

‘To Live is to Change’

Tradition, Narrative and Community
in the Conservation of
Church Buildings

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Abstract

Living things change. From Ruskin onwards, reference has been made to historic buildings as 'living', and current guidance in England defines conservation as 'the management of change'; in practice, however, conservation processes often appear to resist change. While acknowledged in legislation, the difference between historic monuments and living buildings that remain in active use is often blurred; for the latter, the demands of the present and future necessarily play a more prominent role than for the former. In pre-modern cultures it is the dynamic processes of an ongoing tradition that safeguards this balance of past, present and future. Tradition is characterised by temporal continuity rather than the radical discontinuity proclaimed by modernity and assumed by much conservation theory, and is essential for a 'balanced heritage' of people and place.

In this thesis English parish churches are used to explore the relationship between communities of tradition and their historic buildings from two angles – firstly, a critique of the permissions process through an examination of key documentation and, secondly, the lived experience of five communities who have attempted, with varying results, to change their medieval church building. From this it is argued that conservation cannot deal responsibly with the objects of tradition without a thorough understanding of the creative workings of tradition itself, and that narrative is the associated cultural form by which continuity through temporal change becomes intelligible. Finally, the practical application of a tradition-centred narrative framework for conservation is explored in three ways: firstly, through issues of concern to practitioners; secondly, through the polemic of a new conservation manifesto; and, thirdly, through a booklet for church communities introducing the conservation landscape. As a whole, this project demonstrates the necessity and productivity of a critical engagement with theory, which conservation has hitherto tended to avoid.

*In a higher world it is otherwise,
but here below to live is to change,
and to be perfect is to have changed often.*

John Henry Newman ([1845] 2001: 40).

*Question: How many conservation professionals
does it take to change a light bulb?*

Answer: Change???!!!

Anon.

List of Contents

Abstract	2
List of Tables	10
List of Figures	10
List of Drawings	11
List of Accompanying Material	11
Preface: the landscape of commitments	12
Acknowledgements	14
Author's Declaration	15
1. Context: people and change in conservation	16
1.1. BEATING THE BOUNDS: THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH	18
1.1.1. The question of living buildings	18
1.1.2. The nature and relevance of church buildings	22
1.1.3. Fixity, fluidity and the problem of change	24
1.1.4. Framing conservation as applied ethics	26
1.2. CONSERVATION AND THE RELATION OF 'MAKING' TO 'KEEPING'	27
1.2.1. Conservation, preservation and monuments	28
1.2.2. Significance, values and the contemporary framework	30
1.2.3. Where are the people? – experts, universalism and the local	33
1.2.4. Churches and the ecclesiastical exemption	37
1.3. COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES IN HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY	40
1.3.1. Heritage and (critical) discourse	40
1.3.2. Field archaeology and the cultural landscape	43
1.3.3. The Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab	47
1.3.4. Agency and material vitality	48
1.4. DESIGN OF THE THESIS	50
1.4.1. The research question, and four key principles	50
1.4.2. Chapter structure and methodological overview	51
2. Heritage as discourse: the use of words and the wielding of power	55
2.1. THE SPAB MANIFESTO	57
2.2. CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE	59
2.2.1. Values	60

2.2.2. Harm and change	60
2.2.3. Enhancement and future heritage	62
2.2.4. Constructive and destructive conservation	63
2.3. SECTORAL GUIDANCE AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	64
2.3.1. Change and harm	64
2.3.2. Significance and enhancement	65
2.3.3. Choice of language	67
2.3.4. The legal landscape	69
2.4. DUFFIELD, ST ALKMUND	70
2.4.1. The importance of the judgment	71
2.4.2. The status conferred by listing	73
2.4.3. Architectural and historic interest	74
2.4.4. Adversity and danger	76
2.4.5. Justification and enhancement	77
2.4.6. Theology and community	79
2.5. COMMON THEMES	82
2.5.1. Two forms of discourse	82
2.5.2. Community placed	83
2.5.3. Bridging the gulf	84
3. The community view: a case study of five medieval parish churches	87
3.1. PARISH CONTEXTS AND NEEDS	88
3.1.1. The case study churches	88
3.1.2. Recognising needs	95
3.1.3. Articulating needs	97
3.2. PROCESS	99
3.2.1. Experiencing the process	99
3.2.2. Stakeholder support and opposition	101
3.2.3. Diocesan Advisory Committees	102
3.2.4. Stakeholder accountability	103
3.3. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT FOR CHURCH COMMUNITIES	105
3.3.1. Leadership and capability	105
3.3.2. Counting the cost	107
3.3.3. Community and theology	108
3.3.4. Churches as community hubs	110
3.4. REFLECTIONS ON CHANGE	111
3.4.1. Balancing past and future	111
3.4.2. Evidence of narrative	113
3.4.3. Conflating change and harm	114
3.4.4. Reframing change	116
3.4.5. Hybridity and the nature of church buildings	118
CONCLUSIONS	119

4. Understanding tradition:	122
questions of change and continuity	
4.1. MODERNITY, TRADITION AND CONTINUITY	124
4.1.1. Of canon and tradition	125
4.1.2. Continuity and post-war reconstruction	127
4.1.3. Townscape and the Picturesque	130
4.2. TRADITION AND HERMENEUTICS	133
4.2.1. Tradition and conservatism	133
4.2.2. Architecture and hermeneutics	135
4.2.3. Etymologies	137
4.2.4. Romantic and classical approaches	138
4.2.5. Genius and authorship	140
4.2.6. The fusion of horizons	141
4.2.7. Understanding the other	143
4.3. VIRTUE ETHICS	146
4.3.1. MacIntyre's contribution	146
4.3.2. The vitality of tradition	149
CONCLUSIONS	151
5. Telling stories:	152
the uses and abuses of narrative	
5.1. TEMPORALITY	153
5.1.1. History and transition	153
5.1.2. Time and narrative	156
5.1.3. Double temporality	158
5.2. NARRATIVITY	160
5.2.1. The nature of narrative	160
5.2.2. Identity	162
5.2.3. Community	165
5.3. DISPENSING WITH NARRATIVE	166
5.3.1. Voices of dissent	166
5.3.2. The limits of anti-narrativism	168
5.3.3. Illustrating the non-narrative	170
5.3.4. The fitness of narrativity	171
5.4. THE RELEVANCE OF NARRATIVE FOR CONSERVATION	172
5.4.1. The central metaphor	173
5.4.2. An illustration of narrativity	175
5.4.3. Benefits of the narrative model	177
CONCLUSIONS	180
6. 'All is not loss':	182
the application of a narrative approach to conservation	
6.1. THE IMPACT OF NARRATIVE ON PRACTICE	183

6.1.1. Questions of principle	183
<i>Incommensurability</i>	
<i>The cultural whole</i>	
<i>Continuity of character</i>	
6.1.2. Questions of everyday practice	187
<i>Significance</i>	
<i>Reversibility</i>	
<i>Expendability</i>	
6.1.3. Questions of meta-practice	191
' <i>Who need experts?</i> '	
<i>People power</i>	
<i>Restoration</i>	
6.1.4. The compatibility with tradition	194
6.2. THE SCARAB MANIFESTO	195
6.2.1. Background	196
6.2.2. The text of the Manifesto	198
<i>Preamble</i>	
<i>Ancient buildings exude LIFE</i>	
<i>Ancient buildings expect CHANGE</i>	
<i>Ancient buildings embody TRADITION</i>	
<i>Ancient buildings form COMMUNITY</i>	
6.2.3. Comments and reflections	200
6.3. CHANGE TO HISTORIC CHURCHES: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED	203
6.3.1. Genre and structure	204
6.3.2. Theoretical context	205
6.3.3. The first consultation	206
6.3.4. The second consultation	211
CONCLUSIONS	213
7. Conclusion:	214
locating a narrative approach in the landscape of conservation	
7.1. CONTEXT, LIMITATIONS AND APPLICABILITY	215
7.1.1. A moment of transition	215
7.1.2. The relevance of churches	217
7.1.3. Applicability beyond the medieval	218
7.2. REPRISING THE JOURNEY	219
7.2.1. The itinerary mapped	219
7.2.2. Reflections on the methodology	223
7.2.3. History in the gap	224
7.3. THE ONWARD JOURNEY	227
7.3.1. Extending the map	227
7.3.2. Hybridity and the via media	229
Appendix 1	232

Chapter 3 interview methodology	
Qualitative interviews	232
Interview information sheet	236
Interview consent form	237
Interview structure – churches	238
Interview structure – architects	239
Interview structure – DAC secretary	240
Appendix 2	241
List entry descriptions	
Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield	241
B.Church of St Laurence, Brundall	243
C.Church of St Andrew, Holt	244
D.Church of St Edmund, Taverham	245
E.Wymondham Abbey	247
Appendix 3	249
Case study architectural drawings	
Appendix 4	263
SCARAB Manifesto	
Appendix 5	265
‘Guide for the perplexed’	
Appendix 6	266
Chapter 6 consultations	
SCARAB Manifesto consultation process	266
SCARAB Manifesto website	266
SCARAB Manifesto information sheet	267
‘Guide for the perplexed’ consultation process	268
‘Guide for the perplexed’ information sheet	273
‘Guide for the perplexed’ consent sheet and feedback form	274
Appendix 7	275
‘Guide for the perplexed’: visual grammar	
Appendix 8	277
September 2017 workshop flyer	
Appendix 9	278
CBC report, July 2017	
Appendix 10 & 11	281
10: Case study documentation	
11: Case study interview transcripts	

Glossary and Abbreviations	282
Bibliography	286
DOCUMENTARY SOURCES	286
A.Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield	286
B.Church of St Laurence, Brundall	286
C.Church of St Andrew, Holt	287
D.Church of St Edmund, Taverham	287
E.Wymondham Abbey	287
UK PARLIAMENTARY PUBLICATIONS AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS	289
REFERENCES	290

List of Tables

Table 1: Case study interviews	233
Table 2: SCARAB Manifesto consultation quoted responses	266
Table 3: 'Guide for the perplexed' first consultation quoted responses	269
Table 4: 'Guide for the perplexed' second consultation quoted responses	270

List of Figures

All photographs by the author; Fig. 14 by Diocese of Norwich.

Fig. 1: Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield – view from north west	88
Fig. 2: Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield – internal view looking east	89
Fig. 3: Church of St Laurence, Brundall – view from south	90
Fig. 4: Church of St Laurence, Brundall – view from north with Rainbow Room to left and Church Room to right	90
Fig. 5: Church of St Andrew, Holt – view from south	91
Fig. 6: Church of St Andrew, Holt – view from west	92
Fig. 7: Church of St Andrew, Holt – view of courtyard from east with churchyard wall to left	92
Fig. 8: Church of St Edmund, Taverham – view from north west	93
Fig. 9: Church of St Edmund, Taverham – view from south west	93
Fig. 10: Wymondham Abbey – view from east (June 2015)	94
Fig. 11: Wymondham Abbey – view from south east (June 2015)	95
Fig. 12: Church of All Saints, Fleet – view looking east	175
Fig. 13: Church of All Saints, Fleet – altar	176
Fig. 14: September 2017 workshop flyer	277

List of Drawings

The following drawings can be found in Appendix 3:

A.Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield

Drawing A1. Proposed Ground Floor Plan	251
Drawing A2. Proposed First Floor Plan	252
Drawing A3. Proposed Section BB	253

B.Church of St Laurence, Brundall

Drawing B4. Proposed Main Plan	254
Drawing B5. As Proposed: East Elevation of Worship Space and Section Z-Z	255

C.Church of St Andrew, Holt

Drawing C6. Site Plan, Floor Plan and Location Plan	256
Drawing C7. Planning Application 3D Views	257

D.Church of St Edmund, Taverham

Drawing D8. First Floor Plan – as Proposed	258
Drawing D9. North and South Elevations – as Proposed	259

E.Wymondham Abbey

Drawing E10. Abbey Ground Floor Plan	260
Drawing E11. Proposed South, East and North Elevations	261
Drawing E12. 3D Views	262

List of Accompanying Material

The following printed or digital material is included with this volume:

SCARAB Manifesto (Appendix 4)

Guide for the perplexed (Appendix 5)

CD-ROM comprising:

Case study documentation (Appendix 10)

Case study interview transcripts (Appendix 11)

Preface:

the landscape of commitments

*Where others see the river of time flowing as it always has,
the reactionary sees the debris of paradise drifting past his eyes.*

Mark Lilla (2016: xiii)

One central tenet of modernity from Descartes onwards is the privileging of pure, abstracted forms of knowledge that are unencumbered by context and ‘prejudice’. Since this thesis takes the contrary view, that nothing can be known or imagined *without* prior commitments, it seems important to give an indication of my own commitments at the outset, almost by way of confession. I am an architect by profession, what could be described as ‘a merchant of change’. I am also an entrepreneur; in 2000 I founded Archangel, an architectural practice with which I remain involved. The major focus of the work of the practice is (now) historic buildings, particularly churches, many of them medieval and listed grade I. Archangel is a training practice, aiming to develop the conservation professionals of the future, and has an explicit research agenda from which to develop a distinctive body of theory and, where appropriate, to argue for change. This is done through publication of word – including this present thesis – and deed, through the growing portfolio of completed building projects with which we have had the privilege to be involved.

Amongst the by-products of entrepreneurial activity is disruption to existing organisational structures and patterns of behaviour. Where a salaried employee is more inclined to look to the fabric of those existing structures to provide shelter, identity and/or their living, the entrepreneur is drawn to the holes and imperfections, wherein lies opportunity. Similarly, those invested in the existing structures will be more likely to see them as permanent, and change to them as a threat, as the Lilla epigraph above intimates; the entrepreneur sees their contingency, but often misses both how unsettling change can seem, and how genuinely held those fears are. Nevertheless, if their contingent nature goes unrecognised, those structures will outlive their usefulness and become an obstacle to cultural growth and human flourishing.

The starting point for this research is, in that sense, broadly entrepreneurial and ‘disruptive’. However, the aim from the outset has been more than simply to critique the status quo of modern conservation; accordingly I go on to propose an alternative theoretical framework, and then in a third stage to explore some practical applications

of that framework. In this way the critique of the old is accompanied by the proposal of something new in its place, reflecting the 'creative-destructive' paradigm familiar to both business and design. The project is therefore as much concerned with its usefulness in professional practice as with its impact on academic discourse. In this, the architect shares what Ingold (2013: 4) terms the 'speculative ambition' of the anthropologist, who considers 'what life *might* or *could* be like', as opposed to the documentary remit of the ethnographer.

This thesis attempts to avoid overt political commitments, not from a belief that political engagement is unimportant – it is essential – but rather that the political landscape as framed within Western liberal democracies is viewed as part of the problem. It follows that the key to resolving the tensions implicit in the current conservation system lies elsewhere. In this context the resources of pre-modernity seem a good place to start. As an active member of my local Anglican church I have a specifically religious commitment; this also gives me first hand knowledge of church buildings in use, and ample opportunity to reflect on the intricacies of the relationship between 'church' as worshipping community and 'church' as physical fabric. More broadly, the research is also informed by a belief in the relevance of theology to the culture as a whole; while less unacceptable than it once was, this remains, at best, a marginal view.

Whether these commitments make this thesis reactionary or revolutionary (or both, or neither) will be for others to judge. Whatever the verdict, the project as a whole could not have been imagined in the first place, nor brought to its conclusion, except against the specific background of those commitments: at every stage it would literally have been *unthinkable*.

Acknowledgements

This project could not have happened without the support – intellectual, practical and emotional – of a great many people. I would like to thank my supervisors, Gill Chitty and Kate Giles, for their patience and encouragement from the very outset when this project was just the vaguest of ideas. They have always been insightful and constructive in their supervision; the range of skills they cover between them makes them a magnificent team.

This work was supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/L503848/1) through the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities (WRoCAH). I am immensely grateful to WRoCAH, both for the original award of funding, and the organisational infrastructure that came with it; the Researcher Employability Project and the Knowledge Exchange Project in particular have opened up new and unexpected possibilities. The unflinching graciousness and enthusiasm with which Julian Richards, Caryn Douglas and Clare Meadley have made the system run have made a huge practical difference.

There would also have been no project without the interviewees and respondents who generously gave of their time in engaging with the questions with which this research grapples. I am particularly grateful to Matthew McDade (DAC Secretary) and Caroline Rawlings (Church Development Officer) at the Norwich Diocesan office for access to the case study material for Chapter 3, and to many others in the Diocese of Ely, at the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division and fellow members of the Church Buildings Council for their enthusiasm and willingness to share of their experience.

This project grew from the joys and frustrations of professional architectural practice; it could not have happened without the knowledge gained from working with clients and colleagues at Archangel.

Most of all, this could not have happened without the love and support of my wife, Louise: thank you!

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Examiners should note the following works published or written during the course of this research:

- Walter, N. (2015). On statements of significance. *Transactions of the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association*, 8: 1–10.
- Walter, N. and Mottram, A. (2015). *Buildings for mission: a complete guide to the care, conservation and development of churches*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.
- Walter, N. (2016). Conservation as action and reaction. *Context*, (146): 36–37.
- Walter, N. (2017). Everyone loves a good story : Narrative, tradition and public participation in conservation. In G. Chitty (ed.) *Heritage, conservation and community : engagement, participation and capacity building*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 50–64.
- Walter, N. (forthcoming). The 'Second Battle of Britain': Lessons in post-war reconstruction. In P. Schneider (ed.) *Catastrophe and challenge: cultural heritage in post-conflict recovery. Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Heritage Conservation and Site Management. December 5–7, 2016, BTU Cottbus*. Cottbus: Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg IKMZ-Universitätsbibliothek, pp. 55–72.

A jointly authored paper 'The application of narrative to the conservation of historic buildings' is in preparation with the philosopher Peter Lamarque.

I developed and continue to teach the 'Use, Conservation and Change of Church Buildings' module in the University of York's Postgraduate Diploma in Parish Church Studies: History, Heritage and Fabric. I am also an invited lecturer on the Approaches to Conservation MA in the Department of Archaeology.

During the course of this research I have been appointed to the Church Buildings Council, and as an RIBA conservation accreditation assessor.

