

ADAM LEE'S DRAWINGS OF ST STEPHEN'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER. ANTIQUARIANISM AND SHOWMANSHIP IN EARLY 19TH-CENTURY LONDON

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The fire of 1834 at Westminster was devastating. Within a few hours, most of the palace had been burnt down. Westminster Hall itself was saved by taking the fire engines into it and playing water onto the hammer-beam roof. Adam Lee,¹ who had been Labourer in Trust at Whitehall and Westminster for 28 years when the fire broke out, was surely heart-broken to watch the fire destroy all those 'curious, extraordinary and interesting Remains of Antiquity'² that he had spent 15 years studying and drawing.

'There are, says Mr. West, but two ways of working successfully, that is, lastingly, in this country, for an artist – the one is to paint for the King; the other to meditate a scheme of your own', wrote Henry Fuseli to William Roscoe in 1790.³ The latter solution was indeed adopted by a number of artists in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The pioneering Shakespeare Gallery of J. Boydell opened when the staging of exhibitions was still experimental and not always very successful. At first, exhibitions took place in the artists' homes; it was later that the gallery or the hall gradually replaced this formula. Boydell's gallery was followed by the Poet's Gallery of Thomas Macklin, in its turn followed by Fuseli's Milton Gallery. The 1831 exhibition which Adam Lee organised for his own works, could have been called the Palace of Westminster Gallery, but instead it bore the long explanatory title which was the fashion of the day:

'Description of the Cosmorama Views and Delineations of the Ancient Palace of Westminster and St. Stephen's Chapel.'

Adam Lee's career had started in 1801, when he joined the Office of Works for which he worked for 40 years. He started at a junior level at Richmond Park when he was appointed Clerk of Works. Five years later, he became Labourer in Trust at Whitehall and Westminster, and there developed the great familiarity with Westminster Palace which inspired his extraordinary series of 'Illuminated Paintings and Architectural Illustrations of the Ancient Palace of Westminster and of St. Stephen's Chapel'.⁴ It took him 15 years to complete the set of 43 drawings of which the Museum of London possesses seven examples.⁵ Lee's career and his output as a draughtsman illustrate well the emergence of the profession of the architect, and aspects of both antiquarianism and showmanship in early 19th-century London.

The Museum's collection comprises:
ST STEPHEN'S CHAPEL

1. Perspective view of the Chapel as it was finished in the reign of King Edward III – View looking east (Accession No. A15454) Reconstruction 111.5 × 128.0 cm* Varnished watercolour on paper; c. 1820s Framed Cat. p. 25, No. 15 ** (A small scale copy of this view is in the collection of Works of Art of the Palace of Westminster: watercolour by G. Earp, Cat. 178, 121/6 (Pl. 1))

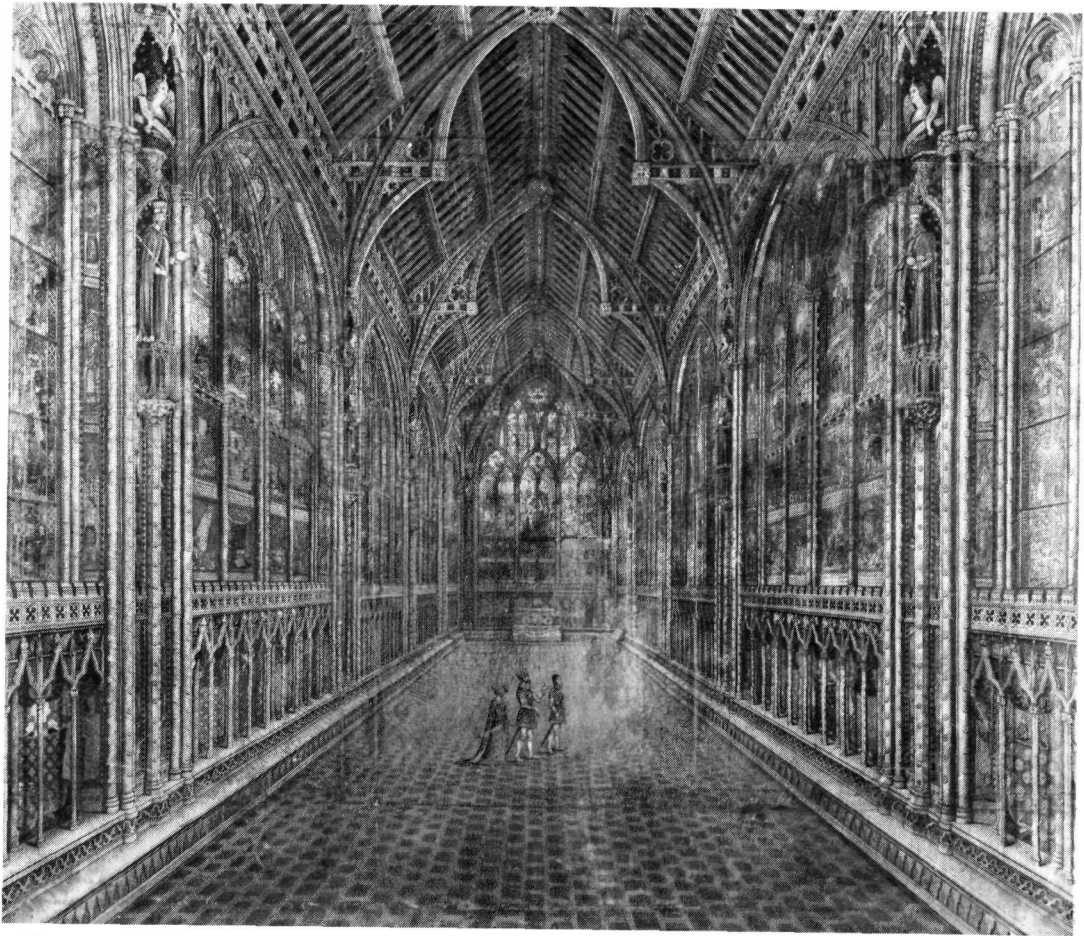


Plate 1. Adam Lee: Perspective view of the Chapel as it was finished in the reign of King Edward III.

2. Longitudinal section of the south side of the building also showing the west end staircase and the north end of the adjoining Whitehall which later became the House of Lords as in the reign of Edward III (Accession No. A15449) Reconstruction 75.5 × 126.0 cm*
Varnished watercolour on paper; c. 1820s
Framed
Cat. p. 20, No. 13 (Pl. 2)
3. Transverse section through the west end of the Chapel, also showing cloisters and original Anglo-Saxon wall adjoining Westminster Hall as in the reign of Edward III (Accession No. A15450)
Reconstruction
79.0 × 126.5 cm*
Varnished watercolour on paper; c. 1820s
Framed
Cat. p. 15, No. 11** (Pl. 3)
4. Longitudinal section of the west cloister of the Royal Chapel showing the staircase leading to the Library (see below for interior views of this staircase) (Accession No. A15455)
Drawn from existing architecture
71.0 × 126.0 cm*
Varnished watercolour on paper; c. 1820s
Framed
Cat. p. 27, No. 17** (Pl. 4)

