1796), 426-493 who quotes John Strype's Circuit Walk, annexed to Strype's revised and expanded *Stow's Survey of London* (1720), 91-93.



Appendix 3 – The 1718 Pew Allocation List

Analysis of the 1718 pew list found in Box 6 of the St Alfege Church archive boxes.

42	Mr James Femble Mrs Stevenson Mr Edm ^d Stagg	S th South Gallery	49	Mr Tho Smith Mr Geo Thompson Mr Tho Jeffries Mr Steph Rochester Mr Tho Exam Co Mr Randolph Denson Mr John Brown Mr John Kethor In the Steams.	N th South Gallery
43	Mr Tho Robinson Mr Jos Giddis Mr Jos Gray Mr Hummonds Mr Lloyd Jun ^r Mr Rownd Williams	S th South Body	50	Mr Geo Fuller & Luke Mr Baring & wife Mr Hannington & wife Mr Tho Smith	N th North Gallery
44	Mr Tho Smith Mr Rich Mr Rouse Mr Archer Mr Archer Mr Ashby	N th North Body	51	Mr John Price Mr Rich Ashby Mr Rich Laming Mr Tho Kupper Mr In ^o Bushley Mr W ^m Bynes Jun ^r & Jun ^r Mr W ^m Geofrey Mr Rich Steadant	N th North
45	Mr Tobias Pratt Mr Crawford	N th North Gallery			

Excerpt from page 3

The pew list comprises a numbered list of groups of names, of varying sizes, and their pew allocation. The numbering of the list does not follow the pew numbering or pew location. The pews are described as being located in four distinct areas: North Body, North Gallery, South Body and South Gallery. I transcribed and rearranged the pew list according to these four areas. In the nave (or body) of the church the numbered pews are ordered from the Vicar at the front in pew no.1 to pew no. 36 at the back of the church. In the gallery the arrangement is less clear, but the lower numbered pews have fewer occupants, suggesting they were more prestigious and likely to be located at the front of the gallery. For instance, Sir John Vanbrughen (sic) and Sir William Sanderson occupy pew no. 8 in the North Gallery.

The list includes 903 names in total, 430 of whom are women. There are many names with titles including Sir, Capt., General, Lady, Madam, Widow, Esq., Mr and Mrs, alongside those whose full name suffices. Most of the pews are occupied by either men or women, and families are separated as a result. The front 19 pews in the South Body and 14 pews in the North Body of the church are occupied by women only, with the exception of 3 pews at the front and pews 11 and 12 in the South Body. So, the front half of the nave pews were occupied mostly by women. The 53 Gallery pews are dominated

by male names; just 13 individual women's names are listed for gallery pews, although the 'Charity Girls' were allocated the West End North Gallery Room (now an enclosed meeting room). The pew list suggests the church was densely occupied and the inhabitants were carefully arranged within the space.



Photograph of the rearranged pew list for the nave: blue is the South Body and green is the North Body.