1. Context:

people and change in conservation

*To the incumbent the church is a workshop; to the antiquary it is a relic.
To the parish it is a utility; to the outsider a luxury.
How to unite these incompatibles?*

Thomas Hardy ([1906] 1967: 204)

Historic churches have been a central concern of conservation in England from its inception. They are also buildings where different stakeholders in decision-making have sharply varied frames of reference which, as Hardy's epigraph demonstrates, is not a new problem. Churches are also prime examples of 'living buildings' that have changed through their history, such that they now form a richly layered composite authored over many generations, and where the pressure for change is arguably as strong now as it has ever been. While this multi-layeredness is a (perhaps *the most*) significant aspect of their character, the current legal framework for the protection of such buildings, based as it is in a reading of architectural and historical significance, is seen by some stakeholders as a major obstacle to further change. Hardy goes on in the same essay to suggest that 'if the ruinous church could be enclosed in a crystal palace [...] and a new church be built alongside for services [...] the method would be an ideal one' ([1906] 1967: 205). This would be to place the church, understood as a precious antique object, quite literally into a glass case, for its protection and preservation. At its most basic, this research project is an engagement with the implications of the tensions that Hardy describes as 'incompatibles', and with his suggested solution.¹

Hardy's incompatibles represent distinct sets of interests, each with their own cultural assumptions and theoretical position; conservation professionals are no exception. Yet conservation has typically shied away from locating its commitments in any wider theoretical landscape that might inform its debates, greatly to its detriment. Symptomatic of this is John Earl's otherwise excellent *Building conservation philosophy* (2003) which, despite its title, contains not one shred of reference to philosophers of any kind. Earl himself warns of the danger that practitioners who ignore philosophical

¹ Hardy goes on to acknowledge this to be impractical, recognising the need for 'compromises between users and musers' ([1906] 1967: 205); the image is nevertheless strongly suggestive of one enduringly influential approach.

questions ‘will find themselves in a rudderless ship’ (2003: 3), but since ‘philosophy’ is taken in its weakest sense of ‘approaches’ he does nothing to locate the discipline with respect to other cultural landmarks; and so the good ship ‘Conservation’ drifts on. Leaving aside the irony of a discipline that champions physical context while remaining blind to the theoretical hinterland beyond its borders, this substantial omission is downright dangerous; practice must connect with theory if practitioners are to know whether they intervene for the good. In any case, even if we wished to, we cannot avoid theory; we either engage with it deliberately, or we find ourselves animated by a philosophy not of our choosing. Since modernity is founded on the flight from tradition and towards dreams of progress and emancipation from the past, the implications for historic buildings of ignoring the wider philosophical landscape are both substantial and urgent. The approach taken in this thesis is therefore not only to critique the operation of contemporary conservation practice, but also to propose an appropriate theoretical foundation and to explore its implications, both for professionals and community interests.

The story of the development of modern Western thought is one of increased specialisation, with the analytic approach of the natural sciences presented as the methodological exemplar. Etienne Gilson (1938: 263) observed that

from the point of view of science, the world has no unity of its own. Every scientist naturally has the temper and the tastes of a specialist; [... ultimately] he finds himself engaged in the exhaustive investigation of some microscopic detail which has now become the whole of reality so far as he is concerned.

Current conservation methodology in England – represented by Historic England’s *Conservation principles, policies and guidance* (HE 2008; hereafter *Conservation principles*) – similarly *analyses* historic buildings into discrete values, which we could term ‘atoms of significance’, yet lacks a theoretically robust account of how these elements form a coherent whole.² By contrast, this thesis adopts a *synthetic* approach; where analysis aims to isolate the phenomenon under consideration, synthesis focuses on the coherent whole, specifically in this case placing conservation in its wider contexts. The term ‘synthesis’ is freighted with philosophical weight as the third stage of Hegelian dialectic reasoning, the transcending of the contradictories of thesis and antithesis. While the position developed here is not Hegelian, it is certainly its ambition to address the tension between the competing claims for change and preservation that are ever present when dealing with old buildings. In this context, churches provide a lens through which to consider wider questions of change to historic buildings generally, and specifically the relation of built fabric to the people of the local

² To follow current usage, all references to ‘English Heritage’ from before its demerger in April 2015 have been changed to ‘Historic England’ (HE).

community. It is the local community which forms the other, often neglected, half of what this thesis terms a ‘balanced heritage’ of the material and the human, and through which, it is suggested, the impasse of Thomas Hardy’s ‘incompatibles’ might perhaps be resolved.

This chapter therefore seeks first to clarify the scope of the research, before considering in Section 2 how current conservation processes deal with change and the concerns of local communities. In this the focus is England, though much will be transferrable to conservation in other parts of the United Kingdom and beyond. Section 3 then looks outside the confines of conservation to some approaches within the neighbouring fields of archaeology and heritage including, appropriately enough, ideas of landscape. The chapter concludes by clarifying the central questions the research seeks to address, and how the remainder of the thesis is structured.

1.1. BEATING THE BOUNDS: THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

Central to this thesis is the question of how people and physical heritage interrelate. This first section starts by considering what is meant by the evocative term *living buildings*, which often stands as a marker of these concerns, but is seldom defined. The section then looks at the place of church buildings within the world of conservation, and what is meant by change and by continuity. Finally it is proposed that conservation in general, and the conservation of churches in particular, can helpfully be located within an ethical framework.

1.1.1. The question of living buildings

Historic England’s official conservation guidance mentions living buildings primarily in a church context. Both first and second editions of *New work in historic places of worship* (HE 2003: 2, 2012: 1) begin with reference to churches as ‘living buildings at the heart of their communities’, each in the very first sentence. The phrase is also used for the enticingly titled guidance *Living buildings in a living landscape* (HE et al. 2006) on the future of traditional farm buildings. None of these documents makes further use of the phrase, which does not appear at all in *Conservation principles* (HE 2008), nor the earlier *Power of place* (HE 2000).

Elsewhere, the pioneering conservation architect Donald Insall chose *Living buildings* as the title for his 2008 monograph celebrating 50 years of practice. While he offers no definition, for Insall *all* buildings can be described as living, a theme that runs throughout the book. Buildings, to Insall, are interlocutors, and it is important that we know our place in that dialogue, allowing the building to address us before we ourselves speak (2008: 7). Nowhere within the literature, it seems, is the term ‘living

building' defined, let alone the particular implications of that status for the practice of conservation examined. Perhaps the term is assumed to be self-explanatory, but this lack of definition denies it a place in conservation discourse, rendering it peripheral.

The use of the phrase primarily in a religious context is perhaps not accidental: Christ is referred to as a living stone and the Christian community is urged 'like living stones, [to] let yourselves be built into a spiritual house' (1 Peter 2:4–5), an example of an explicitly theological category helpfully framing a broader cultural question.³ In 2003 ICCROM convened a forum on living religious heritage (Stovel et al. 2005), adopting a case study approach. The forum was co-organised by Britta Rudolff, who is highly critical of the contemporary norm of categorising the 'living' part of heritage as 'intangible'; one example is the Intangible Heritage Convention (UNESCO 2003), with policy developed by UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Section (UNESCO 2005), for example in its concern for 'living human treasures' (UNESCO n.d.; Rudolff 2006: 16).

Meanwhile, Laurajane Smith (2006: 54) famously suggested that, 'If heritage is a mentality, a way of knowing and seeing, then all heritage becomes, in a sense, "intangible".' Further, she declared it her task 'to redefine all heritage as inherently intangible in the first place' (Smith 2006: 56). Yet in privileging the intangible, Smith treats the tangible with some disdain, placing churches and cathedrals, as examples of elitist architecture, firmly among 'the usual authorised material suspects' (2006: 134). The danger of this position is that it creates a false division of intangible from tangible, obscuring their interrelation and ruling out the much more demanding possibility, argued for in this thesis, of their essential unity. In this connection it is telling how little Critical Heritage Studies (CHS) has to say on the practicalities of how heritage is actually to be *managed* (Baxter 2012).

It is worth noting that this disconnect of life from the material is a problem of modernity's own making. From antiquity until the 'disenchantment' of the Enlightenment (Taylor 2011), matter was understood to be animated; the seriousness with which alchemy was taken in Western culture into the seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries, despite its later caricature as primitive chemistry, provides one trace of this. The Hortus Palatinus at Heidelberg castle, which was entirely structured around an alchemical understanding of light and water, or the use of progressively darker materials to structure degrees of holiness in some South German Baroque churches are examples of this understanding (Walter 1991). The pre-Cartesian view is of a material world that is animated, mutable and protean. Against the standard Western view of

³ Cf. Matt. 21:42 and Acts 4:11 which quote Ps. 118:22 to describe Jesus as 'the stone that the builders rejected [which] has become the chief cornerstone'. All biblical references are from the New Revised Standard Version (2007).

physical objects as inert compounds of matter and form, known as hylomorphism (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 408), Tim Ingold also draws on alchemy to propose a ‘morphogenetic’ view. Rather than the process of making being the imposition of an internal mental form upon an external material world, for Ingold it is instead ‘a process of *growth*’ (2013: 21, emphasis original):

Making, then, is a process of correspondence: not the imposition of preconceived form on raw material substance, but the drawing out or bringing forth of potentials immanent in a world of becoming.

(Ingold 2013: 31)

In his *Seven lamps of architecture*, John Ruskin speaks of a ‘living architecture’, insisting that in the surface of ancient stones ‘there was yet in the old *some* life’ ([1849] 1903: 243, emphasis original); but Ruskin’s adoption of the idea is partial and selective, and is employed to argue for the prevention of elective change.

Of more obvious contemporary application, a living building, at its most basic, is one that remains in beneficial use. This serves as a preliminary definition, establishing the fundamental distinction between living buildings and ‘dead’ monuments, and positioning an active community of people as essential to the vitality described. This distinction is not a new one; the first of six principles set down in the *Recommendations of the Madrid Conference* (Locke 1904) was that

Monuments may be divided into two classes, *dead monuments*, i.e. those belonging to a past civilisation or serving obsolete purposes, and *living monuments*, i.e. those which continue to serve the purposes for which they were originally intended.

Principles 2 and 3 then state that dead monuments should be preserved with minimal intervention, while living monuments should ‘be *restored* so that they may continue to be of use’ (emphasis original). The rationale for preservation is that ‘the importance of such a [dead] monument consists in its historical and technical value, which disappears with the monument itself’; this is noteworthy for the early use of the language of value(s), the investment of that importance (in the case of ‘dead monuments’ only) exclusively in the material fabric and the tacit understanding that the importance of ‘living monuments’ is not similarly constrained. It should be remarked that this understanding of living buildings was articulated by an international gathering of architects, whereas art historian Alois Riegl’s almost contemporaneous ‘Modern cult of monuments’ ([1903] 1996) makes no such distinction.

Continued beneficial use has long been recognised as important for sustaining built heritage, and the current understanding is explicitly that this ‘is likely to require continual adaptation and change’ (HE 2008: 43). But our preliminary definition immediately begs the question of use *for what*, and the further distinction between

buildings whose continued existence is thanks to conversion to another use – such as a mill converted into housing, or a church into a library (e.g. Lincoln College Oxford) or bar (e.g. The Parish, Micklegate, York) – from those buildings that remain in use for the purposes for which they were built, as Locke envisages.

Here we must distinguish *continuity of usefulness* in the former case, from *continuity of use* in the latter; each raises quite distinct issues. Change of use in the first case is often argued on the basis of the very survival of the building; the concern is often to retain its external form in the landscape (urban or rural), and the challenge for heritage professionals in approving such proposals is the impact on the fabric – often in the form of insertions and perhaps subdivisions of the interior – to make the proposed use viable. The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), formerly the Redundant Churches Fund, was established in 1969 to receive the more important closed Anglican churches, and currently cares for some 350 buildings. With limited funding, the CCT seeks to find new beneficial uses for its buildings through its regeneration programme, with imaginative examples in Bolton, Ipswich and elsewhere (CCT 2017). Similarly, the Church of England's 'Open and sustainable' initiative (CCBD 2017e) aims to avoid closure by encouraging 'wider, more imaginative and more strategic use' of Anglican church buildings.

In the case of continuity of use the issues are different and may, at first sight, appear more straightforward. The classic example here is the English parish church, in which the ongoing life of the building provokes demands for change which many conservation professionals find unacceptable, even though change and multiple uses were integral to their development (Davies 1968, French 2001). Change of use examples are often argued in life and death terms; the threat in continuity of use examples often appears less credible, but may be just as real.

This distinction is mirrored in the conservation literature. While the question of change of use has received considerable coverage, the specific concerns and challenges of continuity of use in living buildings is under-theorised. The claims made by church communities for their buildings are theological in nature, and therefore difficult to take seriously – or comprehend at all – in a secular context. And while there is much talk of community ownership, it is rarely acknowledged that communities are not monolithic but differentiated, or indeed how the communities responsible for fragile historic buildings are themselves often extremely fragile. Living buildings with continuity of use are an excellent basis for considering the relations between historic buildings and the communities that care for them and, by extension, how our culture as a whole regards historic fabric and its connection to people. While acknowledging that in many circumstances broader definitions may be more appropriate, for the purposes of this

thesis, the term *living building* is given the tighter definition of a historic building that remains in use for the purposes for which it was originally built.

Adopting this definition, one principal aim of this project is to sketch the outline of a theoretical framework for conservation that makes sense of the substantial practical issues raised by change to living buildings that to date have remained largely unaddressed. Anything that is living is almost by definition growing and changing. The question, therefore, for 'living' historic buildings is not how to manage change down to an acceptable minimum – as though growth and change were a sickness – but how to change well. For this an understanding of how heritage is created and recreated is needed; for as Jokilehto (2010: 30) observes, 'Compared to the habitual definition of monuments and sites as static objects, living heritage is continuously recreated.' Alongside this, rather than treating living buildings as a special case, this thesis proposes the reversal of that assumption, starting from the view that all historic buildings should be presumed living until proven otherwise.

1.1.2. The nature and relevance of church buildings

There are various classes of designated buildings with an element of community use, such as schools, pubs, railway stations, village halls, even prisons; each of these building types merits scrutiny in its own right. But the most obvious category for a study such as this is the historic church, the contested community building *par excellence*. As a class of buildings, churches present an abundance of examples that meet the criteria of historical and architectural importance, community ownership and a varied biography of ongoing change; the current AHRC-funded 'Empowering Design Practices' (EDP) project addresses the importance and particular challenges of community-owned historic places of worship, aiming to empower those who look after these buildings through community-led design (EDP 2017). Finally, churches are also the class of building of which I have most professional experience, including of negotiating the complex issues around living heritage.

Churches represent the biggest category of designated community-owned historic buildings. Almost without exception, the older (medieval) church buildings are Anglican, and the Church Heritage Record lists more than 7,000 pre-Reformation church buildings in England (CofE 2017b). They include a substantial proportion of the most important historic buildings – fully 45% of those buildings listed grade I in England are churches and cathedrals, which makes them of central importance. And looked at from the opposite end, some 77% of Anglican church buildings are listed, making the associated responsibilities an acknowledged challenge for the Church of England (Inge 2015).

Because of their status as living buildings, historic churches also present some of the most challenging – and, for our purposes, interesting – of conservation cases. The pressure for change generally comes from the church community itself, though in other cases it might be from the need to find an alternative community use following closure. In some cases the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) brings both substantial funding and therefore greater potential for change. However, while churches are thus the natural place to centre this argument about the nature of change in living community buildings, the argument is intended to have wider application across the full breadth of conservation.

Also of relevance to this research is the Church itself which, through its ongoing concern with theology, retains some sort of understanding of and access to the resources of pre-modernity. Few within the secular culture, or indeed academia, would see theology as anything more than of (merely) ‘academic interest’. And yet at the very time at which pre-Reformation church buildings were created, theology was the ‘queen of the sciences’, that which framed and informed all other learning. In a UK context in which the humanities find themselves increasingly marginalised within a narrowing conception of education as no more than preparation for employment, that most marginal of all the humanities – theology – can be seen as once again standing for the sector as a whole, precisely because of its perceived non-utility. As the academic theologian Alison Milbank remarked in a recent debate, theology is the one area of academia that is able to address all others (SMIF 2017).

In his chapter on churches and cathedrals in an edited volume on the management of historic buildings, David Baker identifies

two agendas for presentation, one communicating the contemporary religious significance of the “living church”, and the other the wider cultural significance of historically evolved buildings. [...] [T]he churches accept ownership of both agendas [...] many visitors and conservators do not find the practice of religion indispensable for historical and architectural appreciation.

(Baker 1999: 99)

While some of the popular literature does attempt to address this issue (e.g. Taylor 2003), many conservation professionals do not regard the theologies that created and sustain these buildings as of relevance to their work. At the same time, any theology that detaches itself from its physical manifestation will be similarly impoverished. And there’s the rub, for many church communities do indeed detach themselves from their buildings, in part for lack of an adequate theology, and in part because the processes and culture of conservation appear to forbid an active involvement with them. Baker ends his chapter with an appeal to avoid the confrontation between the interests of old buildings and people by setting both in a wider cultural context, heading off

‘perceptions that only an inturned minority interest is at stake’, and suggesting that they have a role to play ‘in healing divisions and promoting regeneration’ (Baker 1999: 112–113). This thesis has very much the same aims.

1.1.3. Fixity, fluidity and the problem of change

A minimal reading of John Henry Newman’s epigraph to this thesis (‘...to live is to change...’) simply acknowledges that change is part of life. But Newman meant something more, for he added that ‘...to be perfect is to have changed often’ ([1845] 2001: 40), implying that change should be welcomed, even rejoiced in, as a sign of life. This suggests quite different notions of change; the first we can label ‘passive’, the second ‘active’. In the passive sense, change is as likely to be negative as it is positive; even when romanticised by Ruskin as ‘that golden stain of time’ ([1849] 1903: 234) it is a form of decay. By contrast, change in Newman’s active sense is enriching, generative and essential for growth. Donald Insall (2008: 11) uses a similar distinction in differentiating conservation from preservation, seeing ‘the latter as negative, obstructing all change, while the former encapsulates life’.

For Insall, historic buildings are

alive and constantly changing. For every building is a product not only of its original generator – whether architect or builder, caravanist or monk – but of the continuing effects upon its materials of time and weather, and of generations of successive occupants, each with his own set of values and requirements. Each building carries, and clearly demonstrates, the impact and influence of all its changing and unforeseeable circumstances.

(Insall 2008: 10)

He illustrates this with St Anne’s Church at Kew (2008: 43), which has grown through nine separate stages from 1714 to 1979, but simply presents this as the way things are, as a *fait accompli*. For those historic buildings that have been formed by these ‘generations of successive occupants’, then surely this aspect of their character cannot be ignored when considering what should happen next. If every building is alive in this way, then the fundamental aim of conservation cannot simply be to keep things the same, the preservationist approach, which he rejects. And what is it that we are conserving – the life of the building, or merely its tangible, material aspects?

In the context of urban design informed by post-war reconstruction, the town planner Thomas Sharp (1968: 20) criticised preservation, which ‘opposes change of almost any kind’ due to its failure to understand that towns are ‘living organisms’, alongside a *laissez faire* commercial utilitarianism; these approaches we could characterise respectively as ‘change nothing’ and ‘change everything’. If we look no further, then we are indeed faced with a sterile opposition of buildings versus people,

and Hardy's incompatibles are irresolvable. But this research grows from the belief that that dichotomy is a false one. Sharp identified a middle way for conservation, whose concern is the 'maintenance of character', and which we can characterise as 'changing well'.

Perhaps instead of opposing buildings to people it might be productive to extend the idea of living buildings and see them as people. In the context of arguing against wholesale urban replanning and for piecemeal renewal, Lionel Esher warned the 1964 Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) conference that 'we must beware of contempt for old buildings just because, like old people, they can be frail, muddled and squalid' (Esher 1981: 73). The parallel is instructive. In many modern Western cultures, old people and old buildings are both accorded a special status which removes them from the stream of life in order better to meet their material needs, with less thought to the creative cultural contribution they might yet make; we tell ourselves that this is for the best, that these precious objects are too fragile. However, one clear difference which further questions the 'care home' model of conservation is that human life has a sharply delimited horizon of some 120 years, which old buildings do not; where a human life passes through its seven ages in relatively short order, a living building can be seen as perennially in the prime of life.

Newman's adage restates the common observation that a full human life is marked not merely by surviving change, but by being formed by it, by growth of character and strengthening of identity, often in adversity. A similar idea was articulated in the 2016 Reith Lectures by the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, who suggested that in meeting the cultural challenge facing Muslims in the West

the recognition that identity endures through change – indeed, *that it only endures by change* – will be a useful touchstone for everyone involved. Religious identities, like all identities [...] are transformed through history: *that is how they survive*.