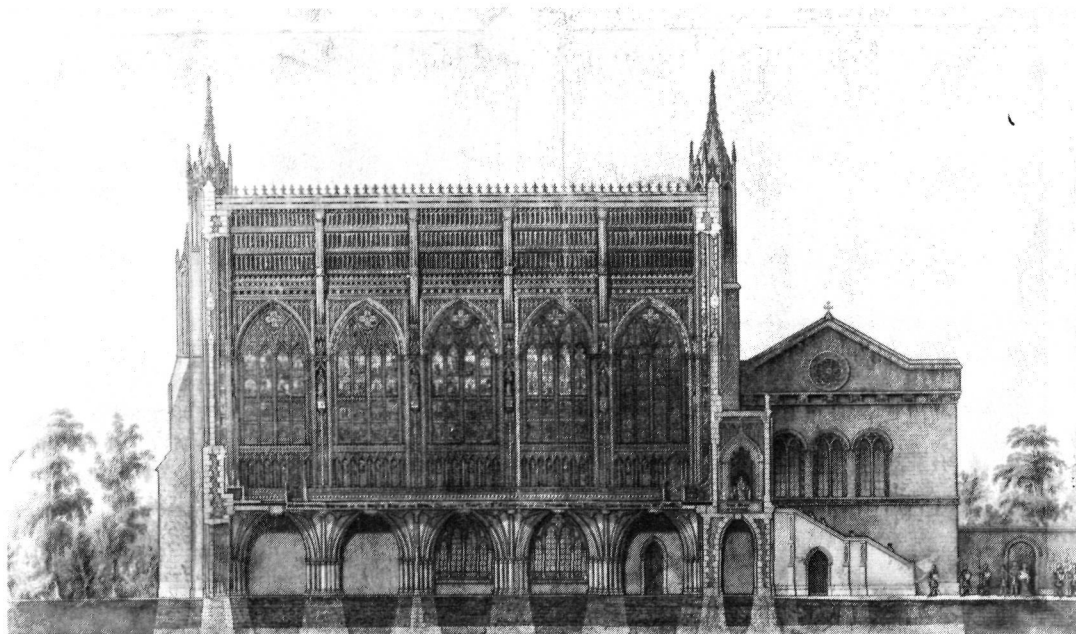


Plate 2. Adam Lee: Longitudinal section of the south side of the building also showing the west end staircase and the north end of the adjoining Guildhall.

SPEAKER'S STAIRCASE (north west corner of the cloisters)

5. Perspective view of the west end of the Speaker's staircase showing part of the gallery leading to the Public Library (Accession No. A15451)
Drawn from existing architecture
63.5 × 49.0 cm

Varnished watercolour on paper; c. 1820s
Cat. p. 27, No. 19** (Pl. 5)

6. Perspective view of the east end of the Speaker's staircase (Accession No. A15452)
Drawn from existing architecture
63.5 × 49.0 cm

Varnished watercolour on paper; c. 1820s
Cat. p. 27, No. 20**

PLAN

7. 'Plan of His Majesty's Ancient Palace of Westminster and adjacent buildings as they appear in the year 1807' (Accession No. A15453)
43.5 × 59.5 cm

Pen and ink drawing on paper, varnished;
dated 1807

Cat. p. 10, No. 1/VII **

* Measurements of the works do not include the frame

** Ref. to Lee's catalogue, 1831

Provenance: All the drawings were presented to the Museum of London in February 1915 by Adam Lee's great-granddaughter; they had been in the family since Adam Lee's death.

Of the seven drawings listed above, three are reconstructions of St Stephen's Chapel, and another three are drawn from existing architecture. It has been suggested that the 1807 plan predates Soane's alterations to Westminster Palace but perhaps shows Wyatt's work. The remaining 36 drawings which were exhibited in 1831 remain untraced. The drawings were organised in sections as follows:

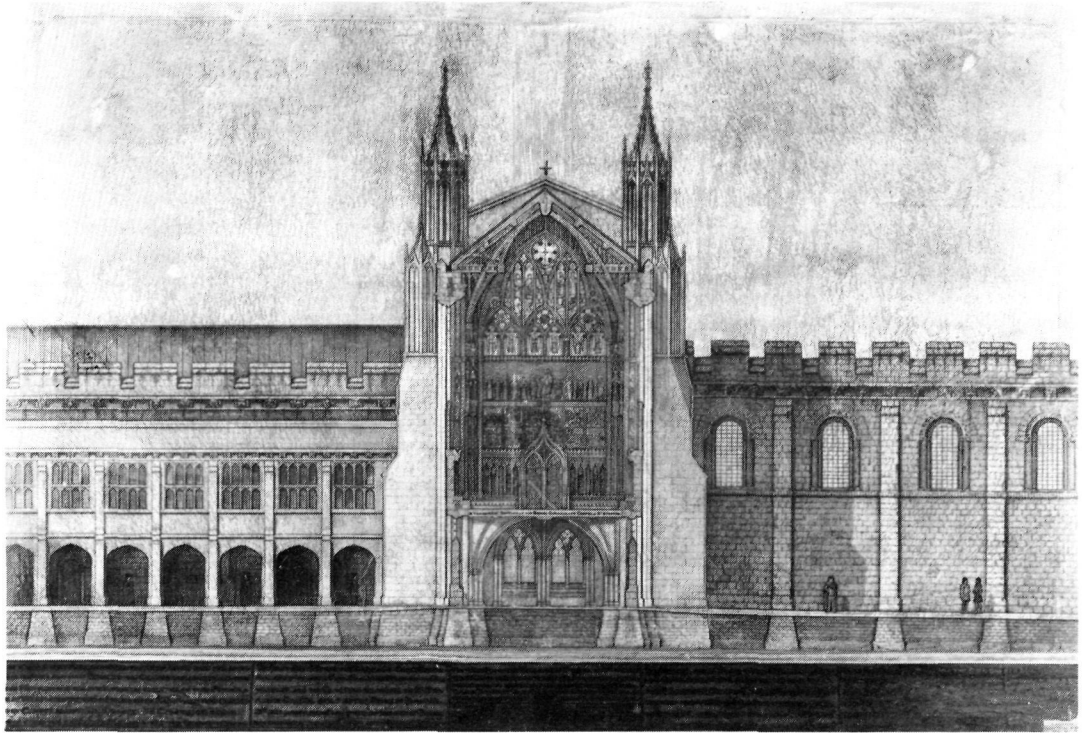


Plate 3. Adam Lee: Transverse section through the west end of the Chapel, also showing cloisters and original Anglo-Saxon wall adjoining Westminster Hall.