7	John Carter Esq	2	North Gallery	1
15	Philip Richard Esq	4	North Gallery	2
	Markus Denton	4	North Gallery	2
13	General Atkinson	6	North Gallery	3
	William Fresh Esq	7	North Gallery	3
4	William Hamilton Esq	7	North Gallery	3
8	Mr William Bennet	8	North Gallery	3
23	Richard M. H.	8	North Gallery	3
	Frank John Esq	9	North Gallery	3
16	Mr Richard Smith	10	North Gallery	3
40	Mr John Wood	11	North Gallery	3
	Mr Alexander Stewart	11	North Gallery	3
60	Mr George Fuller & Son	13	North Gallery	3
	Mr James & Co	13	North Gallery	3
	Mr James & Co	13	North Gallery	3
116	William Stewart & Co	13	North Gallery	3
10	Sir Alex Cairnes	14	North Gallery	3
	General Salley	14	North Gallery	3
57	Rob Baker	15	North Gallery	12
	Barth Jeffry	15	North Gallery	12
	Geo Newland	15	North Gallery	12
	David Daniel	15	North Gallery	12
	James Lee	15	North Gallery	12
	Wm Dobson	15	North Gallery	12
	Dan Davidge	15	North Gallery	12
	Lewis Walker	15	North Gallery	12
	Leitch Esq	15	North Gallery	12
56	Clark Young	18	North Gallery	8
	Henry Hill	18	North Gallery	8
	Mr Herbert	18	North Gallery	8
	Thomas Fenwick	18	North Gallery	8
	Mr Hamilton	18	North Gallery	8
	Mr Gibb	18	North Gallery	8
	Thomas Hepburn	18	North Gallery	8
	Mr Birch	18	North Gallery	8
45	Mr Tobias Pratt	18	North Gallery	5
	Mr Crawford	18	North Gallery	5
	Mr J. Crumwell	18	North Gallery	5
	Mr John Ashby	18	North Gallery	5
85	John Hanson	19	North Gallery	6
	John Richardson	19	North Gallery	6
	Alex Atchison	19	North Gallery	6
	Tho Hodgson	19	North Gallery	6
	(Tho?) Lucas	19	North Gallery	6
	(Tho?) Wilcox	19	North Gallery	6
58	William Pope	22	North Gallery	9
	John White Smith	22	North Gallery	9
	Isaac Alexander	22	North Gallery	9
	Rich Sweeting	22	North Gallery	9
	Jn Leyden	22	North Gallery	9
	Symon Birch	22	North Gallery	9
	James Collier	22	North Gallery	9
	Thomas Nelson	22	North Gallery	9
	Rob Ruddle	22	North Gallery	9
59	Geo Hysle	23	North Gallery	9
	Docket Pattison	23	North Gallery	9
	Rob Matthews	23	North Gallery	9
	Jos Mart	23	North Gallery	9
	Wm Hutchins	23	North Gallery	9
	Thomas Payne	23	North Gallery	9
	Mr Harman	23	North Gallery	9
	Fra Milton	23	North Gallery	9
	Mr Elder Senior	23	North Gallery	9
79	John Jewry	24	North Gallery	7
	John Roberts	24	North Gallery	7
	Phil Batchelor	24	North Gallery	7
	Richd Spranger	24	North Gallery	7
	Clement Goffs	24	North Gallery	7
	Richd Dmyon	24	North Gallery	7
	Richd Dmyon	24	North Gallery	7
3	Thomas Jessell	26	North Gallery	12
	Wm Maccully	26	North Gallery	12
	Matth Plastow	26	North Gallery	12
	Wm Westmore	26	North Gallery	12
	John Laurence	26	North Gallery	12
	Mr Barham Sen & Jun	26	North Gallery	12
	Collins	26	North Gallery	12
	Wm Chinner	26	North Gallery	12
	Rich Poston	26	North Gallery	12
	Willm Henner	26	North Gallery	12
	Wm Fischer	26	North Gallery	12
Y Stows men	27	North Gallery		
City Girls	West End North Gallery Room			
George Wiggell	17	North & South Gallery	7	
Richard Barber				
John Barber				
John Brooks				
John Pitchard				
Andrews				
Mr Atterley				
48	Mr Oliver	9	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	9	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	9	South Gallery	1
16	Walter Marshall Esq	4	South Gallery	1
	Richard Bennett	4	South Gallery	1
	John Thompson	4	South Gallery	1
14	Mr James	4	South Gallery	1
11	Mr John James	7	South Gallery	1
24	Thomas White	8	South Gallery	1
12	Richard Marshall	9	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	9	South Gallery	1
10	Mr George Mackay	10	South Gallery	1
	Mr Thomas	10	South Gallery	1
23	John James	11	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	11	South Gallery	1
43	Mr James Pennington	11	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	11	South Gallery	1
44	John James	13	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	13	South Gallery	1
41	John James	14	South Gallery	1
	Mr James	14	South Gallery	1
66	Wm Langley	15	South Gallery	8
	Richard Taylor	15	South Gallery	8
	Wm James	15	South Gallery	8
	Mr James	15	South Gallery	8
	Mr James	15	South Gallery	8
	Mr James	15	South Gallery	8
	Mr James	15	South Gallery	8
69	Mr Thomas Ersk	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr George Thompson	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr Thomas Jeffrey	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr Hugh Hood Senior	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr Thomas Loxton 40	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr Alexander Dutton	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr James	16	South Gallery	10
	Mr James	16	South Gallery	10
80	Amory Adams 490	17	South Gallery	9
	Mr James	17	South Gallery	9
	Wm Powell	17	South Gallery	9
	Mr James	17	South Gallery	9
	Rob Pennington	17	South Gallery	9
	Mr William	17	South Gallery	9
	Mr James	17	South Gallery	9
	Mr James	17	South Gallery	9
	Mr James	17	South Gallery	9
64	John Miller	18	South Gallery	8
	Mr Rowland	18	South Gallery	8
	Antho Taylor	18	South Gallery	8
	Thomas Taylor	18	South Gallery	8
	Wm Davis	18	South Gallery	8
	Thomas Storer	18	South Gallery	8
	Peter Lewis	18	South Gallery	8
	Mr Struffell	18	South Gallery	8
48	Mr Thomas Moore	19	South Gallery	6
	Mr William Mitchell	19	South Gallery	6
	Mr Trout Junior	19	South Gallery	6
	Mr James Wilby	19	South Gallery	6
	Mr Richard Tuckfield	19	South Gallery	6
	Mr John Black	19	South Gallery	6
65	Ben Dibbell	20	South Gallery	4
	Edw Webb	20	South Gallery	4
	Geo Clark	20	South Gallery	4
	James Williams	20	South Gallery	4
70	Wm Dalton	21	South Gallery	9
	Jos Swain	21	South Gallery	9
	Luke Collier	21	South Gallery	9
	Wm Daws	21	South Gallery	9
	Law Watson	21	South Gallery	9
	Alex David	21	South Gallery	9
	John Taylor	21	South Gallery	9
	Henry Carrman	21	South Gallery	9
	John Adams	21	South Gallery	9
67	Thomas Chapman	22	South Gallery	8
	Rob Talbot	22	South Gallery	8
	Rich Bird	22	South Gallery	8
	Gyles Davidge	22	South Gallery	8
	James Philpott	22	South Gallery	8
	Henry Tyler	22	South Gallery	8
	John Mason	22	South Gallery	8
	Jos Boudie	22	South Gallery	8
68	Rich Wright	23	South Gallery	8
	Tho Cole	23	South Gallery	8
	Fran Norman	23	South Gallery	8
	Tho Church	23	South Gallery	8
	Rich Tossell	23	South Gallery	8
	Jos Storier	23	South Gallery	8
	Cha Bayley	23	South Gallery	8
	John White Casket maker	23	South Gallery	8
69	Rich Blackford	24	South Gallery	
	Rich Sharpe	24	South Gallery	
	Geo Farrant	24	South Gallery	
	John Hubbley	24	South Gallery	
	Marke Blissett	24	South Gallery	
	Fra Gregory	24	South Gallery	
	Christo Manuel	24	South Gallery	
	James Skiffing	24	South Gallery	
62	John Fletcher	25	South Gallery	
	Wm Rooke	25	South Gallery	
	Wm Hows	25	South Gallery	
	Wm Coleman	25	South Gallery	
	Benj Wilson	25	South Gallery	
	Hen Hilliard	25	South Gallery	
	Rich Dutton	25	South Gallery	
	John Herring	25	South Gallery	
	John Reading	25	South Gallery	
84	John West	26	South Gallery	
	Wm Hope	26	South Gallery	
	Isaac Peirson	26	South Gallery	