(Appiah 2016: 10, emphasis added)

In applying this insight to buildings, much rests on whether we see the physical world as essentially fixed or as having a degree of fluidity. If our understanding of an old building is primarily one of fixity, then our approach will be antiquarian or art historical; any change will then be loss, since we do not alter a Rembrandt and believe we have improved it. But if our understanding of a building is primarily one of fluidity and communal authorship over time, then the role of conservation will be radically different. Hence Gill Chitty (2017: 2) quotes Jukka Jokilehto suggesting there should be 'less emphasis on managing change, more on managing continuity through change'.

Clearly not all change is good. Old buildings are important, but if they are 'living' they are fixed neither physiologically (because of the effects of the elements, conflict

etc.) nor culturally (because of their ongoing use). The continuity of the life of these buildings depends on their connection with people, their embeddedness in community. While change should not be at anyone's whim, neither should the prevention of change. On this view preservation is a very blunt instrument which threatens to destroy the holism of building and community that is 'balanced heritage' through the very processes adopted for their care.

1.1.4. Framing conservation as applied ethics

Part of the appeal of conservation is that it is gloriously practical, whether at the policy or campaigning level of saving buildings, or at the hands-on level of deciding how best to intervene for the health of the 'patient', a term professionals often use of the buildings in their care. Conservation practitioners constantly encounter new situations and challenges, and must ask themselves 'what should I do?'; conservation is thus a branch of applied ethics, a theme going back at least as far as John Ruskin (Chitty 2003: 43). In their edited volume *The ethics of cultural heritage*, Tracy Ireland and John Schofield note that ethics in heritage has conventionally focused on responsibilities to external domains such as the 'archaeological record', stakeholders, or the professions; instead they frame heritage as a future-focused domain of social action (2015: 2). Aylin Orbaşlı makes a similar point in the context of a recent article critiquing contemporary conservation processes as 'woefully ill-equipped' to respond to current realities (2017: 1, 8). Just as medical practitioners cannot avoid engagement with medical ethics, so the starting point of this project is that conservation must also situate itself in the broader landscape of moral philosophy, not merely in the ethics of those conventional external domains.

Moral philosophy is conventionally divided into three major approaches: deontological (concerned with duty and the rightness of actions themselves), consequentialist (where the moral worth of actions derives from their anticipated outcomes or consequences) and virtue (rooted in Plato and Aristotle and looking beyond the individual action to questions of moral character; Hursthouse & Pettigrove 2016). In the context of Christian ethics, the theologian Sam Wells (2004: 33–35) offers an alternative tripartite division between universal, subversive and ecclesial ethics. Wells's two innovations are to combine deontological and consequentialist together under the heading of universal, and to introduce a second category of subversive ethics. Whether concerned with duty or consequences, universal ethics considers 'what is right for anyone and everyone [whereas] subversive ethics points out the particular perspective of the marginalized and excluded' (Wells and Quash 2017: 200). Wells's favoured ecclesial ethics is a specific application of the virtue ethics approach.

This Wellsian division will be adopted (and adapted), since it maps most closely onto the ethical landscape of conservation. The universal approach stands for conservation in its first stage of modern development, embracing the authority claims of the antiquarian and the strong universalising tendency of the early international charters. Subversive ethics stands for the growing consciousness of power relations in the development of the brokered notion of significance from the *Burra charter* (Australia ICOMOS 2013) onwards and the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), for example in Laurajane Smith's (2006) notion of Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). Chapter 2 of this thesis will be concerned with the means by which the first form of ethics is applied 'from above', while Chapter 3 will consider the view of the system 'from below' in the experience of church communities who have tried to navigate it. The potential of virtue ethics as an appropriate model for an inclusive and historically literate conservation is a major theme of the thesis from Chapter 4 onwards.

It should be clear in light of the above formulation that none of the above heritage approaches can claim to be uniquely associated with either 'people' or 'buildings'. Rather, the issue is what place each accords to people in general, and local communities in particular, reflecting the central question for this research of how people and buildings of all kinds, but particularly those in community ownership, interrelate.

1.2. CONSERVATION AND THE RELATION OF 'MAKING' TO 'KEEPING'

There is a tension at the heart of conservation, present from its inception, between preserving historic fabric and allowing it to change. Often conservation is now defined in opposition to preservation as the management of change (e.g. Historic England 2008: 71). Donald Insall introduces his section on 'Philosophy in Action' under the heading 'To make or to keep; to change or to save?' and puts this tension in the following terms:

Our philosophy of conservation is based upon resolving a simple dichotomy. The life of places and of buildings is conditioned largely by two contrasting human motives. These two instincts, somewhat akin to the philosophical Chinese male and female energy factors, can be isolated and identified as 'making' – the aggressive principle that implies change (sometimes indeed, domination), and 'keeping' – protecting and saving things unchanged. These two notions run very deep in human nature and they do conflict.

Virtually all we set out to do involves change.

(Insall 2008: 93)

This section considers the ebb and flow of that tension through the legislative frameworks and polemic that continue to shape conservation in England, while situating these in their broader international context.

1.2.1. Conservation, preservation and monuments

The meaning of the terms preservation and conservation have shifted over time. John Earl (2003: 5) notes the development of a mid-1960s ‘propagandist’ distinction

drawn (especially by architectural writers) between the museum preservation of buildings in supposedly ‘frozen-in-time’ states and the enlightened conservation of imaginatively adapted buildings ‘in the environment’. The former was represented as a sterile, negative process and the latter as a creative, forward-looking activity.

Earl favours the more neutral dictionary definition of preservation as keeping safe from harm, with conservation ‘embracing not only physical preservation but also all those other activities, which the practitioner must engage in to be successful in “preserving, retaining and keeping entire”’ (2003: 6). Historic England, in defining ‘preserve’ in the selfsame way, references a 1991 legal definition (2008: 72). Earl thus defines conservation as preservation with other aspects added to it, a view we might label ‘preservation plus’.

Such a definition is consistent with William Morris’s *Manifesto* ([1877] 2009) for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), a central pillar in the development of modern conservation in England. Morris adapted Ruskin’s earlier argument against restoration and his metaphor of living architecture, defining the life of a building as its history. The *Manifesto* specifically aimed to counter changes to church buildings, with Morris pleading that ‘Protection [be put] in the place of Restoration’. Morris saw historic buildings as complex and fragile assemblages of historic layers, for example complaining in the 1891 SPAB annual report that,

If people really saw the true worth of our medieval churches they would realise how dangerous it is to introduce new work into old buildings. It is like putting new wine into old bottles, for both are destroyed.

(in Fawcett 1976: 108)

Morris was of the view that, while the work of previous centuries ‘was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning’, in his own age architecture, ‘long decaying, [had] died out’ and that ‘the nineteenth century has no style of its own’ (Morris [1877] 2009). The Morrisian vision is of a radical *discontinuity* between previous ages and his own; Chris Miele (2005b: 57–58) places this in the ideological context of Morris’s romanticised view of the medieval church as the product of freely given labour.

Miele also demonstrates how the SPAB *Manifesto* serves as an example of the defensive use of the past in the long aftermath of the French Revolution, and that it is but ‘a short step from this denial of the possibilities of the present to what Pugin and Morris did decades later’ (2005a: 12). He identifies an alternative view of history, and

therefore an alternative potential conservation discourse, 'the one rejoicing in improvement, the other despising it' (2005a: 13); for Miele, George Godwin, architect and editor of the influential *Builder Magazine*, represents this alternative. Aside from an opposition to the idea of the architect as creative genius, the key differences that Miele draws out are on the question of continuity and the place of historic buildings:

Pugin and Morris had described in their different ways historical rupture, a shattering of continuity and communal relations that could only be healed by focusing, to the exclusion of all else, on medieval buildings, objects of contemplation, the architectural equivalent of a medieval reliquary or altarpiece. Theirs was a cultish view of antiquity and of historic buildings care.

(Miele 2005a: 27)

This belief in cultural discontinuity, formed in the context of the industrial and other revolutions, has in turn shaped the dominant view within conservation that restoration was a desecration, the cavalier indulgence of historical fancy, with St Albans Cathedral standing as the totemic example (Fawcett 1976). Since nineteenth-century restoration furnished the most prominent and obvious examples of change to historic buildings, the construction of a pejorative account of restoration cannot help but colour the conservation community's broader view of change.

The belief in the entirely destructive nature of nineteenth-century restoration was challenged in Geoffrey Brandwood's (1984) review of restoration in Leicestershire churches, and Dav Smith (2014) has more recently demonstrated through close archaeological analysis of completed schemes that restorations were often a process of archaeologically literate and painstaking reconstruction. This partial rehabilitation of restoration is pertinent to the current argument, since restoration was to some extent justified through the same distinction between living buildings and 'dead' monuments explored above. As Jukka Jokilehto (2010: 29) has observed, the debate resolved into the commonly held view that with living buildings 'such as old churches that were still used, they should be restored taking into account the present-day needs', whereas restoration should be avoided for the material remains of an ancient civilisation, a distinction still being made in the early twentieth century by Professor C Weber (Jokilehto 1999: 196).

Françoise Choay (2001) has argued that the idea of the historic monument was an invention born in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution as a necessary response to the confiscation of historic property from both the Church and the nobility. Regardless of one's more general assessment of the French Revolution, essential to the idea of the historic monument is therefore its removal from its original cultural context. It is interesting to note that heritage law in England has from its inception distinguished between buildings on the one hand and monuments on the other (Mynors 2006: 13).

This distinction is reinforced in the specific case of church buildings: referring to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, s.61(7), Charles Mynors (2006: 567) notes that ‘Even today the definition of monument specifically excludes “an ecclesiastical building in use for ecclesiastical purposes”.’

Clearly some historic structures are overtly monumental, as recognised by Alois Riegl ([1903] 1996) in his category of ‘deliberate commemorative value’. But these are in the minority. Much conservation theory ignores this critical distinction, for example by failing to distinguish between the conservation of historic monuments and artworks such as paintings and sculpture on the one hand, and historic buildings that remain in beneficial use on the other. It is interesting to note that Morris ([1877] 2009) explicitly uses the analogy of the artwork, complaining that even the best ‘of the Restorations yet undertaken [...] have their exact analogy in the Restoration of an old picture’. Muñoz Viñas (2005) presents an example of the same blurring of categories in contemporary conservation theory. Some might argue that the existence of two separate UK legislative frameworks regulating change to listed buildings and historic monuments respectively adequately recognises this distinction. The argument advanced here is that this acknowledgement in principle is not consistently evidenced in practice, as will be seen in the experience of church communities in Chapter 3, while Chapter 4 will explore the relation between the frequent blindness to this distinction and modernity’s foundational antipathy towards tradition.

1.2.2. Significance, values and the contemporary framework

The role of Historic England (HE) in safeguarding built heritage includes setting the policy framework within which conservation in England operates. Central amongst numerous publications dealing with particular areas of heritage by issue or sector, *Conservation principles* (HE 2008) defines conservation as:

The process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

(HE 2008: 71)

This definition, while very helpful, begs the question of what sort of change is envisaged. As discussed, the word ‘change’ is used both in the passive sense for processes associated with weathering and the passage of time, and in the more active sense for alterations arising from creative responses to the pressures of use (Section 1.1.3). Without a theoretical framework appropriate to the subject matter of living buildings, ‘managing change’ very easily becomes ‘managing (to avoid) change’, with the bracketed words rarely spoken but always understood. Conservation professionals may present themselves as, and indeed honestly believe themselves to be, engaged in

the former, but without an adequate theory of change may unknowingly stray into the latter, which more closely matches the common perception of communities that engage with conservation, as seen in the case study examples in Chapter 3.

Central to *Conservation principles* is the notion of significance, which is defined as ‘the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance’; in turn a value is defined as ‘an aspect of worth or importance, here attached by people to qualities of places’ (2008: 72). In this and much else, *Conservation principles* draws on international documents such as the *Burra charter* (ICOMOS Australia 2013), from which it adapts its fourfold structure of values, and the *Nara document on authenticity* (UNESCO 1994).

The *Burra charter* (whose full name is the *Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance*) was first created in 1979 as a local application of the principles of the *Venice charter* (ICOMOS 1964), including the specific need for a common framework that could address the claims of both colonial and indigenous forms of heritage. Subsequently it has achieved much wider application, and in retrospect marks a significant shift from a Western focus on tangible forms of heritage towards an increasing acknowledgement of the intangible. Specifically it takes the *Venice charter’s* passing reference to ‘cultural significance’ and makes this central to the conservation process; unlike *Venice*, its concern is not ‘historic monuments’ but the much broader category of ‘places’, and states the purpose of conservation as the retention of the cultural significance of those places (Art. 1.4). It is acknowledged that ‘cultural significance may change over time and with use’ (Art. 1.2 note) and that the range of cultural values may vary between people, and indeed conflict (Arts 1.2, 13).

The *Nara document* (UNESCO 1994) also positions itself as an elaboration of the *Venice charter* (ICOMOS 1964) in the context of the ‘expanding scope of cultural heritage concerns’ (Art. 3). Michael Falser outlines the discussions behind its development, and quotes Marc Laenen’s description of heritage as a living ‘expression in its continuity of social and cultural functions’ (2010: 122). Heritage is thus dynamic in character, and constantly ‘builds up layers of social and cultural stratigraphy’; by implication, ‘heritage qualities’ must remain renegotiable (ibid.). This is a quite different approach to the *Venice charter*, whose opening sentence famously proclaims that:

Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions.

Ongoing use, while desirable, ‘must not change the lay-out or decoration of the building’ (ICOMOS 1964 Art. 5). The clear implication is that these monuments are the remnants of a by-gone age, and are ‘living’ only in the minimal sense of having survived as witnesses to history.

Both of these approaches – of fluidity and stasis, or to use Insall’s terms ‘making’ and ‘keeping’ – retain currency; the key difference between them, as with Morris above, is the extent to which one sees continuity with, or discontinuity from, the cultures preceding one’s own. Rodney Harrison similarly notes that ‘official’ forms of heritage adopt a clear distinction between the past and the present, while ‘unofficial’ models of heritage are characterised ‘as “continuous”, in the sense in which they emphasise the connection between the past and the quotidian present’ (2013: 18). This tension is expressed through all the above documents in the extent to which significance, and heritage more generally, is seen as a finite resource that can only be depleted – in which case deliberate change can only be seen as harm – or a renewable one. For example, the *Venice charter* asserts our duty to hand ‘historic monuments’ on ‘in the full richness of their authenticity’. In an English context, the more recent *National Planning Policy Framework* (‘NPPF’; DCLG 2012) states that ‘heritage assets are irreplaceable’ (para. 132), while in cases of ‘less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal’ (para. 134). Once again, the judgement of how substantial is the degree of ‘harm’ will vary widely depending on one’s understanding both of significance and of the nature of change; to frame it as a question of degree masks what is a question of principle.

For Kate Clark, values-based conservation enables communities to connect to the historic environment; indeed Clark was herself involved in the drafting of *Conservation principles* (HE 2008), and argued strongly for the values system. In her recent review of values-based heritage management in the UK, she notes the significant change in methodology stemming from the *Burra charter*’s emphasis on significance:

Values-based management involved a fundamental intellectual shift from heritage decisions based purely on the individual expertise of the heritage professional to a more transparent process of analysis and diagnosis. Ultimately, values-based management was more than a process; it was a different way of thinking about cultural heritage.

(Clark 2014: 65–66)

Clark notes with regret the reluctance of many within Historic England to engage with what we could call this ‘values agenda’, preferring instead to focus on significance (pers. comm.); in her view, since the determination of significance remains the province of the expert, this has the effect of keeping heritage out of the hands of the communities to which it belongs. The *Burra charter* stipulates that people should be allowed to participate (Art. 12), but there is nothing beyond this about local *ownership* of heritage, and the charter has been criticised for doing nothing to challenge the assumption of authority by experts (Waterton et al. 2006). This suggests how easily a focus on significance can be co-opted to more ideologically conservative ends.

If Clark can be described as a ‘values-optimist’, the position taken in this thesis is that of the ‘values-sceptic’. A coherent values system in conservation was first articulated by Alois Riegl ([1903] 1996) in a resolutely neo-Kantian philosophical context in which values were *the* central philosophical idea (Schnädelbach 1984). Values were first deployed to account for meaning within a positivist philosophical outlook; on this view material things have meaning when people ‘attach’ values to them. This language of attachment has endured and is seen throughout the literature; for example, *Conservation principles* makes constant reference to ‘attachment’, including in its definition of a value, as seen above (HE 2008: 72). As I have argued elsewhere (Walter 2014b), this is a flawed foundation for conservation, with the result that a values-based methodology cannot deliver on its promises. Aside from being philosophically suspect, the implication of treating meaning as assembled from discrete ‘gobbets of significance’ is that any values that might be added, particularly an intangible class such as communal value, can just as readily be bracketed or entirely detached. In this way the interests of the local and communal are easily marginalised, and the values system collapses back into Smith’s (2006) AHD. I will attempt to address this deficit in the exploration of an alternative philosophical foundation in Chapters 4 and 5.

1.2.3. Where are the people? – experts, universalism and the local

While there is ample evidence of an appetite for heritage in the wider population, for example in the burgeoning membership of the National Trust (NT), now standing at 4,500,000 (NT 2016: 8), the enduring opacity (for the general public) of the conservation process remains a major issue. It is in this context that Erica Avrami (2009) has called for a ‘new emphasis on the social processes of conservation’. John Schofield (e.g. 2014) has foregrounded the role of the expert in heritage, yet conservation practice remains largely expert-led, an increasing oddity in a climate of greater public participation (Orbaşlı 2017). The contested role of the expert is intimately connected with our understanding of the relative importance of ‘communal value’. William Morris, for all the radical polemic of the SPAB *Manifesto* ([1877] 2009), is representative of nineteenth-century attitudes in making no mention whatsoever of the local communities whose buildings he is pleading for.

Historic England defines communal value as deriving ‘from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory’, and includes within it commemorative, symbolic, social and spiritual values (HE 2008: 31–32). ‘Social value’ in particular has a large degree of overlap with communal or community value, and these terms are often used interchangeably. An AHRC-funded review of existing approaches to social value describes it as ‘fluid [and]

culturally specific', encompassing 'the ways in which the historic environment provides a basis for identity, distinctiveness, belonging, and social interaction' (Jones and Leech 2015: 5–6). In a subsequent development of that research, Siân Jones (2017: 22) notes that the conventional 'expert-driven' methodology often fails 'to capture the dynamic, iterative and embodied nature of people's relationships with the historic environment in the present' that constitute its social value. She goes further, questioning whether 'a value-based model, which inevitably tends to objectify and fix different categories of value, is even appropriate' (ibid.). Her solution is to add social research methods including qualitative interviews and focus groups to conventional practices; the argument of this thesis is that, while the problem is correctly diagnosed, a more radical solution is required.

Related to this question of how experts relate to communities, and one of the key issues for conservation, is the locus of culture. Much of the development of conservation had been driven in the nineteenth century in the service of competing nationalisms, and in the twentieth century by international charters, starting with the *Athens charter* (ICOMOS [1931] 2015); the development of World Cultural Heritage processes (UNESCO 2017) strengthened this further. A spectrum from the global, through the national, to the local can be identified. The word 'community' can be used of any and all points on that spectrum, which can also be mapped onto the Wellsian ethical terms discussed above, with the global approximating to the universal, and the local to the subversive.