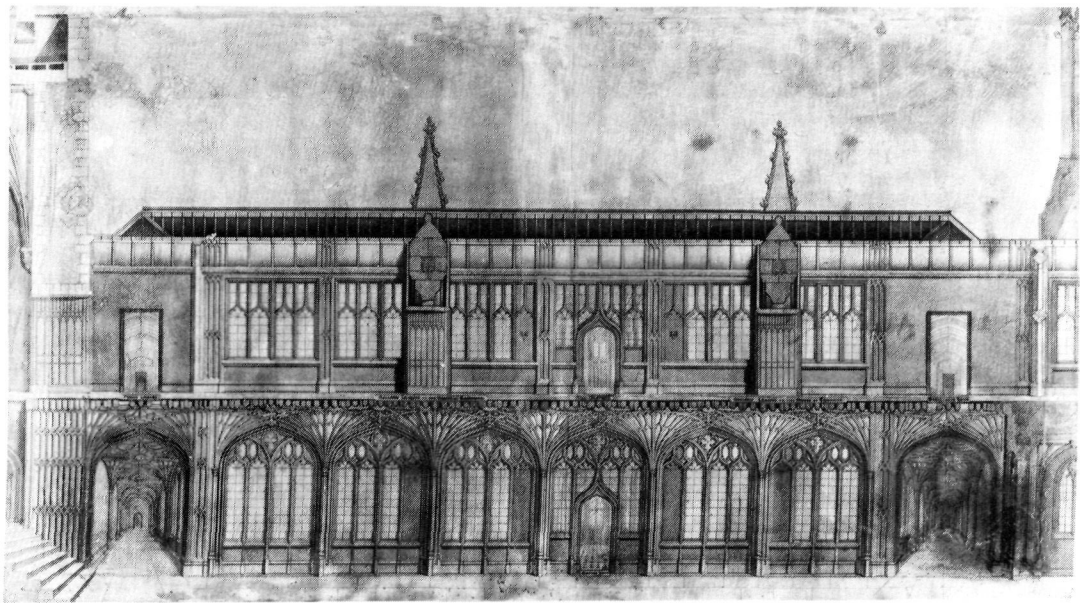


Plate 4. Adam Lee: Longitudinal section of the west cloister of St. Stephen's Chapel.

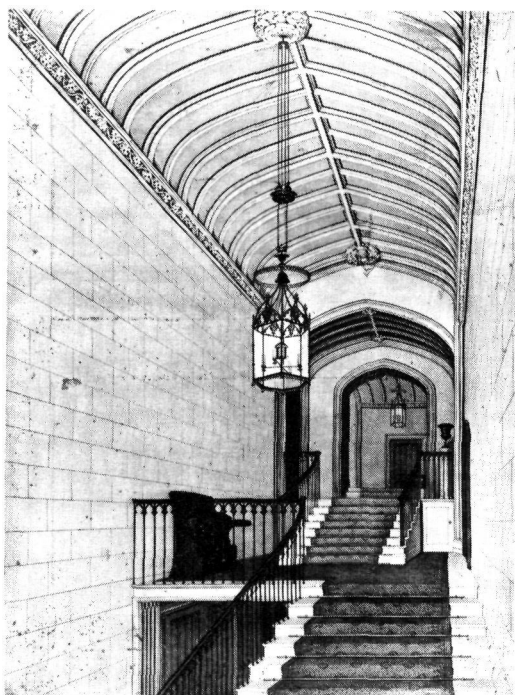


Plate 5. Adam Lee: Perspective view of the west end of the Speaker's staircase showing part of the gallery leading to the Public Library.

1. Plans, Elevations, Sections of the Ancient Palace of Westminster (seven drawings).
2. Cosmographic Views (nine drawings).
3. Views of St. Stephen's Chapel (eleven drawings).
4. Views illustrative of the Coronation Ceremonials of his late Majesty and of King William IV and Queen Adelaide (seven drawings).
5. Views of the Principal Apartments of his Majesty's Palace at Brighton (nine drawings).

The Museum's drawings come from two of these sections: one plan from section 1 and six illuminated paintings from section 3. As this selection contains both reconstruction drawings and observed views, the Museum's collection reflects the composition of the complete set. Because the drawings were

exhibited (1831) and a catalogue published by Lee,⁶ it has been possible to catalogue correctly the seven drawings held by the Museum of London and to be certain how they fitted into Lee's overall scheme.

Lee's pictures are unusual by any standard. Their size, their lavish colours, the fact that they were varnished and placed in thick wooden frames suggest that they were meant to rival or imitate oil paintings. Adam Lee was responsible for the drawings, but he points out in the catalogue that he has had them coloured and illuminated.⁷ Their sophistication and their fantastic qualities culminate in the series on St. Stephen's Chapel which held a special place in Lee's perception. Several documents confirm Lee's obsession with this particular theme. In the Introductory Particulars to the exhibition catalogue, Lee explains that the exhibition was born from his interest in the Royal Chapel: 'I have had constant opportunities of minutely inspecting the manner and style of the Ancient Architecture of St.

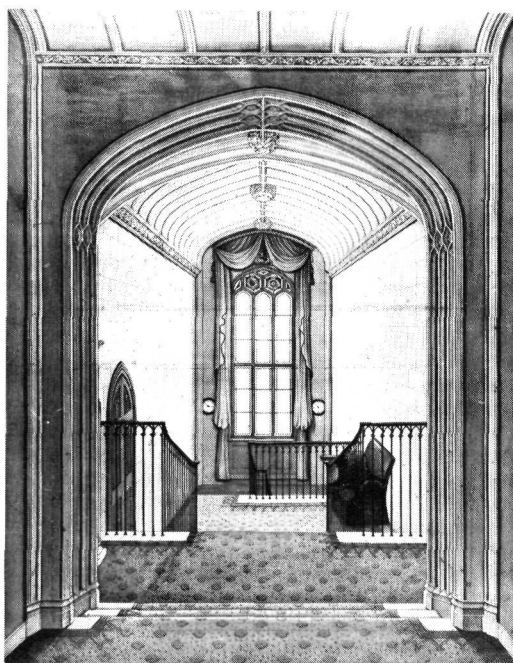


Plate 6. Adam Lee: A perspective view of the east end of the Speaker's staircase (north west corner of cloisters of St. Stephen's).

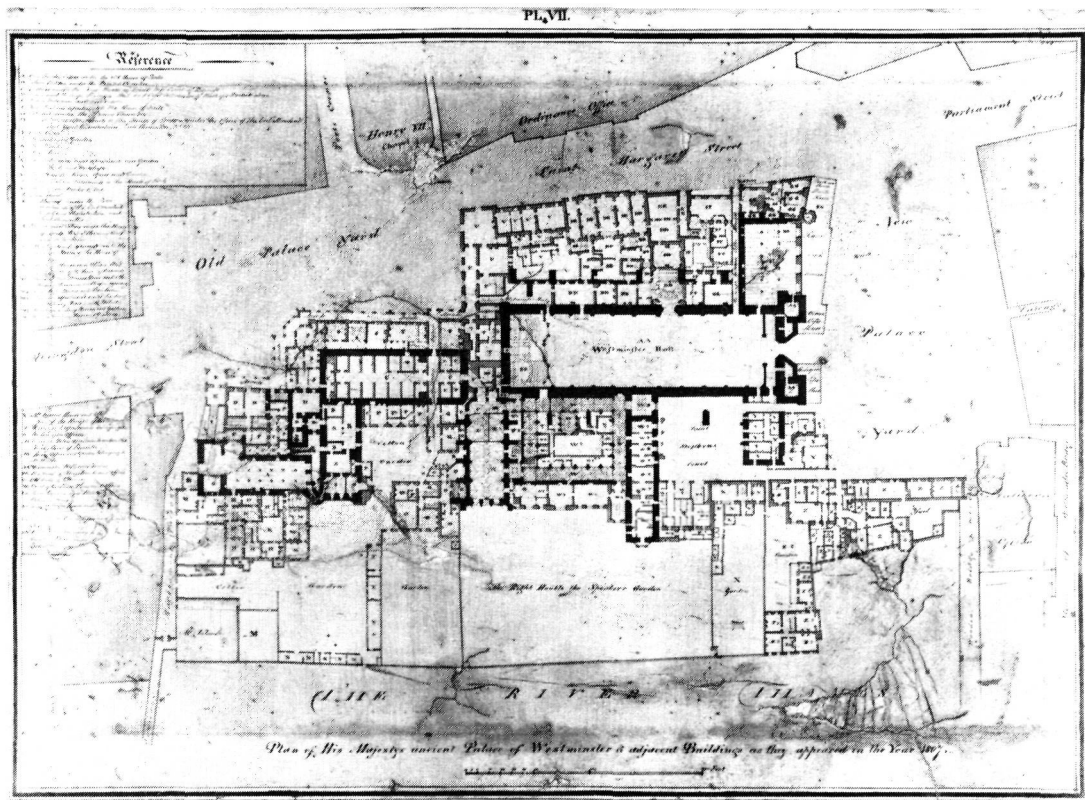


Plate 7. Adam Lee: 'Plan of His Majesty's Ancient Palace of Westminster and adjacent buildings as they appear in the year 1807'.