Photograph of the rearranged pew list for the gallery: orange is the South Gallery and yellow is the North Gallery.

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MS. 2715 - Miscellaneous papers concerning the following parishes, St Alphege Greenwich 1712-38 (ff. 91-152).

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P78/ALF - Records for the parish of St Alfege, Greenwich, including baptism registers (1616-1975), marriage registers (1616-1989), burial registers (1615-1914), banns registers (1874-1992), confirmation register (1947-1980), church service registers (1964-1988).

Barnes Collection:

Q/BRN/4 – print of H M Office of Works drawing showing the site of St Mary's Church titled 'Site Development' with a plan and section showing their landscape proposal, scale 16' to 1", December 1935.

Q/BRN/5 – print of a drawing 'Church of St Mary, Greenwich; Plan of Vaults' scale 1/8" to 1'. Showing the external entrance to the vaults and annotated 'Positions of corner stones (in red hereon) as on plan of vaults with Mr M[?]'s letter of 26.5.36 to Cluttons, which plan was handed to the E. C. (Mr Oliver): 6/6/36.'

Q/BRN/6 – print of the same drawing as Q/BRN/5 with numbers added to the burial vaults that relate to Q/BRN/7

Q/BRN/7 - "Late Church of St. Mary, Greenwich; Schedule of Coffins in Crypt." Duplicate of Cluttons' Schedule found at CERC, file 100581, enclosed with letter to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 23 March 1936.

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A series of 25 photographs illustrating the demolition of St Mary's Church (ref. 67241), photographer Charles Quarrell, Press Photographer, 12 Crooms Hill, Greenwich SE10.

LCC Bomb Damage Map for Greenwich

Pew layout drawings for St Mary's Church

Hawksmoor drawing of the North Elevation of St Alfege Church (ref. no. 4354)

Box of photographs of St Alfege Church; includes photographs of the 1941 bomb damage (175, 174, 178, 21, 19, 176, 177). Photo 181 shows the 16th century pulpit with painted pilaster in the background, photo 5 shows the pre-1941 church interior. Photographs of work in progress during the 1946 restoration – numbered 182, 246, 167, 166, 173, 172, 165, 168, 171, 170, 169.

Panoramic photograph of Greenwich possibly taken from the Observatory roof.

Aerial photograph of Greenwich looking east, undated but including St Mary's Church.

St Alfege Church Archive boxes numbers 6 and 7 (now relocated to St Alfege Church).

James Thornhill, drawing, proposals for the interior of St Alfege Church, c.1718
St Alfege Church 1718 pew list with letter.

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