Nineteenth-century nationalism had a very substantial role in the early days of conservation development, with historic buildings recruited to competing nationalist causes (Jokilehto 1999, Glendinning 2013). It was the mid-twentieth century disenchantment with nationalism after two world wars that led to the establishment of an international infrastructure, which in time produced the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972), with its notion of 'outstanding universal value'; it should be noted that this is 'from the point of view of history, art or science' (Art. 1) but not community, and that 'changing social [...] conditions' are seen as part of the problem (Preamble). This universalism involves a substantial claim:

What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.

(UNESCO 2017)

This ownership claim militates against localism, and has been criticised, for example with respect to the tradition of repainting Australian aboriginal rock art:

The phrase which seems to have acted like a bell on the Pavlovian dogs of the heritocracy is 'cultural heritage of all mankind' ...defining something as belonging to that transcendent category is a means of excluding anyone who might have a particular interest in it.

(Bowdler 1988: 521)

Melanie Hall demonstrates the less recognised internationalising factors in the development of historic preservation from 1870 onwards, arguing for a substantial overlap with national initiatives, and noting how substantial religious buildings were used to reimagine 'international romanticized-Christian communities' (2011: 7). While Chris Miele (2011) argues in the same volume that the idea of community underpins much heritage discourse, it is almost invariably the abstractions of an undifferentiated imagined form of universal community that is understood, while the local and particular is routinely overridden or ignored. Keith Emerick (2014) tells of how British heritage management in colonial Cyprus recognised that different communities have divergent readings of the cultural environment, but that this understanding never transferred into UK practice. He concludes that conservation professionals must "'trust" a community and let them deliver their own solutions', based on building 'the link between people, story and place' (2014: 226, 230); the expert thus becomes an 'enabler' (2014: 177). The linkage between story and place will become a major theme from Chapter 5 onwards.

Ioannis Poullos (2014) helpfully addresses the issues of change to historic structures in community ownership in the context of the cluster of monastic sites at Meteora in Greece. In his analysis, the material-based approach to conservation fails because it creates 'a form of discontinuity [...] between the monuments and the people, and between the past and the present' (Poullos 2014: 20). The subsequent values-based approach, while attempting to place community at the centre of the conservation process, does nothing to address this historical discontinuity, with the result that 'the aim of conservation remains the preservation of heritage, considered to belong to the past, from the people of the present, for the sake of the future generations (discontinuity)' (2014: 22). By contrast, Poullos demonstrates that *continuity* is 'the key concept for the definition of a living heritage site'; this he breaks down into the four criteria of continuity of function, continuity of the community's connection with the heritage site, continuity of care through communal management and ownership mechanisms, and continual change (within tradition) in the expression of heritage (2014: 115–119). Critical to the health of living heritage is the acknowledgement that community is differentiated not monolithic, and that the 'core community' has 'the primary role in the conservation process, while conservation professionals provide an

enabling framework of support, guidance and assistance to the core community' (2014: 130).

ICCROM's summary of living heritage reprises both this fourfold understanding of continuity and the role of the core community. As a process, living heritage

facilitates a community-led (bottom-up), interactive approach to conservation and management by: emphasizing a core community and their values (recognizing the hierarchy of values and stakeholders); recognizing change as inevitable; utilising traditional or established management systems.

(Wijesuriya 2015: 10)

ICCROM aims to build the skills capacity of communities, not simply to increase community participation in existing management structures, but to reframe the system as a whole around the people connected to the heritage, who are seen as integral to its conservation (Wijesuriya et al. 2017: 48). This 'people-centred' approach to conservation explicitly seeks to move beyond values-based conservation (2017: 40); while this is most welcome, little is said about what theoretical foundation might underpin and guide community involvement.

This thesis adopts a similar 'people-centred' approach, in an understanding of heritage that balances people and built fabric within a single, unified and indivisible whole. The thesis works from the experience of local church communities, and seeks both to establish a viable theoretical foundation for this approach and to consider its specific impact in a UK context. The criticism of the current values-based methodology is twofold. Firstly, since 'social/communal value' is believed, like all values, to be attached to the tangible heritage in question, it remains easily *detached* (or, more politely, bracketed). Secondly, the differentiation of community is inadequately acknowledged, which risks rendering the core community invisible. Thirdly, 'social value' is temporally confined, explicitly concerned only with the present-day iteration of the community (Jones 2017), thus raising the obvious objection as to why the views of any one particular manifestation of community at this one particular moment should take precedence, when by definition 'social value' is fluid. This leads to another preliminary definition, that of 'balanced heritage', which aims to address these shortcomings by demanding balance along the two axes indicated above by Poullos (2014: 20): firstly that a historic building is a cultural whole of building *and* community, and secondly that, rather than teetering on the knife edge of modernity's narrow present, it has an understanding of a broader present integrating elements of the past and future with an attendant implication of community as intergenerational. This latter aspect is explored further in Chapter 5.

1.2.4. Churches and the ecclesiastical exemption

Although there are clearly differences between the English parish churches considered in this research and Poullos's Greek monastic buildings or Wijesuriya's (2005, 2010) Asian Buddhist temples, all are examples of community-owned heritage and have many issues in common. While church congregations of any denomination can be described as the 'core community' for their historic building, the Church of England is unique in that the parish priest and bishop are responsible for the 'cure of souls' in their parish – that is, for everyone, regardless of religious affiliation (CofE 2017c). In a related sense, Roy Strong (2007: 233) refers to rural parish churches as 'truly democratic buildings, the meeting place of ordinary people through the ages'. The combination of historical and artistic importance with their role in the constitution of multiple expressions of community embodies the first of Historic England's conservation principles (HE 2008: 19), that 'the historic environment is a shared resource', and should position English parish churches centrally in the discussion of change in conservation.

Both the importance of and the financial challenges facing historic church buildings were acknowledged in the creation of the English Churches and Cathedrals Sustainability Review, instigated by George Osborne in his 2016 budget and chaired by Bernard Taylor. The terms of reference for the review (DCMS 2016) explicitly make the connection between the importance of church buildings – 'the jewel in the crown of our national heritage and repositories of the history of local communities' – and the fragility of their congregations, and states the Government's wish 'to open up these buildings for wider community, cultural and heritage use'. The Review's working group, with support from the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division of the Church of England (CCBD), Historic England, the HLF and DCMS, is charged with exploring new models of financing repairs and maintenance, as well as consulting on non-worship uses, the barriers that prevent these and the potential for church buildings to generate revenue. The consultation phase concluded in January 2017, and the report was due to be submitted in April 2017, though this was delayed until late 2017 by the 2017 General Election. The delay is perhaps also suggestive of both the breadth of interest in, and the complexity of, the issues involved.

That church buildings have different needs due to their ongoing use is also recognised in the separate ecclesiastical exemption system, which dates back to the early days of historic building legislation (Morrice 2009). Five denominations in England (plus the Church in Wales) currently enjoy the exemption; by virtue of the number and importance of the buildings in its care, the Church of England system is the most fully developed. Any Anglican congregation wishing to change their building is obliged to

seek the advice of their Diocesan Advisory Council (DAC) before applying to the chancellor, a specialist in ecclesiastical law (usually a barrister or judge), for approval; this is given in the form of a ‘faculty’ (Walter and Mottram 2015: 253–260; CBC 2015). Due to its legal basis, the system involves the arguing out of conservation principles in legal judgments which are both readily available and surprisingly accessible. It should be noted that the exemption is subject to periodic renewal, something of which those operating it – chancellors, DAC secretaries etc. – are acutely aware.

The faculty process must be at least as stringent as the secular system, and entails a wider scope of consultation (DCMS 2010: 7; Mynors 2016: 56). Applicants must consult Historic England and those of the six national amenity societies that are relevant; in the case of external changes to the building the normal planning process still applies. The Church Buildings Council (CCBD 2017c), a statutory body which produces guidance for the Church of England, also comments on proposals for more prominent buildings. An unofficial but necessary role played by every DAC, and at a national level by the CBC, is to educate and encourage church communities to engage with their buildings as an opportunity, rather than as a burden. The interrelation of heritage and community implicit in this process is explored further in Chapter 2.

The view of the exemption ‘from above’ – that is, the national view from the non-church conservation system – is often highly critical; it is seen as anomalous, the result of special pleading on the part of the Church, and ripe for repeal. By contrast, the view ‘from below’ in light of the preceding discussion is that the exemption does a better job of bringing the universal (safeguarded by a robust legal process) into dialogue with the local. Rob Lennox (2016: 51) cites the continuation of the ecclesiastical exemption as evidence of the lasting influence of the initial stage of conservation regulation; the view ‘from below’ would agree, in the sense that an alternative to the secular system is needed as much now as ever for dealing with living buildings.

The focus of the system is the individual DAC, which is responsible for applications within each diocese; since there are 41 dioceses, these equate very roughly to the size of a county. DAC membership is by invitation and is unpaid; at their best DACs offer an unbeatable range of knowledge and expertise, and combine the technical with the cultural/theological. How well the DAC works depends on the availability of that expertise, the quality of chairmanship, and the administrative efficiency of the secretariat. The CBC actively seeks to encourage common standards and working practices among DACs; a recent internal report found that while mission and development is widely supported, ‘Technical advisers are most prone to eclipsing the needs of the parish and asking for details without it being clear how the request will assist the parish’ (Appendix 9). The operation of the system as a whole also depends

on the capacity of church congregations, and specifically of clergy, who usually receive no input on buildings whatsoever during their ordination training.

In principle both secular and ecclesiastical systems combine national and (through Historic England guidance) international concerns with those of the locality. However, the secular system relies on local authority conservation officers who in straightened economic times find themselves increasingly beleaguered: staffing has decreased by a third since 2006 (Reilly 2016). Despite welcome attempts to formalise accreditation, it is a common complaint that some lack both skills and knowledge. Even when well qualified, there is often inadequate time to consider proposals properly, all of which pushes the default position for decisions away from the ‘making’ end of Insall’s spectrum towards the ‘keeping’. Worst of all, the conservation officer effectively stands alone as a gate-keeper, with neither democratic mandate nor accountability; where negotiation proves difficult, an applicant may find themselves caught between the rock of an undigested reflexive preservationism and the hard place of a lengthy and costly appeal.

The secular and ecclesiastical systems overlap when proposed work includes change to the exterior of a church building; in that case both the faculty system and the secular planning system apply. While the latter is in theory limited to external changes, the planning process can be used by an unsympathetic conservation officer as a means of obstructing what might to them seem unjustifiable internal work. Where Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is required, as was the case at Wymondham Abbey (considered in Chapter 3), the process is made more complex still by the need for DCMS approval. For this reason DACs often advise churches to first explore solutions within the existing footprint of their building in order to avoid these additional complexities.

It should also be noted that the Church of England’s faculty system goes beyond the requirements of the ecclesiastical exemption (DCMS 2010: 27–29), for example extending to a building’s furnishings; it also allows a party opponent such as an amenity society, parishioner etc. to appeal against the granting of faculty, something with no equivalent under secular legislation. Clearly neither system is perfect, and the implementation of both can be patchy. The key differentiators of the ecclesiastical system are the breadth of experience that can be drawn upon, the voice given to the ‘core community’ and the specifically Christian theological understanding of church buildings. When working as intended, it can be argued that the exemption offers broader lessons for conservation methodology, a theme returned to in Chapter 2.

1.3. COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES IN HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

As signalled at the outset, context is a central concern of this thesis; it is appropriate, therefore, to set the above discussion of people and change in conservation in the wider context of the adjacent disciplines of heritage and archaeology which, for better or worse, enjoy a more consistent and imaginative engagement with theory. This section briefly considers a number of areas of theoretical activity: firstly, the development of the sub-discipline of heritage studies and particularly its use of CDA; secondly, the emergence of landscape theory and the evocative idea of the palimpsest; thirdly, the example of the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab; and finally, the perennial interest in agency and the specific notion of material vitality. The aim is not to raid adjacent disciplines for theory that can be transposed onto conservation; rather it is to engage with those disciplines in order to develop a distinct but related body of theory appropriate to conservation.

1.3.1. Heritage and (critical) discourse

Alongside the development of a values-based conservation, the 1980s also saw the emergence of heritage studies as a separate sub-discipline within archaeology, dealing with the same material remains that are the concern of conservation, but within a quite different theoretical framework. Where the groundwork for conservation was laid in the nineteenth century when experts and public each 'knew their station', the emergence of heritage studies in a more postmodern context led to an inevitable unsettling of prevailing assumptions:

For heritage this meant a challenge, for example, to established views about how importance (and thus the status of preservation) is granted. The result was that not only established practices, but also their epistemological basis, were questioned and challenged.

(Carman & Sørensen, 2009: 17)

Conservation, for whatever reasons, has been slow to follow this postmodern lead; rather, the familiar focus on material authenticity and the art historical, now clothed in the language of significance, has endured.

The late geographer Denis Cosgrove addressed this same contrast when he criticised the preliminary paper of the 1992 Dahlem Workshop on Durability and Change, which had proclaimed

an urgent need to sustain our cultural heritage through preserving 'irreplaceable artefacts' of 'cultural value'. This phrasing already reifies culture, relating it through an art object to a set of shared, apparently authentic meanings whose canonical values and ideological significance are not so much taken for granted as simply unexamined. [...] Culture and

identity cannot be captured within an unproblematic concept of heritage, rather they are constantly invented and reinvented; they are mobile and subversive.

(Cosgrove 1994: 260)

This 'mobility' of heritage is consistent with, and a constituent part of, the idea of living buildings discussed in Section 1.1. That heritage might also be capable of 'subversion' will appear thrilling for some and profoundly alienating for others, depending perhaps on how much one has invested in heritage 'staying still' and 'doing what it's told', that is, the extent to which heritage remains 'obedient' to the norms and processes imposed upon it.

CDA is a sociopolitical approach which sees texts (broadly defined) as used by elite groups and institutions to claim and retain power (van Dijk 1993). The use of the label 'Critical' denotes a left wing lineage associated particularly with the Frankfurt School which, in distinction from other approaches, is concerned with human emancipation (Bohman 2016). For Norman Fairclough, a principal exponent, 'Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning' (Fairclough 1992: 64). Drawing on Fairclough and others, Laurajane Smith applied CDA to heritage, asserting its discursive nature:

There is, really, no such thing as heritage. [...] [T]here is rather a hegemonic discourse about heritage, which acts to constitute the way we think, talk and write about heritage. [...] [T]he 'work' that 'heritage' 'does' as a social and cultural practice is obscured, as a result of the naturalizing effects of what I call the 'authorized heritage discourse'.

(Smith 2006: 11)

In this way heritage is framed as inherently political, a question of who holds power in a given situation.

For Reiner Keller (2013: 27), 'Discourses count as ideological to the extent to which [...] they reinforce established social relationships of power and dominance.' Bringing together Keller's position with Smith's critique of AHD, the discourse of contemporary conservation is seen to be distinctly ideological in that, wittingly or otherwise, it reinforces the exercise of control over the historical environment. This, one suspects, would be sharply at odds with the self-image of most heritage professionals who, as Keith Emerick (2014: 11) observes,

believe that their work is 'for the nation' and defines a national story [and] would be aghast at the suggestion that professional expertise has been political and detrimental to communities' ownership of places. Rather than being people who could present a perspective on the past, the heritage experts have become its owners.

In principle Historic England's *Conservation principles* (2008), with its prominent inclusion of communal value, represents a major step towards inclusiveness; but, as will be observed in Chapters 2 and 3, principle is not always followed through in practice.

By merely bolting communal value onto the pre-existing structures, conservation appears cynically ideological, granting a little in order to deny the rest in a simultaneous act of welcome and exclusion.

This CDA-informed approach to the historic environment foregrounds the question of ownership. John Schofield's opening chapter to his edited volume on the role of the expert in heritage management addresses the inclusivity – or otherwise – of ownership, noting how non-experts 'often feel unconfident or unqualified to articulate views on the heritage they value' (2014: 1). Suggesting that the *Faro convention* – the *Framework convention on the value of cultural heritage for society* (Council of Europe 2005) – comes closest to an appropriate definition of inclusive heritage, he quotes from Robert Palmer's foreword to *Heritage and beyond*:

Heritage involves continual creation and transformation. We can make heritage by adding new ideas to old ideas. Heritage is never merely something to be conserved or protected, but rather to be modified or enhanced. Heritage atrophies in the absence of public involvement and public support. This is why heritage processes must move beyond the preoccupations of the experts in government ministries and the managers of public institutions, and include the different publics who inhabit our cities, towns and villages. Such a process is social and creative.

(Palmer, 2009: 8, cited in Schofield 2014: 8)

Here Palmer forcefully combines the idea that heritage is on the one hand by nature 'creative' – hence we should expect it to be 'modified' or 'enhanced' – and on the other 'social' and must remain rooted in the support and involvement of the public, without which it dies. The two issues of change and community involvement are thus intimately intertwined, and jointly inherent in cultural heritage. While the *Faro convention* has not been adopted in the UK, its ideas have nevertheless informed policy.

Another prevalent theme in heritage studies is the social construction of reality, for example implied in the view that 'all heritage [is] inherently intangible' (Smith 2006: 56). This is highly relevant to the reaction to change in the historic environment: if the significance of a 'historic asset' is socially constructed, then why should it not be reconstructed? In principle everything is changeable, culture is 'hypermutable'. For those from a conventional conservation background this is deeply suspect, and enough of a concern for many to dismiss heritage studies in its entirety. Mapping this onto the tripartite division of ethics mooted in Section 1.1.4, this is the meeting (and mutual incomprehension) of Well's universal and subversive approaches; again, the question is how to unite these incompatibles.

The social construction of reality is an activity that, by implication, happens only in the here and now; this neglects the temporal and intergenerational dimension, which provides a degree of boundedness to the fluidity of subversive ethics, and is inherent in

the third (virtue ethics) approach. ‘Tradition’, in G. K. Chesterton’s (1908) formulation, ‘is only democracy extended through time’, yet the commitments of a CHS approach mean that the relevance of tradition will either be missed, or ruled inadmissible. The past is acknowledged; in the context of discussing the social construction of cultural landscapes, Denis Byrne notes that ‘we in the present landscape are thus always in a form of contact with those who occupied it before us. Their presence interacts with our presence’ (Byrne 2008: 155), and that this is a process that inevitably involves interpretation. However Byrne considers this intergenerational aspect of heritage as limited to the living, that is, to current generations (2008: 162); an understanding such as Chesterton’s envisages an intergenerational dialogue between the present and the more distant past. This thesis follows Chesterton’s lead in treating tradition as itself discursive, an active conversation between the present and earlier generations, reaching back to antiquity. The nature of tradition and the role of hermeneutics is explored further in Chapter 4.

1.3.2. Field archaeology and the cultural landscape

A second rich area of overlap with the question of change to heritage is offered by landscape. At its simplest, landscape archaeology reflects a concern with what lies beyond a specific site (Johnson 2005: 156). This has value at a literal level in asserting the importance of physical context – now well recognised within conservation – but has also been much discussed at a more theoretical level through the notion of cultural landscapes, and therefore involving non-professional communities.

Since landscape belongs both to everyone and to no one, it offers a means of overcoming the democratic deficit that dogs conventional approaches such as Smith’s AHD. Noting that ‘landscape as a concept is also heavily democratic because landscape is everyone’s neighbourhood’, Graham Fairclough takes this as a mandate to call for ‘a greater inclusion of public and lay voices as well as expert and professional opinion’. (Fairclough 2008: 298). Further, landscape invites a holistic and synthetic approach to which non-professionals are naturally drawn:

”Real” people (“normal” people) automatically have a holistic view which specialists and experts sometimes have to struggle to re-discover. People do not readily divide the world, or heritage or landscape, into natural or cultural features, instead they think in terms of place or landscape.