Stephen's Chapel and also of the cloisters. Such knowledge and opportunities inspired me with the wish to make drawings of all I saw and discovered, and thus to restore views as accurate as possible of those beautiful Edifices'.⁸

Four years later, in 1835, he produced a design in the competition for the New Houses of Parliament and proposed to restore the chapel rather than demolish it. For the style of his river-front elevation, he determined 'expressly to adapt it to the celebrated architecture of St. Stephen's Chapel'.⁹ Finally, it was the height of St. Stephen's which determined the 'level' of the whole complex. Also Lee could not resist observing that his interest in the Chapel had been shared by the present King's father, George III: 'I may mention that King George III had a great

desire that St. Stephen's Chapel should be restored. His Majesty often spoke of such a wish to the late Surveyor General, J. Wyatt, Esq., and Models of the works requisite to such restoration were prepared for His Majesty's inspection'.¹⁰

In 1845, four years after Lee's death, *The Builder* announced the auction of Lee's drawings and made special mention of 'two most elaborate and beautiful drawings of the interior of St. Stephen's Chapel as it appeared in the time of Edward III, beautifully illuminated with gold and giving all the elaborate details of the painted glass and architectural ornaments'.¹¹ Of all Lee's production it was the work on St. Stephen's Chapel which attracted the publication's attention, and certainly one of the two drawings described survives in the Museum of London collection.

I ANTIQUARIANISM

Lee's drawings herald the concern with the Middle Ages which grew to obsessive proportions with the Victorians. A number of his contemporaries with antiquarian interests had spent time examining what they could of the original structure of St. Stephen's Chapel and had published their findings. John Carter, commissioned by the Society of Antiquaries, worked between 1795 and 1817.¹² He was followed in 1800 by J. T. Smith who had received permission to draw what was uncovered, and often destroyed, in the course of the alterations to the House of Commons undertaken by James Wyatt.¹³ J. T. Smith's drawings are often more accurate than Carter's but they can be difficult to interpret as he drew isolated figures, fragments or remains, and it is difficult to obtain a clear view of the whole. After Lee, may be placed the

work of E. W. Brailey and J. Britton, perhaps the most serious antiquarian source on St. Stephen's Chapel. A footnote in their *History of the Ancient Palace and late Houses of Parliament at Westminster* (published in 1836) lists what were then the main sources of information for the architecture of St. Stephen's and these included: 'Mr. Adam Lee's 'Description' of his 'Cosmoramic Views' of this Palace and Chapel, which were publicly exhibited about the year 1831'.¹⁴ Thus Lee was apparently regarded as an important source for the study of these buildings together with John Carter, Richard Smirke and J. T. Smith. Much quoted but not executed until after the fire is Frederick Mackenzie's government publication, *The Architectural Antiquities of the Collegiate Chapel of St. Stephen's* (published in 1844). Like Lee he favours the use of reconstruction drawings but these can be extremely

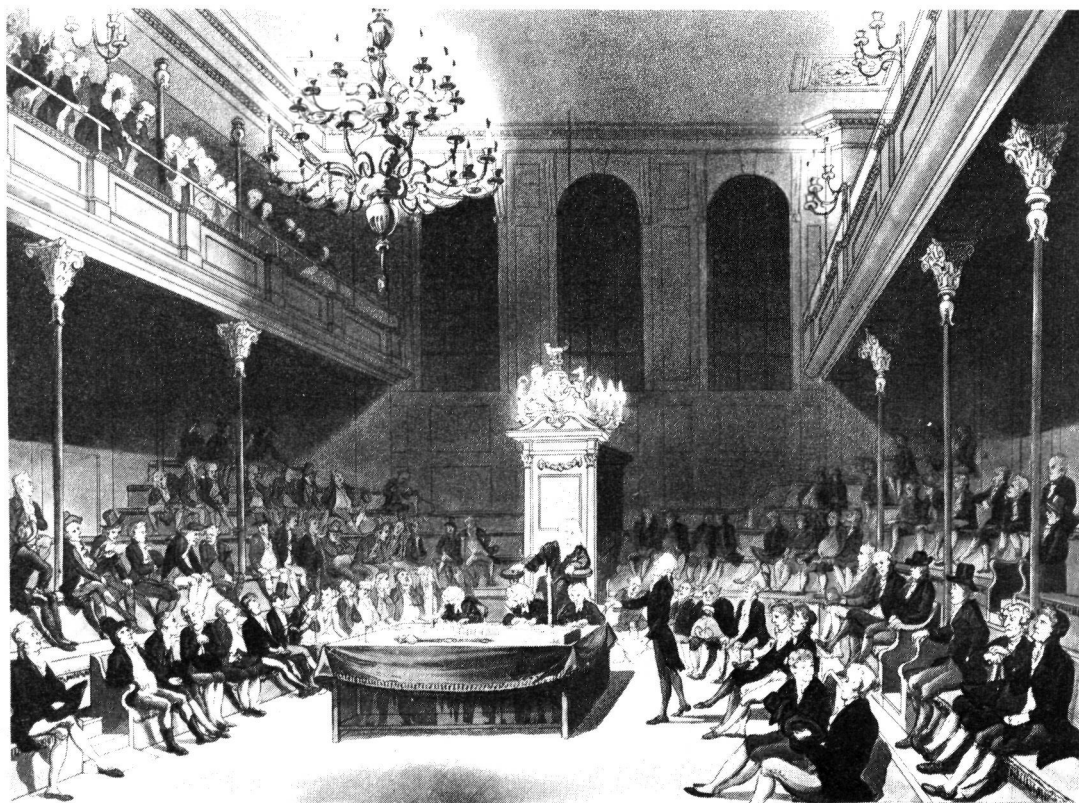


Plate 8. Interior of the House of Commons. Coloured aquatint by Pugin and Rowlandson from *The Microcosm of London*, 1808.

misleading to present day architectural historians, particularly as the reconstruction of the missing elements varies with the sources.

For a building that was destroyed nearly 150 years ago, the architecture of St. Stephen's Chapel is remarkably well documented. Visual records, the earliest dating from 1558,¹⁵ together with a detailed set of building accounts¹⁶ and exceptional scholarly attention in the early 19th century, all contribute to our knowledge of the royal chapel. However, despite this wealth of visual and written records, two important areas have remained problematic, the clerestory and the details of the tracery.