(Fairclough 2008: 298–299)

This reference to the context-aware ‘place’ is typical of the landscape approach and contrasts with the more conventional concern with the defined site or monument. Place is central, for example, to the *Burra charter*, as noted, and to the influential Historic England (2000) report *Power of place*, which Fairclough coordinated; this criticises the

training of conservation officers for lacking ‘an understanding of historic landscape (which leads to buildings being considered in isolation from their setting)’ (HE 2000: 21). This indicates a significant difference between landscape and conventional conservation sensibilities, at both literal and figurative levels.

A great strength, therefore, of a landscape approach is that it involves communities from the outset, allowing access to an otherwise evasive holism which, as suggested above, cannot be delivered by a values-based approach which grafts communal value onto a pre-existing structure. Landscape is by its nature interdisciplinary, which fits well with the way heritage is managed; Castro et al. (2002: 133) note that landscape encourages interdisciplinary dialogue, thus resisting what they term ‘the increasing segmentation of scientific knowledge in present day academia’.

Fairclough characterises landscape (including urban townscape) as ‘a single complex artefact with a long history of change and continuity’ (2002: 31) offering a close parallel with many historic buildings. That complexity suggests that landscapes, and by extension buildings, can be read as texts. Daniels and Cosgrove (1987) observe John Ruskin’s focus on landscape as central to a social, political and environmental morality, and his treatment of it as a text, on the model of biblical exegesis, and in some sense therefore as sacred. They present landscape as iconographical, that is, primarily symbolic and cultural, as opposed to its typical treatment at the hands of human geographers as an empirical object of investigation. Theirs is an integrated view, seeing verbal, written and visual images not as ‘illustrations’ standing outside of culture, but as constitutive of its meanings. They note Erwin Panofsky’s reading of Gothic architecture as a form of text, indeed an ‘architectural scholasticism’ (1987: 3), noting his likening of iconography to ethnography, and the parallels in Clifford Geertz’s (1973) use of text as a metaphor for culture. The Renaissance emblem was an iconographically rich combination of text and image which embodied an often complex idea; this understanding was extended to the whole material world, for example as expressed by Francis Quarles in the seventeenth century:

Before the knowledge of letters, God was known by hieroglyphs, and indeed what are the heavens, the earth, nay every creature but hieroglyphics and emblems of his glory.

(in Vesely 2004: 222)

The idea that the natural world can be read as a book goes back to Konrad von Megenberg’s *Buch der Natur* ([C14] 2003) and beyond. But it was the archaeologist Osbert Crawford who first likened the landscape to a palimpsest, a parchment from which the text has been scraped or cleaned ready for reuse, a process which leaves traces of the earlier writing. For Crawford, human interventions in the landscape are

letters and words inscribed on the land. But it is not easy to read them because, whereas the vellum document was seldom wiped clean more than once or twice, the land has been subjected to continual change throughout the ages.

(Crawford 1953: 51)

It is interesting to note that the palimpsest metaphor deepens the resonance of the 'Anti-Scrape' label adopted by William Morris for SPAB, since the Greek root literally means 'again scraped'. The practice of scraping parchment arose because it was a valuable commodity in short supply, as is the landscape, suggesting that opposition to scraping in this metaphorical sense – such that old buildings should be left alone and new buildings built for contemporary needs – even *devalues* those old buildings in declaring them incapable of reuse.

In 1955 William Hoskins published *The making of the English landscape*, absorbing the metaphor of the palimpsest, but ignoring its theoretical context and Crawford's concern with time depth (Johnson 2007: 56). Hoskins established English local history as a formal academic discipline at the University of Leicester, and his interest remained the local understanding of particular places; this local focus led to accusations of nationalism (Johnson 2007: 128, 174). It is interesting to note that in the same year Hoskins's book was published, Nikolaus Pevsner delivered his Reith lectures on the 'Englishness of English art', which appeared in book form the following year (Pevsner 1956), and that many of the same criticisms were levelled at him. Hoskins was deeply distrustful of modernity, despairing of the way the landscape has been ravaged in the twentieth century, the 'barbaric England of the scientists, the military men and the politicians' (Hoskins 1955: 232). This is paralleled in Pevsner's resistance to modernist urban planning on Le Corbusier's model of the 'Functional City'; his 'Englishness argument' formed a part of this, while leaving him free to defend modernism in architecture.

The above two characteristics of landscape – its democratic character and its 'literary complexity' – combine to offer a quite different understanding of change:

The idea of cultural landscape has the concept of change (in the future as well as in the past) at its very heart. The idea that there are any landscapes where time has stood still, and history has ended, is very strange. No landscape, whether urban or rural, has stopped its evolution, no landscape is relict: it is all continuing and ongoing [...] The decision that each generation, including archaeologists has to make, is what will happen next to the landscape, and how it will be managed or changed.

(Fairclough 2002: 35)

The evocative word 'relict' is placed in opposition to continuity; it has the conventional meaning of remaining or surviving, and it is easy to see how on an antiquarian and preservationist view historic buildings could be described in such terms. But in the Latin the literal sense is 'that which is abandoned or left behind', suggesting that the choice

to treat buildings or landscapes as monuments is an active desertion. And the other, still current, meaning of 'relict' is a widow, signalling personal tragedy and the end of relationship.

Seeing landscape and change as inseparable, Fairclough (2003: 23) offers a holistic view:

The cultural landscape is central to the debate about managing change. It is entirely the product of change and of the changing interplay of human and natural processes; our intellectual and spiritual responses to it are ever-changing [...] Change, both past and ongoing, is one of its principal attributes, fundamental to its present character. There is no question of arresting change.

Change needs to be managed, however. Conservation should not merely be change's witness but a central part of its very process, the better to direct it sustainably.

Continued use of both landscapes and buildings is agreed to be desirable; Fairclough insists that this must be matched by an acceptance that 'a consequence of continued use is continued change' (2003: 24). He also argues that age is not a pre-condition of significance, and that the recently altered can be 'valuable and historically significant' (2002: 29, 30), a starkly different understanding both of what counts as historical and of significance than is typical in conservation. Finally a landscape understanding acknowledges that contemporary change can be beneficial in revealing previously hidden layers of the palimpsest, as for example when 'the construction of new roads and quarries revealed unknown archaeological sites' (Urtane & Urtans 2002: 179).

There are therefore significant differences of sensibility between conventional conservation and landscape archaeology but, while the parallel between landscape and buildings holds, it is difficult to base these differences in any question of principle. Where conservation grew from an antiquarian wish to 'arrest change', landscape archaeology has never claimed that the whole landscape should be preserved. The textual metaphor of the palimpsest of material traces has encouraged a multi-period model of investigation, with which conventional conservation should be comfortable. Yet much of the advocacy in the conservation process is periodised (four of the six national amenity societies) or follows the 'Great Man' approach to history (see Section 5.1.1). By contrast, landscape has a far stronger appreciation of communal authorship across time – thus recognising the interests of present and future generations – and the expectation of creative change; these themes will prove central to the later development of this argument.

1.3.3. The Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab

Siân Jones's (2004) report describing the tensions between professional orthodoxies and community ownership associated with the Hilton of Cadboll Pictish cross-slab provides an excellent case study which combines these aspects of ownership, 'social value' and landscape. Dating from around 800AD, the finely carved slab had been broken into three pieces. The upper part, with the majority of the fine carving, had been removed by the landowner to the grounds of Invergordon Castle in the mid-nineteenth century (Jones, 2004: 11–12); when the estate was sold in 1921, the stone was gifted to the British Museum, before being repatriated to the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) where it remains on prominent display. The second lower part of the main slab had been missing, until it was discovered during excavations in 2001. Heritage professionals claimed ownership under Treasure Trove and wished to remove it to the NMS for conservation and subsequent display. Locals, however, regarded the stone as very much theirs, indeed describing it in anthropomorphic terms as another member of the community, and were clear that it played an important role in the constitution of that community. As Jones (2004: 49) remarks,

the apparent dispute over ownership is far from a simple conflict over the possession of cultural property. 'Ownership' acts as an umbrella which embraces a diverse set of perceptions of, and relationships to, the monument.

While there are significant differences – most obviously its relative portability – here and elsewhere there are strong parallels with historic buildings in community ownership. The stone offers a powerful example of the way tangible heritage can be constitutive of community and identity, and something around which communal, family and individual stories are woven. Jones (2004: 63) notes how

In local discourse, the monument is symbolically conceived as a 'living thing' and its relationship to the community is defined in terms of an idiom of kinship and belonging. As such, an inalienable relationship of belonging is created between the cross-slab and Hilton as a community/place, and this provides the foundation for the monument's value in local contexts in terms of the 'making' of community and place.

Disruption of these ties can be highly destructive of the totality of a balanced heritage, but this is precisely what current conservation processes achieve through their implicit ownership claims. While buildings may be less easily removed physically from their communities, they can be, and commonly are, equally museumised through heritage processes. Jones does not attempt to challenge the values methodology, and nor does she have reason to, but notes that in practice artistic and historic values tend to eclipse social value because they are better established and academically more respectable (2004: 66).

1.3.4. Agency and material vitality

It is a commonplace of modernity to divide matter from life. The casting of the material world as inanimate is a natural corollary of the privileging of the human subject over against the objective world. These are perhaps the most basic of classifications for the modern mind, and ones we mostly take for granted. Nevertheless, they are being questioned: for example, Arjun Appadurai's exploration of the 'social life of things' (1986) marked for him the beginning of a continuing engagement with the idea 'that persons and things are not radically distinct categories' (Appadurai 2006: 15). The idea that objects mediate social agency has been developed further in anthropology and archaeology (e.g. Kopytoff 1986, Olsen 2003, Hodder 2007). The remainder of this section samples some alternative readings of the material world – alluded to above as 'disobedient' and by Jane Bennett (2010) as recalcitrant – that might fruitfully inform our approach to historic buildings.

Agency is widely acknowledged to be a fundamental theme for archaeology, but one by which different authors can mean quite different things (Gardner 2008). In describing the disputed relationship between people and material culture, Dobres and Robb (2000: 12) sketch out a theoretical spectrum from a view of agency as a question of intentionality in which 'the material world is created and manipulated by more or less freely acting individuals', to another in which 'meanings and values, histories and biographies, even personhood and agency can be attributed to material things' and our material culture therefore actively constructs us. In a very different context Winston Churchill captured these poles of possibility with the simple formulation, delivered during a debate on how to rebuild the Houses of Parliament after bomb damage, that 'We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us' (UK Parliament 23/10/1943). The first intentional approach operates within a modern paradigm and is concerned with individuality and the Marxian interplay of agency and structure; the second relational approach transgresses the limits of modernity and reflects a broader concern to challenge the watertight division between subject and object. Each, therefore, flows from a very different anthropology; it is the second pole that is of greater relevance to the themes of this thesis, and it is anthropologists who will be our guides.

The philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour suggests in his book *We have never been modern* (1993) that one founding characteristic of modernity is a dichotomy between the natural and social worlds, using Robert Boyle and his contemporary Thomas Hobbes as exemplars. This 'separation of powers' is part of what Latour terms the 'modern constitution' (1993: 13–48). Much is invested in clearing the ground

between the social and natural poles, through a work of ‘purification’; in our context, ideas of living buildings and personification discussed above involve an unconstitutional ‘deployment of networks’ (p. 49). In rewriting the constitution Latour suggests retaining from the premoderns

their obsessive interest in thinking about the production of hybrids of Nature and Society, of things and signs, their certainty that transcendences abound, their capacity for conceiving of past and future in many ways other than progress and decadence, the multiplication of types of nonhumans different from those of the moderns.

(Latour 1993: 133)

Latour refers to hybrid ‘quasi-objects’ (p. 51) that defy the modern dualism of Nature and Society.

Another anthropologist, Alfred Gell, framed the importance of a work of art not as a question of aesthetics or visual communication, but as what it *does* in the context of social relations. Like Latour, he explores ‘a domain in which “objects” merge with “people” by virtue of the existence of social relations between persons and things’ (1998: 12). For Gell, this is not agency in the sense of autonomous human agents, but ‘the kind of second-class agency which artefacts acquire once they become enmeshed in a texture of social relationships’ (1998: 17). Gell describes both the *oeuvre* of an artist and entire classes of art as ‘distributed objects’ which extend the agency of those that created them through time. Daniel Miller (2005: 13) registers this difference of approach, observing that

while Latour is looking for the nonhumans below the level of human agency, Gell is looking through objects to the embedded human agency we infer that they contain.

The particular case of the historic building produced over multiple generations is not considered by any of these authors but combines these notions of hybridity and the distributed object. In this light the treatment of objects as mere carriers for meanings attached by humans in the present – as, for example, envisaged by *Conservation principles* (HE 2008) – appears grossly simplistic. It is also wholly inappropriate to the subject matter, since it demands that the middle ground between people and objects is cleared of the hybridity that seems essential to the full understanding of living buildings.

The medieval world would have found modernity’s sharp distinction between people and things both strange and artificial. Caroline Walker Bynum (2001) has explored the prominence of hybridity and metamorphosis across the breadth of medieval culture; both, of course, are images of change and were matched by a complementary concern with identity, all of which are of relevance to this discussion. In her later *Christian materiality*, she describes the medieval understanding of matter as ‘by definition labile, changeable and capable of act’ (2011: 283). It is this *lability* – a

liability to change – that best sums up the difference between the medieval and modern assumptions about matter. Since the medieval world laid the foundation for the modern, this sharply different view is of relevance not only in a medieval context, but to the full range of contemporary discourse on material culture. While Bynum makes clear that she is not proposing a general theory of materiality, she does acknowledge the parallels with Latour, Gell, Miller and others (2011: 31). Similarly, the purpose of this present research is not to propose a comprehensive theory of material culture, but simply to point out how modernity's approach to the material world as a passive resource, an understanding shared by contemporary conservation practice, is so particularly ill-suited to dealing with the question of change to historic buildings, medieval or otherwise.

1.4. DESIGN OF THE THESIS

1.4.1. The research question, and four key principles

The broad aim of this research project is an exploration of the links between current conservation processes in England, and the outcomes of those processes for buildings in communal ownership, and particularly churches. Underlying the project is an understanding that the 'core' communities (Poulios 2014) that use and care for historic churches, far from being of peripheral concern, are an integral and essential part of what makes them heritage, that is, what makes them worthy of interest, care and protection. Since to date there has been little research into the impact of conservation processes on the communities that find themselves responsible for historic buildings, this project considers how such buildings bear meaning, examines the nature of the conflict between various groups that make claims over them, and explores whether there might be alternative mechanisms that might better ensure their long term health.

Central to this research is the exploration and critique of the interpretative framework concealed beneath the surface of the conservation process, including its official textual expressions. As discussed, much work in Critical Heritage Studies covers similar themes of the disconnect between communities' views of heritage and official structures and processes, aiming to reveal the power relations latent within those structures and processes. What it does not do (nor seek to do) is to explicate the practical outworking of this disconnect in the operation of the prevailing conservation methodology. This is both my professional focus, and the place at which the future shape of many important historic buildings is decided. Compared to the AHD approach (Smith 2006), this thesis therefore follows a complementary but distinct trajectory from a similar point of departure, but taking a broader theoretical sweep, and returning to a more specifically targeted destination.

This research aims to address the central question of change in historic settings, and specifically how living historic buildings should be conserved. This is approached through four distinct themes that run through this thesis:

- How robust is the distinction between monuments and **living buildings**, and in practice who observes it?
- If living buildings are to be allowed to change, then on what grounds can conservation professionals and others distinguish **good change** from bad?
- What resources might a pre-modern understanding of **tradition** bring to conservation, and how might those resources inform how change is approached?
- How do people and built heritage interrelate; specifically, what do we mean by **community**, and how might a tradition-centred approach inform questions of public participation?

These four aspects, taken together, have potentially significant implications for conservation; what, then, would a tradition-centred approach to conservation look like for professionals and for the public?

1.4.2. Chapter structure and methodological overview

The synthetic approach introduced at the beginning of this chapter requires a diversity of methodologies, and these are outlined in the chapter structure below. Because they are diverse, further detail of the methodologies is distributed through the thesis, appearing in the first sections of Chapters 2, 3 and 6 respectively; supporting material for the methodologies used in Chapter 3 and 6 appears in Appendix 1 and 6.

In terms of its overall design, this thesis divides into two halves. The first half surveys the current state of conservation, starting with the forces that shape the conservation process and the often unacknowledged theoretical understanding that undergirds it, and then looking at the impact of those forces on communities through case study examples. The second half then attempts to build an alternative framework that addresses some of the identified contradictions. Accordingly, the thesis widens into a theoretical discussion of an alternative philosophical foundation, before exploring the practical implications of this alternative foundation. Finally, some possible avenues of future research are sketched out.

Chapters 2 and 3 address the contemporary practice of the conservation system in England as it relates to church buildings, not only by looking at its official operation, but also crucially at how that process is experienced by non-professionals. Chapter 2 takes a critical look at the mechanics of the current system from the ‘top down’,

considering the way conservation is described and enacted through a discourse analysis of four documents of particular relevance to church community projects. The documents are of three contrasting genres, from free-flowing polemic, through national guidance, to closely argued legal judgment. While not exhaustive, when taken together these documents mark out the intellectual territory within which conservation currently operates, and establish the character of contemporary conservation discourse. The aim of the analysis is in each case to identify the understanding of the nature of historic buildings and the possibility for their change, and the role allotted to communities in decisions over those proposed changes.

Chapter 3 is devoted to an exploration of the experience of the conservation process by church communities and provides the 'bottom up' view of the current system. Initially questionnaire-based quantitative research across one or more dioceses of the Church of England was considered but, since an understanding that conservation is as much a cultural as a technical phenomenon is central to this research, it was decided that qualitative interviews would allow for the uncovering of more nuanced and reflective responses. As Jennifer Mason (2002: 15) observes,

cultural values submit to quantification only fitfully and inadequately. Qualitative research methods, ranging from narratives and analyses written by experts to interviews of ordinary citizens, elicit cultural values more effectively.

The decision was therefore taken to focus more closely on a handful of specific churches with first hand experience of attempting to implement change to their buildings.

A tighter focus within a single diocese would also allow for the reflection on different outcomes within the same administrative context. The Diocese of Norwich was chosen since I could expect to be unknown to interviewees in the church communities, for its concentration of fine medieval buildings listed grade I or grade II*, and because it was reasonably accessible for multiple visits. In discussion with Matthew McDade, the DAC Secretary, the diocesan archive was examined and a sample of five churches that have proposed significant change within the last ten years was chosen. In each case, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with specific people, including the incumbent, one or more lay members, and in two cases, the architect. The aim was to uncover the attitudes and beliefs which might not appear in written form but which nevertheless endure within the community, and what lessons the various participants believed should be drawn from the process. In conjunction with these interviews, the analysis from Chapter 2 facilitated a review of the written representations of stakeholders in the case study examples to see how these themes are manifest. During the course of the research (and partly because of it) I was appointed to the CBC; our

national casework has both broadened my overview and furnished further challenging case studies, one of which is discussed in Section 5.4.2.

Conservation, like any other cultural area, cannot fail to express theoretical themes, and yet few practitioners give conservation theory much consideration. Chapters 4 and 5 therefore consider some philosophical approaches relevant to the practice of conservation, and to our relationship to the past. Clearly this research is not primarily philosophical; rather it aims to place the concerns of change in conservation within a broader theoretical context, and to see what resources philosophy can bring to bear on those issues.

Central to conservation is an understanding, or arguably a misunderstanding, of tradition. Conservation is concerned with the well-being of the material production of 'traditional' cultures, yet the practices of conservation are a product of modernity. Since modernity is principally concerned, from its roots in the Enlightenment, with the overthrow of tradition this presents a profound irony at the heart of conservation that demands theoretical exploration. The particular case of the conservation of non-traditional buildings such as modernist architecture is the exception that proves the rule, not least since, as is argued below in Chapter 4, such areas of modern culture effectively (if ironically) operate as traditions. The philosopher Alasdair McIntyre (1985, 1988, 1990) provides one of the most cogent reflections on the nature and role of tradition, exploring some of the resources offered by pre-modernity that may be of use to us today, and connecting tradition to practices and narrative. Writing at a similar time, Paul Ricoeur (1984, 1985, 1988) explores the relation of temporality and narrative. These two linked themes of tradition and narrative form the focus of Chapters 4 & 5 respectively. Given this broad concern with the interrelation of theory and practice, the approach taken is an unapologetically hermeneutic one. This focus on interpretation, far from marking a retreat into the abstractions of philosophy, represents an insistence that practice and theory should be mutually engaged and constantly informing one another.

Thus, while the development of an alternative theoretical foundation for conservation is one of the principal aims of the research, it is also hoped to go further and trace the impact such an alternative foundation would have on the practice of conservation. Given that projects for substantial change to church buildings typically take a minimum of five years from inception to completion, it would clearly be unrealistic within the scope of this research project to develop a methodology and then trial it in its entirety over the lifetime of even one sample project. Chapter 6 therefore explores alternative modes of application of the theoretical work in three distinct ways and for three audiences: firstly, some central questions of concern to conservation professionals are reconsidered; secondly, the central themes are expressed in polemic

in the form of a new manifesto for the conservation of living buildings; and thirdly they are applied for church communities in the form of a booklet on change to historic church buildings. Further consultation is undertaken on the second and third of these, and the responses discussed.

As indicated at the outset, while church buildings form the locus of investigation, the case is made in Chapter 7 that the research has much broader application. The ground covered is reviewed and priorities established for taking forward this proposed approach, including its application to conservation as a whole. The conclusion of the project is thus characterised by the same proximity of theory and practice that was present in its inception. In design, the research is circular in structure, moving from a practical question encountered in professional life, via the current methodology, to theoretical concerns, and back via a proposed theoretical foundation to the outlines of an alternative praxis. Taken as a whole, therefore, this research reflects Hans-Georg Gadamer's ([1960] 1989: 324) view, in the context of ethics (in our case of conservation) as a 'model of the problem of hermeneutics', that 'application is neither a subsequent nor merely an occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but co-determines it as a whole from the beginning'.

2. Heritage as discourse: the use of words and the wielding of power

The language of birds is very ancient, and, like other ancient modes of speech, very elliptical : little is said, but much is meant and understood.

Gilbert White (1789: 240)

This chapter considers four documents of particular relevance to the way the current processes of conservation in England deals with historic church buildings. While not exhaustive, these four have been chosen because between them they account for the principal features of the terrain which church communities must negotiate if their buildings are to be allowed to change. The four documents are of deliberately contrasting genres, as follows:

- a. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings *Manifesto* ([1877] 2009) was William Morris's response to nineteenth-century restoration. As discussed in Section 1.2.1, the *Manifesto* articulates a preservationist approach to change; the document is held in great affection by many in conservation, and retains significant influence;
- b. Historic England's *Conservation principles, policies and guidance* (2008), which condenses current professional orthodoxy and therefore provides an overall framework for conservation practice in an English (and to some extent broader) context;
- c. Historic England's document on *New work in historic places of worship* (2nd ed., 2012), which provides sector-specific guidance; and
- d. *Re St Alkmund, Duffield* (1 October 2013), the judgment in the Court of Arches which provides the framework for the determination of faculty applications by diocesan chancellors.

Through analysing these four documents it is hoped to establish the hidden implications of the current system for the process of change to historic buildings. To reveal that which is hidden or taken for granted not only requires close attention to what is written, but also a reading between the lines, that is, attention to what is not written. As discussed in Section 1.3.1, proponents of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) such as

Norman Fairclough and Tuen van Dijk suggest it is possible to uncover buried ideological structures that are (at least partially) determinative of the outcomes of those processes. While adopting a different methodology, this chapter similarly aims to undertake an ‘archaeology’ of conservation discourse. Of the four documents, greatest attention is paid to the *Duffield* judgment; this illustrates the application of the current discourse to a specific faculty case and, through the framework it created, continues to exert a significant influence over the Anglican system of ecclesiastical exemption.

Todd Gitlin, in his reflection on the mass media response to the anti-Vietnam War protests, coined the term ‘media frame’ to denote the ‘largely unspoken and unacknowledged’ structures that ‘organise the world’, both for journalists and thence for the general public (Gitlin 1980: 7). Gamson and Lasch describe a methodology of ‘signature elements’ for analysing what they term ‘media packages’, including framing devices that ‘suggest a framework within which to view the issue [such as] metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images’ (1980: 4). While conservation literature is not overtly journalistic, this idea of media frames or packages can profitably be applied to the diverse examples examined in this and the next chapter. The aim is to identify the often unspoken ideas that animate current conservation discourse and on which it bases its legitimacy, and to reflect on how consistent these are with the requirements of a conservation of living buildings.

At the end of the previous chapter four distinct aspects of the central question of how living historic buildings should be conserved were identified. Working within these four themes, the analysis which follows seeks indications, both overt and covert, of the following key issues:

- i. with respect to the recognition of **living buildings** as distinct from monuments, where the importance of a historic building is understood to lie, and the robustness, or vulnerability, of that importance;
- ii. with respect to **change**, firstly whether, and if so how, the terms ‘change’ and ‘harm’ are differentiated or conflated; and secondly, whether the importance of the building is seen as fixed or mutable, and if mutable whether it is possible to enhance that importance;
- iii. with respect to **tradition**, the sense of continuity (or otherwise) between past, present and future; that is, how buildings relate to the tradition that created them, and whether that tradition is understood to be dead or, conversely, ongoing;
- iv. and with respect to **community**, what understanding, if any, is shown of the link between historic buildings and their communities; and, perhaps most

importantly, the extent and nature of non-professional participation allowable within the process, particularly for the core communities that use and care for historic buildings.

It will be noted that the description of these four issues avoids the use of the word ‘significance’, which features prominently in the current methodology, most obviously in Historic England’s *Conservation principles* (2008). Along with the broader methodology, the term itself is the subject of critical examination, and it is therefore felt helpful to differentiate the formal and the everyday uses of the term. To preserve this distinction, less freighted terms such as ‘importance’ and ‘worth’ are used, both here and throughout the thesis, to indicate that less official sense.

2.1. THE SPAB MANIFESTO

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) is an important and animating force for good in conservation, not least for historic churches, through programmes such as ‘Faith in Maintenance’ and ‘Maintenance Cooperatives’ (SPAB 2017a, 2017b). The importance of its founding *Manifesto*, principally the work of William Morris ([1877] 2009), extends far beyond its original nineteenth-century context; it has endured not least due to its clever use of genre to frame the argument. It remains a central point of reference for the organisation (and one to which members are still required to assent) and, as John Earl (2003: 62) suggests, its underlying thinking is evident in the subsequent development of international policy, such as the *Venice charter* (ICOMOS 1964). The thrust of the document is clear: the nineteenth century is unable to change historic buildings without despoiling them: ‘Our ancient buildings [are] monuments of a bygone art [...] that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying.’ If an ancient church ceases to meet a congregation’s needs another should be built rather than change the old one.

Morris’s attack is focused on the ‘strange and most fatal idea’ of restoration, particularly of historic churches. His polemic is a broadside against a nineteenth-century romantic approach which failed to recognise historical distance and imagined that a nineteenth-century modern could compose a sixteenth-century sonnet or build a thirteenth-century church just as authentically as his predecessors, provided he learned the appropriate style for its composition. Morris had good grounds for opposing this naïve vision of effortless cultural continuity, which facilitated the worst excesses which SPAB was established to counter. In this sense he understands tradition; recalling previous centuries, even the seventeenth and eighteenth, he sees that ‘every change, whatever history it destroyed, left history in the gap’. In similar vein he claims that the restorers

have no guide but each his own individual whim to point out to them what is admirable and what contemptible; [which] compels them [...] to supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done.

This key framing image offers an astute observation of the role a tradition should play, but which Morris believes it no longer can.

But in avoiding the first trap of a simplistic cultural continuity Morris falls into the next, by positing a radical *discontinuity*. His approach is consistent with modernity's broader opposition to tradition, which he declares irretrievably lost: these buildings were 'created by bygone manners', architecture has 'died out', and constructive and historically literate change to historic buildings is therefore now impossible. The reference throughout the *Manifesto* is to *ancient* buildings. Current conservation usage, perhaps following Morris, generally restricts 'ancient' to monuments, while buildings are termed 'historic'. The former suggests otherness and the latter continuity: it is possible to 'make history' but not to create age. Morris talks of 'the living spirit' of those buildings which 'was an inseparable part of that religion and thought, and those past manners', but regards all these as gone for good. Morris's skilful choice of vocabulary is integral to the persuasiveness of his argument.

The church communities that continue to care for these buildings would most likely disagree both with his prescription and its underlying secularism, but if they wish to counter Morris they will need not only to challenge the appeals to principle on which his argument is based but also its polemical form and framing imagery. In the context of Morris's later novel *News from nowhere* ([1890] 2009), Miles Glendinning (2013: 123) notes that his utopianism 'elaborated the animistic stream of thought developed by Ruskin, sacralising and attributing a quasi-eternal life to the monument'. Redefining historic buildings as holy on account of their agedness is a continuation and heightening of the separation that Choay (2001) had observed taking place a century earlier, as noted in Section 1.2.1. Paul Ricoeur, in discussing the abuse of memory, emphasises the excesses of commemoration 'which attempt to fix the memories in a kind of reverential relationship to the past' (Ricoeur 1999: 9). The language of reverence and ecstasy seen, for example, in the *Venice charter* and in many present-day consultation comments, testifies to the enduring influence of Morris's approach.

The *Manifesto* explains how and why the newly created Society seeks to protect ancient buildings. In presenting their 'official guardians' – that is, the architectural profession – as the principal source of threat, the text can be read as a radical rebalancing away from experts in favour of community interest; greatly to SPAB's credit, this facilitation of the non-professional care of historic buildings is promoted to this day, as discussed. But, at least within the terms used in the *Manifesto*, that rebalancing is

not towards the community as representatives of an ongoing tradition, but the community as a caretaker that should do no more than 'stave off decay by daily care', in Morris's enduringly resonant catch-phrase. It should be noted that the only reference to non-professionals is to 'the public generally', rather than the specific communities associated with particular buildings, who are at best deemed an irrelevance, and at worst complicit in the destruction the Society has been created to resist.

Asking which buildings merit protection, Morris answers:

anything which can be looked on as artistic, picturesque, historical, antique, or substantial: any work, in short, over which educated, artistic people would think it worth while to argue at all.

This places the focus exclusively on the architectural and the ancient, or in contemporary conservation terms on the aesthetic, historical and evidential; what gets no mention is the communal. The omission is reinforced by the appeal to the taste of 'educated, artistic people', suggesting that only an elite minority is capable of understanding the importance of historic buildings. We should not be anachronistic in our criticism of Morris, who in this reflects his times. Rather we should note how this Victorian understanding retains its normative power, for example with 'architectural or historical interest' as the sole criteria for statutory listing in England (s7, Planning Act 1990). For better or worse, it is testament to the efficacy of the *Manifesto* that it continues to influence conservation to the present day.

2.2. CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

The next two sections consider two key pieces of conservation literature issued by Historic England ('HE'), the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment, together with the legal framework that applies to churches. The first document, *Conservation principles* (HE 2008), sets out the methodological framework within which the competing requirements of what are often complex and multi-layered buildings can be negotiated. The document is principally intended to describe best practice for Historic England staff, but also addresses a wider audience, including non-professionals (HE 2008: 1, 67). Sandy Bruce-Lockhart's foreword has some of the same impassioned feel as the SPAB *Manifesto*, in this case arguing for 'constructive conservation' and positioning *Conservation principles* as a 'progressive framework for managing change in the historic environment' (HE 2008: 1). Four principal aspects of the document are considered: values, harm, enhancement and 'constructive conservation' itself.

2.2.1. Values

Conservation principles introduces community interests into the conservation process through a values system directly modelled on the *Burra charter* (Australia ICOMOS 2013). The document identifies four classes of values: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal; all may be relevant to extant church buildings. The obvious innovation is the inclusion of communal value, a subset of which is spiritual value (paras 59–60). However, the understanding of spiritual value is a generalised one, focusing on ‘places sanctified by longstanding veneration or worship’, or ‘wild places with few obvious signs of modern life’ (para. 60). No mention is made of churches or similar bodies as living communities.

Paragraph 31 stresses that all the values that contribute to a building’s significance should be considered, even when one or more predominate. With the inclusion of communal value, significance has clearly been widened from the focus on architectural and historical interest seen in the legislation, with communities, at least in principle, being given a voice. This is consistent with the first two of six principles (para. 3), that ‘the historic environment is a shared resource’, and that ‘everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment’.

A value is defined as ‘an aspect of worth or importance, here attached by people to qualities of places’ (HE 2008: 72). It should be noted that the later *New work* (HE 2012), considered in the next subsection, avoids any mention of values being ‘attached’ to aspects of the building; by contrast, this language is adopted throughout *Conservation principles*, seemingly at every opportunity. This difference may simply be because the documents serve different purposes, or perhaps it indicates a partial retreat from the idea of values attachment. One implication of values attachment is that meaning is socially constructed, which would indeed concern many conservation professionals, perhaps suggesting a radical undermining of expert opinion.

2.2.2. Harm and change

‘Harm’ is defined as ‘change for the worse’, thus differentiating between harm and change *per se*. The distinction of harm from change runs through the entire document. For example:

A “presumption in favour of preservation” (doing no harm), even preservation of evidential value, does not equate to a presumption against any intervention into, or removal of, existing fabric; but such interventions require justification in terms of impacts on heritage values.

(HE 2008: para. 145)

Change is acknowledged as being

inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effect on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is eroded. (HE 2008: para. 84)

Given that significance is defined as ‘the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place’ this is highly relevant, suggesting that there is no harm if the *balance* of the impact on values, including communal value, is not negative. This question of ‘harm on balance’ also features in the *Duffield* judgment, considered below.⁴

By contrast, the ease with which harm can be conflated with change is illustrated by the introduction to one of Historic England’s own research priorities, historic interiors in places of worship:

Alterations to interiors, including seating and other potentially significant fixtures and fittings are commonplace and there is considerable risk of attritional or gradual loss and erosion of historic fabric and character.

(HE 2017)

Character here is clearly framed in terms of fixity and vulnerability, with no mention of its mutability or possible enhancement, and this is reflected in the aesthetic-historical focus of many of the contributions to the conference around which this was centred (University of Leicester 2015).

Conservation is defined in Principle 4.2 (HE 2008: 42) as:

the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

Management is clearly not the same as minimisation. Read against an understanding of heritage that integrates past, present and future, this definition allows that *too little* change might be as damaging as too much. This is elaborated in paragraph 84, which states that conservation ‘may simply involve maintaining the status quo, intervening only as necessary to counter the effects of growth and decay, but equally may be achieved through major interventions; it can be active as well as reactive’ (2008: 43). Paragraph 86 shows an understanding that many historic buildings are richly layered: ‘Owners and managers of significant places should not be discouraged from adding further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process’ (2008: 43).

Ensuring that heritage values are not compromised is central to the conservation process – hence the central importance of the statement of significance (HE 2008: 72). However, given that values are ‘attached by people to qualities of places’ (ibid.), agreement may be elusive, with expert opinion deployed on opposing sides of what

⁴ It appears in relation to the ‘composite question’ at paragraph 60.

may be an essentially *political* argument over significance. Paragraph 44 states that ‘historical values are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated or concealed them, although completeness does tend to strengthen illustrative value’. This suggests that some values are more robust than others; presumably the argument is that a surviving fragment sustains historical value of the original better than it would, for example, evidential value.

2.2.3. Enhancement and future heritage

Conservation principles makes it clear that preservation is not enough. Under the umbrella of the objective of sustaining (rather than preserving) heritage values, paragraph 25 draws on the Planning Act 1990 to introduce the idea that the historic environment can be *enhanced*:

In managing significant places, ‘to preserve’, even accepting its established legal definition of ‘to do no harm’, is only one aspect of what is needed to sustain heritage values. The concept of conservation area designation, with its requirement ‘to preserve or enhance’, also recognises the potential for beneficial change to significant places, to reveal and reinforce value. ‘To sustain’ embraces both preservation and enhancement to the extent that the values of a place allow. Considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places, as well as generating the need to protect their established heritage values. It is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment.

(HE 2008: 15)

Not only can the historic environment be enriched, the aspiration to do so in each generation is acknowledged and validated. This is wholly incompatible with the SPAB *Manifesto*, and it seems the distinction endures, with Douglas Kent (2011) restating that SPAB ‘takes issue with the notion that [the significance of a historic building] can be “enhanced”’. It is also worth remembering that the Planning Act 1990 makes no reference to ‘conservation’ other than to ‘conservation areas’, and when discussing listed buildings speaks only of their ‘preservation’ (e.g. Section 16 (2)), a further indication of the continuing influence of the SPAB *Manifesto*. *Conservation principles* stands in marked contrast to that nineteenth-century understanding.

In the section on ‘New work and alteration’ (paras 138–148) there is further recognition of the importance of continued cultural production, very much including in historic settings:

The recognition of the public interest in heritage values is not in conflict with innovation, which can help to create the heritage of the future. Innovation is essential to sustaining cultural values in the historic environment for present and future generations.

(HE 2008: 58)

This notion of ‘future heritage’ again suggests an understanding of temporal continuity between generations. Elsewhere we are instructed that proposals should be ‘designed

not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future' (para. 138.d), in further recognition that living buildings will continue to change.

Behind this openness to (considered) change is an understanding of the sustaining of heritage as an ongoing cultural production. The penultimate concluding paragraph warns that if the 'constantly changing' historic environment

is not sustained, not only are its heritage values eroded or lost, but so is its potential to give distinctiveness, meaning and quality to the places in which people live, and provide people with a sense of continuity and a source of identity.

(HE 2008: 67)

'Communal value' is the key to sustaining heritage, and arguably is the centre around which the whole of *Conservation principles* revolves. The historic environment helps determine the character of 'the places in which people live', and roots people with a sense of 'continuity' and 'identity'. We can therefore say that to obstruct considered change is to undermine community and threaten the survival of the historic environment, which is meaningless and void without people to animate it.

The question of tradition is not directly addressed by the document, though contemporary cultural production seems to be assumed to be continuous with both past and future in an unproblematic manner. Most references to 'tradition' are adjectival (e.g. 'traditional materials'), though cultural heritage is defined as 'inherited assets [identified and valued] as a reflection and expression of [...] evolving knowledge, beliefs and traditions' (2008: 71). The idea that an explicit understanding of how tradition works might inform conservation as the management of the objects of tradition is, however, entirely absent. Chapter 4 below discusses how tradition is central to the sense of continuity that *Conservation principles* describes, and Chapter 5 goes on to consider the role narrative plays in shaping identity.