It was not until the 1834 fire that Mackenzie, who had closely examined the fabric of the building, came to the conclusion that the two storey chapel had once had three storeys.¹⁷ This was confirmed by early illustrations which clearly showed a greater height and clerestory windows (Pl. 9). Mackenzie's reconstruction however did not closely follow these earlier views as he was convinced after analysing the structure above the cornice of the

upper chapel, that the clerestory comprised two windows per bay rather than one, as shown in the view of 1647 by Hollar or the earlier view of Westminster by Van der Wyngaerde of 1558.¹⁸ Lee's pre-fire drawings (Pls. 1–3) reconstructed the chapel without a clerestory, in the same way as his contemporaries had done. Recently, Christopher Wilson has argued that the upper chapel of St. Stephen's was designed as a one storey structure with a trussed rafter roof¹⁹ and that the subsequent addition of the clerestory represents a change from the original plan.²⁰ This analysis throws new light on early 19th-century reconstruction of the chapel, and it can be suggested that Lee's drawings reflect the original design (1290) while failing to represent the building as it was actually constructed.

The visual results obtained by Lee were no doubt reached accidentally. He had been privileged in seeing some of the 14th-century fabric hidden behind the wainscoting 'the whole of the beautiful ancient Gothic

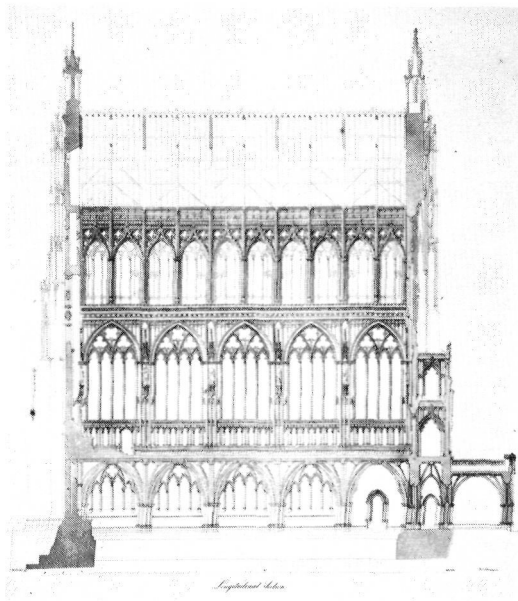


Plate 9. Interior elevation, St. Stephen's. From Mackenzie's *The Architectural Antiquities of the Collegiate Chapel of St. Stephen*.

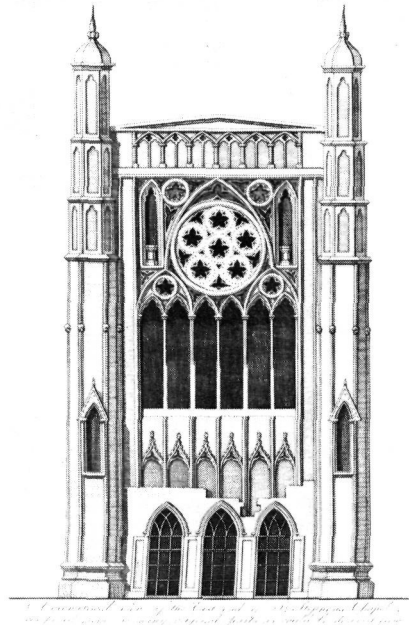


Plate 10. East front of St. Stephen's. From J. T. Smith *Antiquities of Westminster*.

architecture, as also various painted subjects on the jambs, and the panelling over the window heads and particularly a large embattled cornice that ranged all round the room'.²¹ However, for the architecture, he most certainly relied entirely on current published knowledge, 'From repeated personal observations, and the assistance derived from the plates published by the Antiquarian Society; and Mr. Smith's work on the *Antiquities of Westminster*'.²²

Details of the original window tracery of St. Stephen's were also unknown. By the 18th century the tracery of the north, south and west sides of the upper chapel had completely disappeared (Pl. 13). Prior to James Wyatt's drastic restorations, some tracery of the east window survived (Pl. 11), enough in fact to confirm the view of c. 1682 reproduced in the *Antiquities of Westminster* and to allow Smith to illustrate its former appearance (Pl. 10).

As for the tracery of the crypt windows, Edward Middleton Barry's restoration is thought to have been carried out in keeping with the original design. Here, blind tracery panelled the walls, with mullions taken to the floor level with no interruption at window level, thus superimposing a second layer of tracery upon the traceried window. By the 19th century the 'flying' mullions had been broken off, but close observation would have revealed an indication of their original presence.²³ While Carter and Smith were very scrupulous in drawing only what they could see, it is clear that by the time of Lee's drawings, the blank windows of Carter's plates were unacceptable and the space was filled with tracery drawn in a speculative design (Pls. 1, 2, 9).

While the sources for the reconstructions of Mackenzie and Lee clearly differed, it should be noted that the illustrations by Lee bridge the gap between the early records of the chapel of Carter and Smith who drew what they saw and the later records (1830s), when Mackenzie and Brailey and Britton clearly researched their reconstruction to a greater extent. Lee's approach was 'researched' in the sense that he was determined to be as accurate as possible '... the wish to make drawings of all I saw and discovered, and thus to restore views as

accurate as possible of those beautiful Edifices',²⁴ but finally produced reconstructions which were fanciful. While Mackenzie applied a certain logic when he opted for Kentish tracery (Pl. 9), having found it in the architectural backgrounds of the paintings inside the chapel, Lee's tracery of the east window was based on that invented by James Wyatt (Pls. 1, 11), whose restoration of the royal chapel was considered to show scant respect for the original.

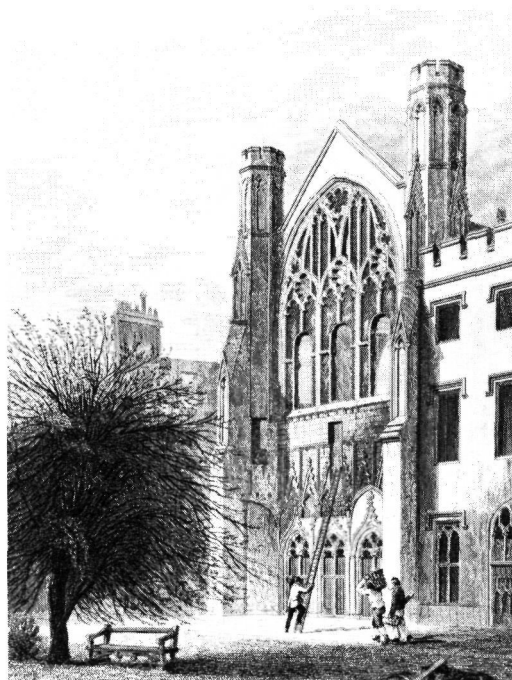
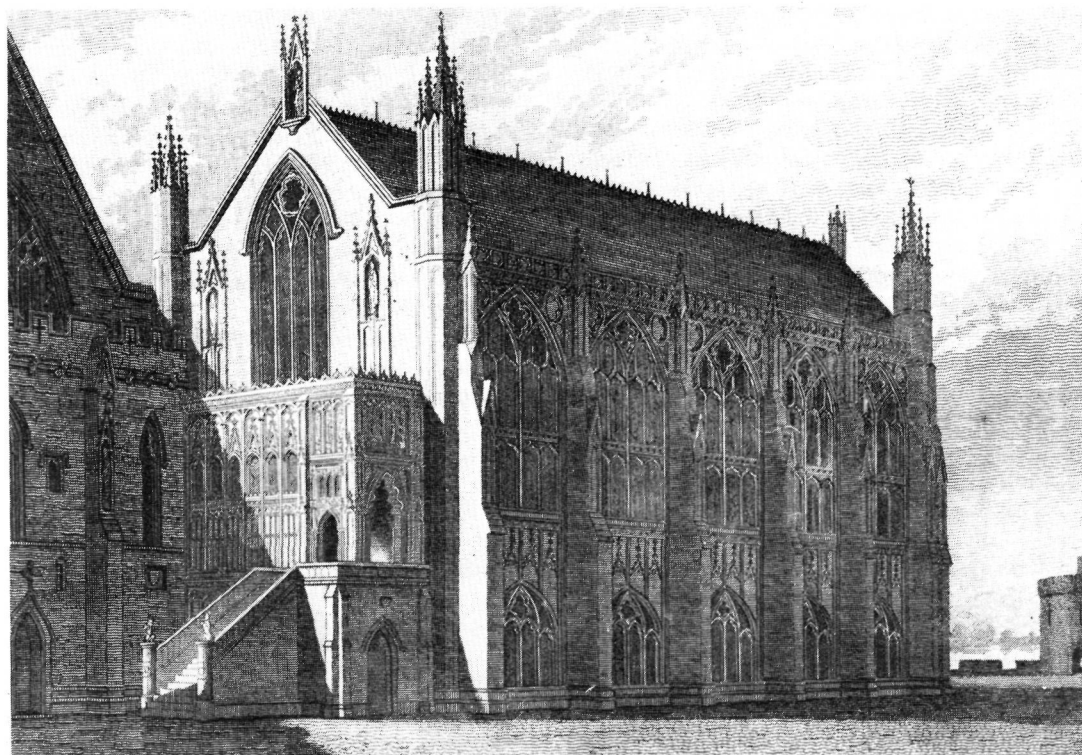


Plate 11. East front of St. Stephen's showing James Wyatt's 'restorations' carried out in 1805–6. From Brailey and Britton.

The tracery shown by Lee in the lateral windows (Pl. 2) is the same as that found in an engraving by James Basire (Pl. 12) imprinted *St. Stephen's Chapel as restored, 1800*,²⁵ suggesting that Lee's tracery for the lateral windows again derived from the restoration by Wyatt. There are however three anomalies in this engraving. First the view is taken from the south west as if no buildings obstructed, and this is the contrary to the cramped view from the south by J. T. Smith (Pl. 13). Secondly,



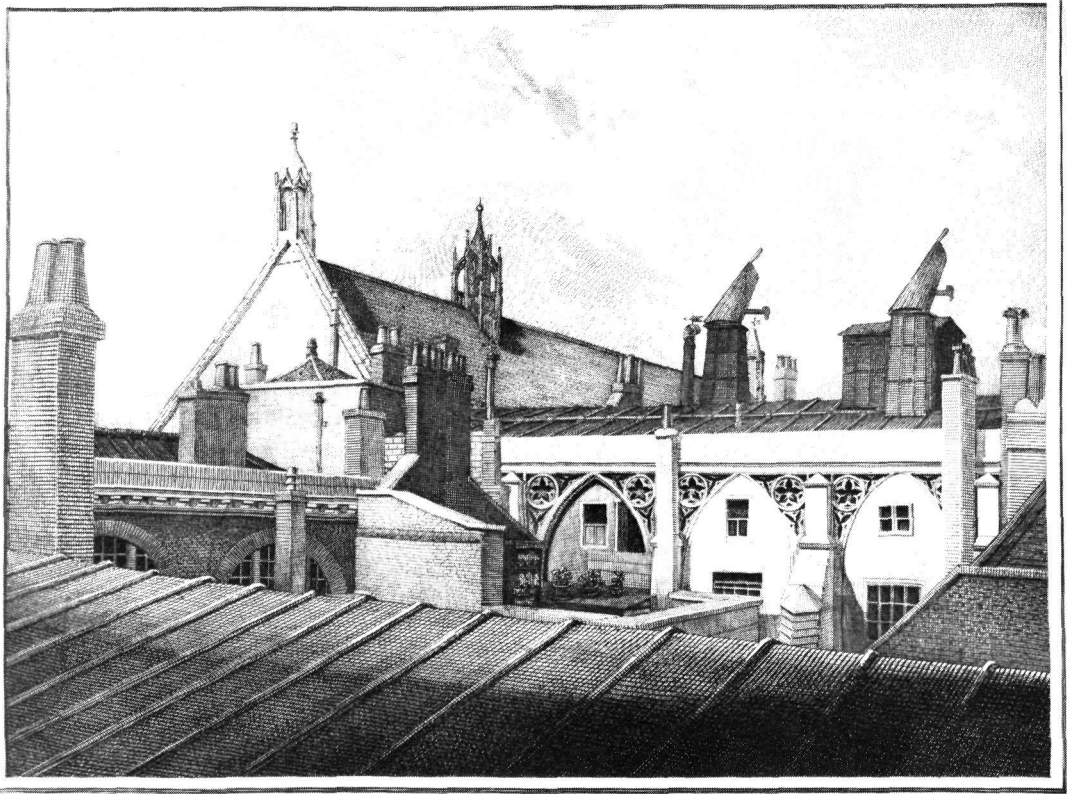
South West View of St. Stephen's Chapel Westminster, restored 1800.

Plate 12. St. Stephen's Chapel from the south west – a reconstruction.

the four angle towers do not correspond to Wyatt's crenellated version (Pl. 11). These towers appear in a number of early 19th-century pictures,²⁶ and also in Lee's drawings (Pls. 2, 3). They are close to the original medieval design as shown in Van der Wyngaerde's drawing, but it is not possible to explain adequately their appearance in pictures of the early 19th century. Thirdly, while Wyatt 'restored' the tracery of the east window, he does not appear to have attempted the same exercise on the lateral windows which remained filled with masonry. However it remains likely that the engraving by Basire and Lee's drawings were largely based on Wyatt's restorations, perhaps revealing original intentions which were never carried out.

This examination of the architectural content of Lee's drawings of St. Stephen's chapel illustrates his antiquarian sources and

interests. He appears to have been the only illustrator to have attempted to capture the original glory of the royal chapel. The chapel had housed the House of Commons since 1547, and its original interior decoration had been completely masked since that date (Pl. 8), much being hidden behind the wainscoting applied in front of the original walls. M. Hastings writes that 'the chapel of St. Stephen practically disappeared from c.1547 until 1834, when at long last fire exposed its original features'.²⁷ The only surviving visual records of the interior decoration of the chapel prior to the fire of 1834 are two sets of drawings compiled by R. Smirke²⁸ and J. T. Smith in 1800,²⁹ when James Wyatt had been requested to enlarge the House of Commons to accommodate 100 Irish members following the abolition of the Irish Parliament. This presented a major opportunity to *see* what was left of the painted decoration of the chapel. It was,



*South side of the House of Commons from the roof of the Painted Chamber
London, Published as the Act Directs 1794 by John Thomas Smith, 47 Old Newgate Street, (opposite St. Dunstons Church)*

Plate 13. St. Stephen's Chapel from the south side, taken from the roof of the Painted Chamber. Engraving from J. T. Smith *Antiquities of Westminster*.

as shown by Lee, a feast for the eyes: the bright colours, the gold, the stained glass, the overall jewel-like quality had first appeared at the Sainte Chapelle in Paris in the 1240s. Fifty years later, in 1292, when work began on St. Stephen's, England was to have its own Ste. Chapelle.