2.2.4. Constructive and destructive conservation

As touched on above, Sandy Bruce-Lockhart's foreword places *Conservation principles* under the banner of 'constructive conservation'. It is difficult to imagine anyone choosing to adopt the opposite label of 'destructive conservation', and yet the possibility that what is done in the name of conservation could be *actively destructive* must be faced; we well know that good intentions are no guarantee of good outcomes, and a system built on unstable theoretical foundations may indeed have negative consequences which must be considered.

It is this that makes the differentiation of harm and change so critical. To conflate the two is to claim, to paraphrase architect Mies van der Rohe's slogan, that 'Less

[change] is more' (Johnson 1947: 49) – and presumably no change is best of all.⁵ This is the logic of minimal intervention, a doctrine articulated in the SPAB *Manifesto* and still influential today. By contrast, following the framing of conservation as applied ethics in Section 1.1.4, Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics* positions virtue in the 'golden mean' between two extremes – for example the virtue of courage lying between the vices of recklessness (the extreme of excess) and cowardice (the extreme of deficiency). We can plot a similar tripartite structure onto conservation, labelling the extremes 'All Change' (such as the claimed excesses of Victorian restoration) and 'No Change' (Morrisian preservation) respectively. In defining conservation as the management of change, *Conservation principles* seeks this golden mean.

Thus framed, each extreme represents an equal and opposite vice. And if communities are regarded as central to conservation, then *both* extremes represent a 'destructive conservation'. Framing an ethical issue merely as an opposition between two poles – past versus future, preservation versus development – undermines the centre ground which should be our focus and goal, in this case occupied by those often fragile communities seeking to 'change well'. The conflation of change and harm, one hallmark of this 'bipolarity', can indeed be seen in many stakeholder responses, including in the *Duffield* judgment considered below and the case study examples in the next chapter.

2.3. SECTORAL GUIDANCE AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Alongside its more general guidance, Historic England also produces sector-specific documents, applying the general principles to more specific building types and situations. This section considers *New work in historic places of worship* (HE 2012; hereafter '*New work*'), which is particularly relevant for our discussion, before turning to the legislative background.

2.3.1. Change and harm

New work starts with reference to places of worship as living buildings:

[Historic England] believes that this country's historic places of worship should retain their role as living buildings at the heart of their communities. We want to help congregations accommodate changes that are needed to achieve this, in ways which will sustain and enhance the special qualities of their buildings.

(HE 2012: 1)

The criteria for acceptable change are that 'successful schemes of new work come from a shared understanding of, and respect for, both the cultural significance of the

⁵ The phrase seems to come from Robert Browning's poem 'Andrea del Sarto (known as "The Faultless Poet")', line 78 (Browning 1855).

building and the needs of its users' (ibid.). Clearly the intention is that both the inherited cultural significance and the current needs should together determine contemporary interventions.

In contrast to the first edition of *New work* (HE 2003), which predated *Conservation principles* (HE 2008), the current, second edition adopts the language of significance and values. The introduction welcomes 'proposals for appropriate additional uses and new facilities such as kitchens and toilets which will help to sustain these important parts of our heritage in use' (HE 2012: 1). Responsibility for the determination of the appropriateness of proposed change is undefined, but the focus is on keeping churches in use as places of worship, with a clear understanding of 'the threat posed by closure to the special architectural and historic interest of the buildings' (ibid.). Safeguarding architectural and historic interest is the principal concern of the process, with the continuity of use and consequent survival of a church community as a means to that higher end. 'Harm' is mentioned in an inset box summarising four 'General Principles', but again this harm is restricted to the material fabric, with an expectation of 'public benefits, such as securing the long-term use of the building, which outweigh any harm to significance' (ibid.).

The chapter makes clear that 'Listing does not freeze a building at a point in time' (HE 2012: 2), a pivotal theme in the *Duffield* judgment, as seen below. *New work* then states that

Understanding *significance* – all the things that are special about the building in terms of its architectural, historic, archaeological or artistic interest – will help to identify where change can be made without harm [...] Any harm [...] needs to be weighed against any public benefits the proposal will bring.

(HE 2012: 2; emphasis original)

Change is thus clearly differentiated from harm, though one could still insist on the avoidance of harm by limiting change to those aspects of the building that lack significance. Significance is defined in a narrow sense similar to the way the Planning Act 1990 is focused on 'buildings of special architectural or historic interest'. The notion of public benefit that may 'outweigh', and therefore compensate for, harm is now firmly established in the literature. It was absent from the first edition of *New work* (HE 2003), and from the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules (hereafter FJR) 2000, but within a short space of time appears in the NPPF (DCLG 2012), the second edition of *New work*, the FJR 2013 (see below) and the now widely cited *Duffield* judgment examined in the next section.

2.3.2. Significance and enhancement

Chapter 1 of *New work* contains the key content addressing how the importance of historic buildings is judged, particularly in the sections on identifying significance and

determining need (HE 2012: 3–4). Significance is framed more broadly than as quoted from page 2 above, listing ‘relevant aspects’ as typically including community, setting, site, architectural and historical development, fabric (i.e. the ‘material substance’ of which the building is formed) and furnishings. The status of these six ‘aspects’ is unclear, since this is not a simple restatement of the four classes of values from *Conservation principles* (HE 2008). And while one can map that list of values onto these aspects, the ordering is different; in particular, the placing of ‘community’ at the head of this list is interesting. The remaining five items follow a logical progression of scale from landscape/cityscape to furniture, which perhaps suggests that the sole ‘intangible’ aspect (a potentially provocative word already used on page 2) has the broadest scope and scale. Since placing it at the end of the list after ‘furnishings’ would certainly have given it a lower status, promoting it to the top of the list arguably frames it as ‘first amongst equals’.

The possibility of the *enhancement* of a historic building is absent from the first edition (HE 2003), except with respect to the positive features of its setting, implying that any change to the building’s significance can at best be neutral. The idea of enhancement appears in this and three other places in the second edition (HE 2012) including the ‘entrepreneurial’ suggestion under the heading ‘determining need’ that ‘some new work will help to enhance or better reveal the significance of an historic place of worship or will be neutral in its effects’ (2012: 4). The phrase ‘to enhance or better reveal’ also appears in clause 137 of the NPPF (DCLG 2012) published the same year; however, where the NPPF is referring to changes in the setting of heritage assets, *New work* applies this to the asset itself. The understanding must therefore be that the significance of historic buildings is not immutable and fixed; but since this idea remains undeveloped and does not feed through into the FJR 2013 or 2015 it is easily ignored if one regards significance as unchanging.

The paragraph on architectural and historical development starts with the assertion that ‘many older places of worship have grown by processes of accretion and re-building over centuries and it is important to try to establish the building sequence’ (2012: 3). This shows a welcome understanding that places of worship have often changed over time, but this could be interpreted as of merely historic interest without suggesting any commitment to the continuity of ongoing cultural production. If we adopt the metaphor of buildings as a form of text, the privileging of ‘building sequence’ perhaps frames them as chronicle, excluding alternatives such as narrative; this theme is explored further in Chapter 5.

More generally, Historic England’s approach is increasingly to see the historic environment as something that is living and changing. In place of its earlier ‘informed

conservation' (e.g. Clark 2001), it defines its remit of 'constructive conservation' as 'the protection and adaptation of historic buildings and places through actively managing change' (Catling 2013: 2). And with the British Property Federation (BPF) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) it published *Heritage works*, to encourage developers to embrace the positive role of heritage in regeneration, stating that 'using the historic environment as an asset, and giving it new life, has [...] been one of the cornerstones of the economic and social revival of our towns and cities' (BPF et al. 2017: 4). While some may fear this represents the reduction of heritage to mere economics, Historic England's evident openness to engage with, and potentially to harness, the dynamism of business is to be welcomed.

2.3.3. Choice of language

It is interesting to note the use in *Heritage works* of terms with strong theological resonance such as 'revival' and 'new life'. However, when it comes to church buildings, *New work* fails to acknowledge the theological/spiritual context that originally gave, and for its users continues to give, these buildings their purpose and meaning. The studious avoidance of overtly religious language does have the distinct advantage of enabling the document, and through it Historic England itself, to address all faith communities. However, there are practical and theoretical grounds for questioning this approach. Practically, it is undeniably the case that almost all the 15,000-plus listed places of worship in England are Christian churches or chapels. If we consider those buildings which would normally require consultation with Historic England – those of grade I or II* status – the proportion is even higher. There are just two mosques graded II*: the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking, purpose-built in 1889, and the Spitalfields mosque which, like the handful of grade II listed mosques, is a former church (Mynors 2006: 552). Of the 27 listed synagogues still in use in England and Wales, three are listed grade I and nine are listed grade II* (Kadish 2016). Churches therefore represent some 99.9% of relevant buildings; unsurprisingly, every one of the illustrations in *New work* is of a church scheme and it is alterations to churches with which the document is in fact concerned.

This failure to acknowledge the specifically theological/spiritual aspect of church buildings (and indeed separately of synagogues, mosques etc.) has significant ramifications. The relevant paragraph reads as follows:

Community. Historic places of worship often derive significance from their ability to bring a community together through symbolism or shared identification. Places which have seen centuries of worship can provide a powerful sense of continuity with the past, while memorials might evoke particular past lives or events. Other sorts of community, for instance bellringers who might come from further afield to ring the bells of a church, might

also value the building. Explaining how particular communities value a place of worship will provide a useful context for discussions with external organisations that are not familiar with the building or the people who use it.

(HE 2012: 3)

While not erroneous in itself, this is not the way in which theologically literate church communities relate to their buildings. For example, memorials are mentioned as a means to 'evoke particular past lives or events', whereas the Christian tradition has the far richer notion of the communion of saints, that present and previous generations, stretching back to the foundation of the Church, form a single community. And while church buildings are indeed able 'to bring a community together through symbolism or shared identification', these forms of predominantly intellectual engagement provide a very poor account of the significance of the building, which in a Christian understanding relates to Christian mission and the worship of God. Clearly these theological/spiritual categories are not universally shared, but the use of generic secularised language removes them from legitimate consideration. Yet these are precisely the categories within which theologically literate congregations will approach their buildings; the exclusion of this form of discourse in favour of secular language, however benign and inclusive the motivation might be, serves to impose secular categories on those communities, and thereby to marginalise them.

This secularism is evident elsewhere. Under 'Determining Need', *New work* states that the public benefits that are to be weighed against any harm 'might include securing viable long-term use for the building, mitigating the effects of climate change or making the building more accessible' (2012: 4). By contrast the *Duffield* judgment, considered below, describes public benefit as 'including matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral well being, opportunities for mission, and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission' (para. 87.5). Once again the secular description is found lacking.

The word 'value' as a noun or verb appears on 11 occasions in the text, but six of these are of a general nature, for example 'value to society' (HE 2012: 2), with only five relating to values in the technical sense, as in 'artistic, historic or associative value' (2012: 19). The relative absence of the technical use of the term 'value' is noteworthy, given its foundational role in *Conservation principles* (HE 2008). This either represents latent disquiet with the concept, or perhaps is simply a reflection that the two documents are written for different audiences, with *New work* more specifically aimed at non-professionals. Both explanations are (literally) remarkable: the first would imply suppression in sectorial guidance of a key concept of national guidance; the second would imply that values are an unhelpful or irrelevant way of describing a building for the resident community. The absence of the language of values in the

Duffield judgment, and from the case study documents in Chapter 3, could support either interpretation.

2.3.4. The legal landscape

New work provides a helpful description of how applications to change listed church buildings are dealt with by the five major denominations in England (HE 2012: 22–25). Under the ecclesiastical exemption each denomination must have in place structures that are distinct from, but ‘equivalent’ to, secular listed building control. For the Church of England, which has the great majority of listed church buildings, this is carried out under the Faculty Jurisdiction system, the legal framework for which is provided by the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 (hereafter ‘the 1991 Measure’); detailed description of the operation of the process is presented in the FJR 2015. The Measure is equivalent to, and of the same status as, an Act of Parliament, and provides the background against which individual judgments are made, whether by diocesan chancellors or at appeal in the Arches Court of Canterbury or the Chancery Court of York. This subsection briefly examines this legal framework before we turn in the next section to consider in greater detail the landmark 2012 *Duffield* judgment.

The very first section of the 1991 Measure reads:

1. Duty to have regard to church’s purpose.

Any person or body carrying out functions of care and conservation under this Measure or under any other enactment or rule of law relating to churches shall have due regard to the role of a church as a local centre of worship and mission.

As Charles Mynors observes (2006: 573), this is not presented as a principle that overrides all other considerations, but given its prominent location it acts as a ‘headline’, powerfully framing what follows in terms of what Historic England calls ‘communal value’. It should also be noted that this clause is not restricted to those whose remit explicitly includes these ‘communal’ issues, such as DACs and the CBC, but applies to all participants in the process, including Historic England and the national amenity societies. In Chapter 3 we will consider how well these parties fulfilled this legal duty in the case study examples.

Where proposals involve changes to a listed building, paragraph 4.3 of the accompanying FJR 2015 sets out the requirement for statements of significance and needs, requiring applicants to prepare:

- (a) a document which describes—
 - (i) the significance of the church or other building in terms of its special architectural and historic interest (including any contribution made by its setting) and

(ii) any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest that the church or other building has

so as to enable the potential impact of the proposals on its significance, and on any such features, to be understood (a “statement of significance”); and

(b) a document setting out the justification for the proposals (commonly known as a “statement of needs”).

The paragraph then requires that

(2) If proposals are likely to result in harm to the significance of the church or other building as a building of special architectural or historic interest, the document setting out the justification for the proposals must set out the basis on which it is said that the proposals would result in public benefit that outweighs that harm.

The wording thus differentiates between harm on the one hand and the ‘impact’ of change, which presumably could be positive as well as negative, on the other. The narrow definition of significance, which excludes the communal, is inherited from the description of the listing criteria in the Planning Act 1990, and is consistently adhered to throughout. The NPPF similarly excludes ‘communal value’ from significance, which it describes as

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

(DCLG 2012: 56)

It can be seen therefore that, compared to Historic England’s *Conservation principles* and *New work*, the legislative framework treats the two issues of community involvement and change quite differently. Both ecclesiastical and secular legislation restricts significance to the tangible aspects of ‘special architectural or historic interest’; and while the 1991 Measure acknowledges communal value, it does so separately from the determination of significance. As will be seen in the next section and chapter, this division often plays out as a confrontation between the heritage expert as guardian of tangible heritage and the community as champions of public benefit. And while the ecclesiastical legislation implies a distinction between change and harm, this is not made explicit; since by definition all change involves an element of loss, if only to the status quo, ample scope remains for the conflation of the two ideas.

2.4. DUFFIELD, ST ALKMUND

The 2012 *Duffield, St Alkmund* judgment in the Court of Arches is of critical importance to the approval of change to Anglican church buildings. The judgment set out a framework commonly used by chancellors in subsequent consistory court judgments,

and now shapes the process as a whole, since DACs and amenity societies use it as a point of reference.⁶ This section considers the *Duffield* judgment in some detail.

The church of St Alkmund, Duffield is a grade I listed church of medieval origin. The church underwent two Victorian restorations; among other works the 1896 restoration by John Oldrid Scott involved a refurbishment of the chancel, including a new chancel screen, altar and reredos. Chancel windows by C.E. Kempe had been planned prior to the Scott works, and were installed at approximately the same time. The chancel screen was, however, a theological embarrassment to the current church community, who wished to move it from the chancel, where it was seen as separating the congregation from God, to the arch of the adjacent Bradshaw chapel, in the process creating additional space for musicians. A consistory court had been held specifically to consider the move of the screen, and in a judgment dated 2 March 2012 the chancellor had found against the church. This decision was then appealed, resulting in the Court of Arches judgment of 1 October 2012. The Court upheld the appeal, and having set aside the earlier judgment, then proceeded to determine the faculty in favour of the appellants, subject to conditions.

2.4.1. The importance of the judgment

Any legal process is accretive, with later decisions built on the foundation of precedents set in earlier rulings. The *Duffield* judgment is a landmark ruling, and provides a framework for determining future faculty petitions, comprising the following five steps:

- 1 Would the proposals, if implemented, result in harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest?
2. If the answer to question (1) is “no”, the ordinary presumption in faculty proceedings “in favour of things as they stand” is applicable, and can be rebutted more or less readily, depending on the particular nature of the proposals [...] Questions 3, 4 and 5 do not arise.
3. If the answer to question (1) is “yes”, how serious would the harm be?
4. How clear and convincing is the justification for carrying out the proposals?
5. Bearing in mind that there is a strong presumption against proposals which will adversely affect the special character of a listed building (see *St Luke, Maidstone* at p.8), will any resulting public benefit (including matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral well-being, opportunities for mission, and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission) outweigh the harm? In answering question (5), the more serious the harm, the greater will be the level of benefit needed before the proposals should be permitted. This will particularly be the case if the harm is to a building which is listed Grade I or II*, where serious harm should only exceptionally be allowed.

(Duffield, para. 87)

⁶ A search for ‘Alkmund’ at <http://www.ecclesiasticallawassociation.org.uk/index.php/judgmentlist> reveals 22 judgments that reference this decision between November 2012 and November 2015.

Assuming that harm to significance is established in question 1, the focus is in the last three questions, which ask firstly about the *seriousness* of the harm, secondly whether the *justification* for the proposed changes is convincing, and finally whether there is sufficient *public benefit* that would outweigh that harm. Of these, the answers to questions 4 and 5 depend a great deal on the petitioner's ability to make a convincing case, firstly by providing adequate justification for the scheme in their statement of needs, and secondly by articulating the public benefit.

This framework is so salient because it condenses the legal position at the time of the judgment, including both legislation and case law.⁷ In addition, it was a condition of the appeal that an *amicus curiae* be appointed to assist the court in specialist matters, and through the *amicus* the court benefited from the most recent official heritage policy advice, including the then just reissued *New work* (HE 2012).⁸ The *Duffield* process is also a landmark because it superseded the '*Bishopsgate* questions', a previous framework on which the chancellor's original decision at St Alkmund had been based, and which demanded that petitioners prove the *necessity* of their proposals. It was the removal of this test that gave rise to the new framework; since there is no test of necessity in the secular system it was deemed unreasonable to apply a stricter test to church buildings (para. 84). After reviewing the current guidance on the ecclesiastical exemption (DCMS 2010), the court was clear that 'equivalence' did not require exactly the same approach to proposed alterations as is adopted in the secular system, and even that in some cases the two systems could be expected to produce different outcomes (para. 39), not least since the purpose of the ecclesiastical exemption is that it enables the Church 'to retain control of any alteration that may affect its worship and liturgy' (para. 38).

As stated, the *Duffield* process turns the current legal position into a common framework to guide the future determination of faculty petitions. The language of 'significance' and 'substantial harm', and the 'weighing' of harm against 'public benefits' (para. 41) is all drawn from the legislation; at the time of the chancellor's judgment this was in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (hereafter 'PPS5', DCLG 2010), which by the time of the appeal had been superseded in almost identical terms by the NPPF (DCLG 2012: paras 129, 133). It was, however, the court which cast the questions in the order they are given, following the logic of the legislation, with the initial focus on harm in question 1, and 'communal value' (otherwise

⁷ The process remains fluid; for example, the judgment in the 2015 case of *Evesham, All Saints with St. Lawrence* suggests that the *Duffield* process should be updated in light of subsequent decisions in the secular courts, but this was later overruled.