II SHOWMANSHIP

Lee's drawings were executed and displayed at a time when public interest in antiquarianism included an element of showmanship. 'The Proprietor of the PALL MALL EXHIBITION of the Cosmorama DELINEATIONS OF THE ANCIENT PALACE OF WESTMINSTER, AND ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL, has not opened it for the purpose of personal emolument, but to

afford the Public the opportunity of becoming acquainted with these 'curious, extraordinary, and interesting Remains of Antiquity . . .'.³⁰ To achieve this aim, Lee was using resources currently available, and his output was a happy and original mixture of the perspective drawing and panorama. By 1830 the use of perspective drawings in architectural presentation was firmly established, and architects exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy. Gavin Stamp suggests that 'the burgeoning of the art of the architectural perspective may well have been the foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768 (. . .) The Academy's first Professor of Architecture (1770), Thomas Sandby, was a particularly accomplished perspective artist. Architects would now compete with painters on the same

terms'.³¹ Stamp also notes that in the late 18th century, the tradition of topographical painting became merged with the practice of architectural design. The perspectivist was therefore calling on both the arts of architecture and painting for the expression of his art. Joseph Michael Gandy (1771–1843) was the most visionary of these perspective artists, and his paintings illustrate well the fusion of disciplines. The Tomb of Agamemnon, The Tomb of Merlin, A Landing Place to a Temple, and The Bank of England offer romantic parallels to Lee's medievalism.³² Occasional figures appear, dwarfed in their giant environment, and these blend well with the Taste for the Sublime whose famous architecturally minded exponent was John Martin.

In 1823 the 'Cosmorama Rooms' opened at 209 Regent Street. The cosmorama, 'a high-toned version of the old peepshow'³³ originally consisted of small pictures magnified by convex lenses. The use of mirrors, black frames inserted between pictures and lenses, and subsequently dynamic lighting effects, produced a new and attractive type of show.

The initial meaning of the words panorama, diorama or cosmorama was quickly corrupted. In 1823, for example, a brochure entitled *A Picturesque Guide to the Regents Park* stressed that 'the term Diorama has (. . .) been strangely corrupted since its successful adoption in the Regent's Park – it being applied to any number of description of paintings'. In 1835 the *Athenaeum* observed that 'the advertisement (of shows) is often far more satisfactory than the show itself'. In fact, the terms panorama, diorama and cosmorama came to invoke magnitude, lighting tricks and minutiae respectively. Lee's paintings were too large to require enlargement by lenses. However, they justified their appellation because of their extremely detailed and polished execution. A group of cosmoramic paintings (the Poecilorama) by Clarkson Stanfield, known to have been exhibited at the Egyptian Hall in 1826, may have been in a similar vein, and formed a precedent to Lee's exhibition.³⁴ The Stanfield paintings, however, constituted an eclectic selection which included scenes of Turin, the Castle of Chillon, London in 1590,

Rouen (with a dioramic effect of a rainbow), and Netley Abbey (with a moonrise). In contrast, Lee's exhibition was unified, for all the paintings related to the Palace of Westminster, with St. Stephen's Chapel in a prominent place.

Lee's Cosmoramic Views contrast with what seems to have been the only other type of show with Westminster as its subject: the burning of the Houses of Parliament. Lee's drawings were different for they were all executed long before the 1834 fire of Westminster, and it can be argued that his motives were similar to those described by Fuseli in 1790 for his Milton Gallery: 'I am determined to lay, hatch, and crack an egg for myself too, if I can. What it shall be, I am not yet ready to tell with certainty; but the sum of it is a series of pictures for *exhibition*, such as Boydell's and Macklin's'.³⁵

While dioramic and cosmoramic fires, earthquakes and battles held particular attraction for the public, there was also a demand for religious architecture. Throughout the first half of the century, a number of shows had focused on St. Peter's basilica, Santa Croce in Florence, St. Mark's Cathedral, Chartres Cathedral, the interior of St. Gudule's Cathedral in Brussels, and others, though few English scenes were included (the ruins of Holyrood Chapel, Trinity Chapel in Canterbury and Netley Abbey) and none from London.³⁶ With St. Stephen's Chapel, Lee had found sensationalism and exoticism in the heart of the capital, for the building was totally unknown to the majority of people.

Investigating the relationship between panoramas and painting offers interesting insight into areas which people subsequently regarded as two separate entities, one associated with popular taste and the other elevated to the status of Art. The importance that panoramas held at the time is reflected in the treatment they received in the press which reviewed them as seriously as they would Royal Academy shows. While it is possible to gain an accurate idea of what panoramas consisted of, it is more difficult to assess the nature of the cosmorama. Lee's pictures would appear to form a unique survival, and they

suggest a three way relationship between cosmoramas, painting and architecture.

III THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

While Lee's drawings reveal the fabulous world of medieval wealth and taste, they are also closely linked to their author's career. The fact is repeatedly and arrogantly outlined by Lee, when he speaks of 'the singular opportunities I have possessed for many years to become acquainted with every part of the buildings – not only in having officially to superintend alterations, repairs, etc., in and about the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Hall etc., but by the uncovering of various parts of the original walls previously to their being taken down'.³⁷

Lee was one of ninety-seven contestants in the 1835 competition for the Houses of Parliament. The designs were exhibited at the National Gallery in 1836 and a catalogue was produced with the architects' descriptions of their drawings.³⁸ In his entry Adam Lee insists once more on his exceptional position at Westminster and his extreme familiarity with the site and the buildings there. A little earlier, in 1833, a Select Committee had come to the conclusion that the House of Commons was inadequate and ought to be replaced.³⁹ Adam Lee was one of the 15 architects to produce plans for the new building. Lee's official interview by the Select Committee revealed that his plans lacked originality and contained unresolved practical problems. Lee already showed a great dependence on the site on which he was working, and the minutes of his interview record: 'And your (Lee's) reason for adopting that plan is, because such is the plan of the present house, and you conceive experience may have proved that to be the most convenient?'⁴⁰ The dependence on what he claimed he knew so well, appears to have been coupled with a lack of creativity. In both 1833 and 1835, in response to the two exceptional opportunities to forward his career, he produced firstly a design which was a replica of St. Stephen's Chapel, located only yards away from its model, and secondly, after the fire of 1834, a scheme governed by the preservation of the chapel and its pervading stylistic

influence on the other buildings.

If he lacked creativity, Lee was full of energy and ambition. He was a symbol of the great debate of architect versus builder, so effectively illustrated in the dialogue reported in the 1818 *Annals of the Fine Arts*:

'You are a builder, I believe?'

'No sir; I am not a builder; I am an architect'.

'Ah well, builder or architect, architect or builder – they are pretty much the same, I suppose?'

'I beg your pardon – they are totally different.'

'Oh indeed! Perhaps you will state wherein this difference consists.'

'An architect, sir, conceives the design, prepares the plan, draws out the specification – in short, supplies the mind. The builder is merely the machine; the architect the power that puts the machine together and sets it going.'

'Oh, very well, Mr. Architect, that will do. A very ingenious distinction without a difference. Do you happen to know who was the architect of the Tower of Babel?'

'There was no architect, sir. Hence the confusion.'⁴¹

Lee was constantly struggling to reach the honorable title of 'architect'. There are records of his insubordination; he was reprimanded for authorising schemes which strictly speaking were beyond his control.⁴² He also used the title of F.S.A.,⁴³ but was not an elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. This puzzling title may have been meant to refer to Lee's membership of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts i.e., the Society of Arts. He was elected on 31st January 1816, proposed by Thomas Simpson. His membership lapsed in 1818 and was renewed in 1820 to last only another year. Lee was an ordinary member of this Society, not a Fellow, as the nomination of Fellows did not start until 1916.⁴⁴ (There are a few cases of misused titles in the history of the Royal Society of Arts and this may be one of them). Lee's membership was relatively short and his insistence on using a title some 10 years after it had ceased to be

valid probably shows that he was not insensitive to the prestige that titles could give. Less subtle was the way in which Lee attempted to convince the jury for the 1835 competition of his own absolute authority. His magnificent drawings of St. Stephen's Chapel were, he wrote, 'the only true and unquestionable authority for reinstating the building'.⁴⁵

Despite his respectable position at the Office of Works, and the fact that he received there regular promotion, Lee's career was not exceptional. His efforts to assume the role of architect remained unsuccessful. His professional life was dominated by the names of James Wyatt, Surveyor General and Comptroller of the Office of Works, from March 1796 to September 1813, Benjamin Charles Stevenson, who replaced the latter from 1814 to 1832, and, finally, John Soane, 'Attached Architect' from 1815 to 1832. When in 1832 the posts of 'Attached Architect' and Clerk of Works were swept away and replaced by a 'Clerk of the Works', Adam Lee obtained that post for Whitehall and the Horse Guards, but to little effect for his career as an 'architect'. His extraordinary drawings constitute his best legacy. He was very anxious to establish their permanence, and he had planned to have them engraved to ensure 'the preservation through the means of the engraver's art and the press of the accurate knowledge of those Remains'.⁴⁶ However, it appears that engravings were never produced, and this most certainly indicates a lack of sufficient public acclaim. In the last resort, Lee had joined the 'melancholy procession of expensive and doomed attempts to enlist showmanship in the service of art',⁴⁷ and, in this case, of antiquarianism too.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

1. Adam Lee (c. 1772-1843): Most of the information known about his life has been incorporated into this paper. There are three main sources: H.M. Colvin *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architects 1660-1840* (1978) 509; *The History of the Kings' Works* ed. H.M. Colvin (1973) VI;

- Adam Lee *Description of the Cosmorama Views and Delineations of the Ancient Palace of Westminster and St. Stephen's Chapel* (London, 1831), see Introductory Particulars. This is the catalogue for the 1831 exhibition held by Lee at the Society of Painters in Water Colours. One copy of this booklet is in the Victoria and Albert Museum Library – see the pre-1890 volume catalogue in Room 77 – and one is inserted at the back of the Museum of London's copy of J.T. Smith's *Antiquities of Westminster*.
2. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, i.
3. 'Fuseli's Milton Gallery: Unpublished Letters' *Burlington Magazine* 101 (1959) 436.
4. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, ii (title).
5. In 1962, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Perspective Views for restoring the Royal Chapel of St. Stephen, Westminster* by Adam Lee were sold at Sotheby's (4 June 1962, Books Catalogue, Lot 154) and came from the Library of the Rt. Hon. Lord Nathan of Churt, formerly the property of Sir George Chetwynd. These are unfortunately impossible to trace, but their existence confirms Lee's great interest in the subject of St. Stephen's. The drawings described in the Sotheby's catalogue are of a very different format and technique to the Museum's views and were perhaps the preparatory drawings from which Lee pieced together his large scale reconstructions of the Royal Chapel.
6. Exhibition held at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, Pall Mall. See Lee, *op. cit.* in note 1.
7. *Ibid.* i.
8. *Ibid.* iii.
9. *Catalogue of the Designs offered for the New Houses of Parliament now exhibiting in the National Gallery London* (1836) 65 & 66.
10. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, i.
11. *Builder* 3 (1845) 104.
12. J. Topham *Some Account of the Collegiate Chapel of Saint Stephen, Westminster* (1795). The Drawings are by J. Carter and were engraved by J. Basire.
13. J.T. Smith *Antiquities of Westminster* (1807) London.
14. Brailey and Britton (1836) 434.
15. Van der Wyngaerde drawing. Bodleian Library.
16. *The History of the Kings' Works* I, 510-527.
17. F. Mackenzie *The Architectural Antiquities of the Collegiate Chapel of St. Stephen* (1844) vii & viii.
18. See for instance M. Hastings *St. Stephen's Chapel and its place in the development of perpendicular style in England* Plates 14 & 15.
19. C. Wilson *The Origins of the Perpendicular Style and its Development to circa 1360* PhD (Aris) Thesis (1980) University of London, 44 & 45.
20. *Ibid.* 42.
21. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, vi.
22. *Ibid.* iv.
23. For the reconstruction, see Mackenzie *op. cit.* in note 17, Pl. 4. For its condition c. 1800, see Topham *op. cit.* in note 12, Pl. 5.
24. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, iii.
25. Museum of London Accession Number A6597; the engraving was first published in Jan. 1801 in the *Union Magazine and Imperial Register* 25. The author of the reconstruction deliberately remained anonymous.
26. a) J. Basire, see note 25.
b) St. Stephen's from the river, Westminster City Library, Box 56 (54).
c) Engraving published by A. Beugo, 12 Nov. 1810, St. Stephen's and the Speaker's House from the river, Museum of London Accession Number A3763.
27. Hastings *op. cit.* in note 18, 28.
28. Robert Smirke's drawings are in the Society of Antiquaries.
29. *Idem.*
30. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, i.
31. G. Stamp *The Great Perspectivists* RIBA Drawings Series (1982) 11.
32. *Joseph Michael Gandy (1771-1843)* Architectural Association (1982).
33. R. D. Altick *The Shows of London* (1978) 211.
34. *The Spectacular Career of Clarkson Stanfield 1793-1867* Tyne and Wear County Council Museums (1979) 177.
35. *Burlington Magazine* *op. cit.* in note 3, 436.
36. Altick *op. cit.* in note 33, Ch. 16.
37. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, i.
38. See note 7.
39. R. J. B. Walker *The Palace of Westminster after the fire of 1834* Walpole Society 44 (1972-1974) 100.
40. *Parliamentary Papers* 12 (1833) 269, questions 1126-1167 and plate.
41. Reproduced in *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architects*, *op. cit.* in note 1, 39.
42. *Kings' Works* VI *op. cit.* in note 1, 117 & 120.
43. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, i. Also see *Builder* 3 (1845) 104.
44. I am indebted to Dr. D. Allan of the Royal Society of Arts for the information relating to Lee's use of the title of F.S.A.
45. *Designs for the New Houses of Parliament*, *op. cit.* in note 9, 66.
46. Lee *op. cit.* in note 1, i.
47. Altick *op. cit.* in note 33, 109.