⁸ Literally 'friend of the court', an impartial adviser in a particular case.

absent from the legislation) represented by ‘public benefit’ and placed at the end of the process. Taken in isolation, the *Duffield* framework appears heavily stacked against community interest and in favour of preservation; setting this process in the context of the judgment as a whole, however, reveals a more nuanced understanding.

2.4.2. The status conferred by listing

The setting aside of the chancellor’s original decision hinged on his ‘erroneous approach to the assessment of adverse impact on the listed building’ (para. 53), which led to his misjudging the impact of the proposals on the character of the listed building; this in turn flowed from a misunderstanding of the status conferred by listing on a historic building. In his original judgment the chancellor stated that:

The fact of listing in one way “fixes” the appearance and state of the building at that point in time, and thereafter proposals for changes have to be evaluated against the *Bishopsgate* questions. It is obvious that there have been many changes, some of considerable effect, to the fabric of St Alkmund’s over the centuries, and we know the present pews and screen were only installed fairly late on in the process, in the last years of the 19th century. None the less, the pews and screen were part of the fixtures and fittings at the time when the listing took place. At that point, it seems to me the particular form and layout of the church took on a particular character, not inviolable or immune from any subsequent change [...] but so that any proposed change must meet the *Bishopsgate* tests.

(Duffield: para. 48)

In countering this view of the ‘fixity’ of listed buildings, the Arches Court returned to the definition from section 1(5) of the Planning Act 1990: ‘In this Act “listed building” means a building which is for the time being included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under this section’ (para. 36). At paragraph 52.ii) it is stated that, ‘to use the *amicus*’s own phrase, listing does not “fix” a building at a particular moment in time; rather it “accords it a particular status *on an ambulatory basis*, for so long as the building remains listed”’ (emphasis added). In a different context, Principle 3.2 of *Conservation principles* allows that the values of a place ‘tend to grow in strength and complexity over time’ (HE 2008: 21) as understanding deepens and perceptions evolve.

While the chancellor had acknowledged that the building had changed over the centuries, it was argued by the Arches Court that his understanding of the ‘fixity’ of listed status was incorrect, since ‘all the features of a listed building are equally “listed”, including any new features that have been introduced since the building was listed’ (para. 52.ii)). Misunderstanding the more fluid or ‘ambulatory’ aspect to listed status seems to have been a key factor in the chancellor’s flawed appraisal of the adverse impact of the proposals on which the appeal hinged, for example with respect to the Kempe window, discussed below. By contrast, an ‘ambulatory’ understanding of listed status implies the mutability, the potential waxing or waning, of the significance of

a historic building and of the historic fabric itself. At issue here are competing understandings of the nature of historic buildings, with a great deal hanging on the distinctions made.

An integral part of this ‘fixity thesis’ is that, as the chancellor puts it above, at the point of listing ‘the church took on a particular character’. This is telling in two respects; firstly in the use of the word ‘character’, which is pivotal to the protection of historic buildings, and secondly in contending that listing removes the building from the flow of history, thus following the understanding of the SPAB *Manifesto* of a radical discontinuity with the past. By allowing for a degree of change, the ‘ambulatory thesis’, unlike the ‘fixity thesis’, is far more congruent with the idea of churches as living buildings discussed in the previous chapter.

2.4.3. Architectural and historic interest

It would appear that this ‘fixity thesis’ lead the chancellor to treat the building as an undifferentiated ‘lump of significance’ and, at least as reported, to make no attempt to judge which aspects of the church as it stands are more, and which less, important. By contrast, the Arches Court, in its analysis of the effect on the character of the building, was careful to differentiate between its various types of interest (para. 56), and from this differentiation flowed a number of important insights.

Turning first to architectural interest, the Court treated the Victorian work, fine as it is in its own right, as secondary to the interest and character of the interior:

We recognise that the two rounds of Victorian alterations to the church (especially those of Scott) are of some special architectural interest in themselves, but in our view the special architectural interest and character of this particular interior lies primarily in the building’s medieval elements and the spatial proportions derived therefrom, both of which are exceptionally pleasing.

(Duffield: para. 57)

The Victorian work is thus judged against the broader medieval context, which is given priority, the Court even judging the ‘significant impact’ of Scott’s alterations as ‘not wholly beneficial’, and that the screen ‘impacts adversely on the overall character of the architecture’ (ibid.).

Mrs Walker, the church architect, had made the comment that

whilst the screen was of high quality, it detracted from other features of the church, in particular the view of the Kempe window, so that if there were to be an application to install a chancel screen now, in this location, ‘there would be an uproar’.

(Duffield: para. 44)

This argument was dismissed by the chancellor as ‘a non-starter because [the window] is contemporaneous with the screen, and has not been subsequently obscured by its

introduction' (*Duffield*: para. 49); it was, however, noted that the window had been designed separately and slightly in advance of the reordering (para. 4). For this argument the chancellor was criticised, since he 'left out altogether any consideration of the potential benefit to the architectural character and historic interest of the listed building' (para. 51) of the proposed changes. Once again this suggests a nuanced appreciation on the part of the petitioners and the Court both of the building's ability to accommodate change positively, and of its multi-layered temporal nature. The Court found that the architectural interest was not adversely affected by the proposals.

The judgment then considers the question of historic interest, which 'includes a consideration not merely of the building's medieval elements, but also of the way in which the church has been altered over time, including the works to it undertaken during the two rounds of Victorian alteration' (para. 58). Here the Court judged that 'the Scott alterations are a valuable lesson in late Victorian architectural and ecclesiastical history' (para. 58), and that 'there will be greater detriment, because the Tractarian ensemble will no longer be intact' (para. 59).

Having looked at each aspect of interest separately, the question of overall harm was then considered:

If one asks the composite question, will there be a loss to the character of the building as one of special architectural and historic interest, the answer must be "yes", unless the view were taken that the architectural gain outweighs the loss of historic interest (which is a fine judgement which we do not feel qualified to make, nor do we feel it necessary to do so).

(Duffield: para. 60)

The view is that harm would result, because harm had been identified to the historic interest. Most interestingly, even though the Court did not feel qualified to make the 'fine judgement' of balancing the impact on the two types of interest considered, the implication is that such a judgement is nevertheless possible. Not only is it clear from this that change can bring benefit and is thus markedly differentiated from harm, it also opens up the possibility that the process should consider 'harm on balance', rather than merely harm of any kind.

The implications of the unwillingness to consider this 'harm on balance' are significant. The fact that the NPPF takes a narrow view of significance that excludes the communal/social virtually guarantees that change is read as harm; if that change is substantial then, seen as harm, it will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, since the NPPF states that 'substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance [including] grade I and II* listed buildings [...] should be wholly exceptional' (DCLG 2012: para. 132). Reading the NPPF and the *Duffield* judgment together amounts to a strong presumption against change. While some parts of the

conservation system in England may speak in different terms (e.g. HE 2008, 2012, etc.), it is clear that for others an older, preservationist understanding endures. Within that understanding, statutory listing offers a means of restricting change, as though change were some form of architecturally transmitted disease.

2.4.4. Adversity and danger

Objections to the removal of the chancel screen had been received from Historic England, SPAB and the Victorian Society. For Historic England the proposals would cause ‘substantial damage’/‘substantial harm’ (para. 40) to the significance of the church; for SPAB it would ‘have a serious impact on the interior’ (para. 42), and the Victorian Society maintained their ‘strong objection’ to the relocation, believing it to be ‘highly detrimental to the special architectural and historical interest of the building’ (para. 43). In addressing this threat, each of these objections followed a ‘narrow’ approach to significance. Each focused solely on the Victorian work that was ‘threatened’, without reference to the temporal context – that this was a medieval church that had undergone multiple changes of which the Scott works were merely the most recent. The Historic England comment explicitly closes down reference to the wider context of the building: ‘We do not agree that the screen detracts from other features in the church’ (para. 40). And beyond the temporal context, none of the objectors even acknowledges the broader communal/theological context, as demanded by the 1991 Measure.

This ‘narrow’ approach from the consultees was consistent with the approach taken by the chancellor and criticised by the Arches Court, as noted above. The appeal judgment turned on the Court’s finding that the chancellor had misread the effect on the character of the listed building, due to his erroneous interpretation of the ‘adverse’ effect of the proposals (para. 53). Paragraph 48 quotes the chancellor’s own definition:

An ‘adverse’ effect is one that alters or affects *in a material way*, the appearance of form and layout of the listed building at the time it was listed, or as it has become by subsequent authorised changes. The change may be made by the introduction of some item, or by its removal, as well as by alteration of existing features.

(Duffield: para. 60; emphasis original)

Here is a clear example of the conflation of change and harm which runs through much conservation discourse. By contrast, the Court of Arches was clear that:

Not every change that alters or affects the appearance and layout of a listed building in a material way (the definition used by the chancellor) will necessarily adversely affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

(Duffield: para. 52 (i))

The chancellor is explicitly criticised for failing to identify the building's character 'other than by reference to the list description of the church at the time it was listed', and indeed for barely using the word 'character' at all (para. 52 (i)).

Thus far, therefore, we have seen three distinct missteps in the chancellor's judgment that also, arguably, characterise at least some conservation discourse: firstly, the view that listing somehow 'fixes' the nature of a historic building; secondly, a failure to differentiate types of interest, and to consider the impact of proposals on each in turn; and thirdly, the overstatement of adverse effects and the conflation of change with harm. These three errors combined to exaggerate the perceived threat to the listed building.

2.4.5. Justification and enhancement

We turn next to the possible gains from proposed change, and the positive implications within the appeal judgment for our understanding of the nature of listed buildings. After considering the approach taken to the effect on the character of the listed building by Historic England and the amenity societies (paras 40–43), the Court of Arches then considers the contrasting approach of the petitioners (paras 44–46). Unsurprisingly, where the language of enhancement had been entirely absent from the reported interventions of the objecting consultees, it is more prominent in the comments of those speaking in support of the proposals.

Mrs Walker, the church architect, had written the statement of significance, where she suggested that the removal of the screen would 'open up the body of the church' (para. 44). Her witness statement at the appeal expanded this comment into five areas of improvement, all architectural in nature (para. 45); these different aspects of enhancement clearly informed the Court's view that the proposals would improve the architectural interest of the building. Two witness statements from members of the church are then quoted, making similar points about the positive impact on the church from removing the screen; Mr Jeffery believed that 'the aesthetic view of the whole will be greatly enhanced', and Mrs Taulbut stated that the change 'would improve the appearance of the chancel' (both para. 46). Where the objectors see nothing but harm, the supporters see this particular building, and by extension historic buildings in general, as capable of being enriched and enhanced by allowing them to continue to change.

The statement of needs articulated a threefold justification for the proposals, under the headings of the theological, the visual and the practical (para. 64). The chancellor's approach, of treating the aspects of the case for necessity separately rather than cumulatively, was declared 'wrong in principle' (para. 72). This suggests that

the justification for change to historic buildings is multi-faceted and should be taken in the round, in this case explicitly including the theological/doctrinal. For example, the ‘visual’ justification included the revealing of the Kempe east window, which was not only judged by the Court to be of ‘potential benefit to the architectural character and historic interest of the listed building’ (para. 51), but the chancellor was criticised for not taking this into account as ‘a possible benefit to pastoral well being’ (para. 71).

The Court concluded (para. 77) that, ‘Taking all these matters together, in our view they constitute “public benefits” and a “clear and convincing” justification for the proposal (to use the language of paras 134 and 132 of the NPPF).’ As noted, in the fifth of the *Duffield* questions, ‘public benefit’ includes ‘matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral well being, opportunities for mission, and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission’ (para. 87). None of the reported comments from objectors addressed any of these aspects; at most there is a bald statement of the sort offered by Historic England that ‘we do not consider that the reasons provided are sufficient to justify the substantial harm caused’ (para. 40). For the purposes of the Faculty Jurisdiction system ‘public benefit’ remains outside discussions of the significance of the building, as noted in the previous section. Perhaps the objectors’ reticence in engaging with these issues is because they are seen as an irrelevance, the real interest being significance, narrowly defined. Whether ‘public benefit’ is rightly placed outside the determination of significance is an issue returned to below.

In marked contrast to the language of fragility and peril so familiar in conservation discourse, the insight undergirding the community view is of the essential *robustness* of heritage. Such non-expert opinions are all too readily dismissed as the voice of ignorance, and it is certainly possible for the inexperienced to underestimate the fragility of historic fabric. But in this case those articulating this understanding are highly experienced in dealing with what is a building of national importance, and should be regarded as bringing their own expertise to the discussion. Certainly that expertise is partial, but then so is aesthetic-historical expertise, since *by definition* no single participant in this dialogue has a complete grasp of the whole. Furthermore, the language used in the arguments supporting the proposals are not characterised by ignorance, but quite the reverse. For opponents to dismiss out of hand the community’s view of the robustness of their historic building is to suppress a potentially valuable set of insights, however challenging they may be to the received wisdom.

For obvious reasons, framing devices such as metaphor and analogy are not generally characteristic of legal literature; there is however one striking example in the

chancellor's judgment. In support of his view of the 'adverse' effect of moving the chancel screen, the chancellor had stated that

The listing "fixes" the contents of the building wherever the items are [...] They are not to be seen therefore as a random collection of items, deployable like pieces in [*sic*] a chess board, but as a systematic whole.

(*Duffield: para. 48*)

The use of the chess analogy is clearly intended to assert 'fixity' over mutability. If the chancellor had used this image only to resist the idea that the furnishings can be moved anywhere within the building with impunity, then few would disagree. But here he used it to resist the idea of *any* movement/change, and his pejorative use of a game image betrays opposition to the possibility of the playfulness that characterises all forms of creativity. If we consider heritage as a form of text – a contested theme returned to in Chapter 5 – then the chancellor's view is of language as mere communication, rather than as inherently shifting, fecund and itself the site of the generation of new meaning (cf. Ricoeur 1977). If we adopt this second view of language, we should expect playfulness, as an essential rather than trivial part of language, not only to be present in the completed fine craftsmanship of the exuberant screen; the screen itself would remain legitimately, perhaps even *necessarily*, open to such playfulness.

Given the stress the chancellor places on the fixity of listed buildings, this sense of playfulness is unsurprisingly absent. Yet inherent to the design process which produced the chancel screen is an understanding of contingency and mutability, that things can always be done differently. Indeed Scott himself acknowledges this:

It is clear from reports prepared by Scott before the works started that he did not regard the chancel screen as an essential component of his proposed reordering, although in his view 'if it should be decided to erect a chancel screen, its architectural effect will be admirable'.

(*Duffield: para. 9*)

All of the objectors assume that the significance of the screen, and of the interior as a whole, is greatly diminished by its move within the building; what none seems to have asked is whether Scott, were he able to be respond to such a changed liturgical practice within this building, might not himself have supported the proposals. However, it seems likely that the change of status claimed in the 'fixity thesis' would override this also, even if such authorial intent were demonstrable.

2.4.6. Theology and community

It is to expected that an active church community will articulate the importance of its building at least partly in theological terms. The admissibility of theological language into the debate, and the terms on which it is admitted, therefore provides a strong indication

of the underlying worth attached to ‘communal value’. In the case of the Court of Arches judgment that place is prominent and its consideration nuanced.

Fully 17 paragraphs (18–34) across 10 pages of the judgment are devoted to a discussion of matters theological, including the status of the *Thirty-nine articles* (CofE 2017a) and whether a chancel screen imposes a ‘Temple’ theology (paras 32–33) on the building.⁹ By contrast, the chancellor is explicitly criticised for his dismissive treatment of the theological dimension of the proposals, dealing with it as a question of mere doctrine detached from other aspects of the justification and concluding that, since the existing screen was not contrary to Anglican teaching in general, that this aspect of the petitioners’ justification should be rejected (para. 67). The Court took a different view, stating that

In so far as it may, the consistory court must strive in the exercise of its faculty jurisdiction to ensure that any decision it makes permits the proper reflection of the doctrinal beliefs of the priest and congregation.

(*Duffield*: para. 25)

Clearly local wishes cannot be the sole determinant, and the Court goes on to say that the exercise of the beliefs of a different priest and congregation should not be limited by a set of proposals. This balance is reasserted at the close of the theological section:

The theological/doctrinal stance of a particular congregation cannot of itself determine whether or not a faculty should issue, and it is not a basis on which, taken alone, we would have allowed this appeal. Nevertheless, it is certainly a matter which needs to be taken into consideration in assessing the totality of the petitioners’ case.

(*Duffield*: para. 34)

This is a very significant acknowledgement that the voice of the local congregation – the core community (Section 1.2.3) – deserves a more than marginal place in the decision-making process.

This same approach is evident elsewhere in the judgment; for example, two of the three voices quoted in the section on the petitioners’ approach to the character of the building (paras 44–46) are lay people, both quoted at length. Elsewhere, in a consideration of the negative impact of the screen on the use of the church, Mr Lindop (a reader – para. 16) eloquently deploys his own framing devices:

When I first joined the church, worship was led from behind the screen, which put an obstacle between the leader and the congregation – I felt as though I was the wrong side of the fence. We moved to standing in the opening in the screen, which felt like being the gatekeeper, before the dais in front of the screen was built to allow the service leader to

⁹ The *Thirty-nine articles of religion* date from the mid-sixteenth century and are the doctrinal statements of the Church of England, particularly in relation to Calvinism and Roman Catholicism; Anglican clergy are still required to affirm their loyalty to them.

interact more effectively with the congregation. However, that has left the chancel effectively cut off from the rest of the church.

(*Duffield*: para. 32)

This liturgically-literate comment is then linked by the Court to Reformation debates on the role of chancel screens (para. 33).

In more general terms there is also a marked contrast between the language used by the experts opposing the scheme on one side, and the ‘people of the parish’ on the other.¹⁰ The opponents’ comments are marked by the use of dramatic language such as ‘serious impact’, ‘highly detrimental’, ‘substantial damage’, ‘exceptional quality’, phrases clearly intended to accentuate the sense of threat should the proposals be allowed. The danger of this strategy is that when it fails, as in this case, it risks being seen as alarmist hyperbole, eroding the opponents’ authority. By contrast the language used by the non-professionals is far calmer and more measured. There is more balance to these comments and more qualification, as when Mr Jeffrey describes the screen as ‘beautifully carved, but rising rather uncomfortably juxtaposed’. And there is far less assumed authority, with these views being owned by the individual – e.g. ‘it strikes us...’ and ‘I think...’ – rather than being declaimed as fact.

This contrast of language reflects a conspicuous asymmetry between expert and community voices (Shanks 2007, Schofield 2014). It is a particular mark of the Court of Arches that both expert and non-expert voices appear to have been closely attended to, in seeming contrast to the chancellor’s earlier judgment. More generally still, the objectors’ comments display an impoverished understanding of the link between the worshipping community and its building, with no acknowledgement of their interrelation. Rather, the consultees simply declare themselves unpersuaded by the justification offered by the community, with the Victorian Society complaining that the importance of the screen and the impact of the proposals had not been ‘properly considered’ (para. 43).

The *Duffield* framework influences the faculty system as a whole, given the emphasis now placed on this by chancellors in their judgments, and the guidance it provides for all parties, including DACs, the CBC, amenity societies and others. The consequences of that influence can be very positive, for example in forcing churches to think through a clear statement of needs, resulting in a more robust rationale for a given set of proposals. But the necessarily legal nature of the process can also have a negative effect; for many parishes, often lacking the confidence of professional

¹⁰ This is the title of a book by Katherine French (2001) which, *inter alia*, documents the multiplicity of communal uses accommodated in one parish church in the medieval period.

experience, the prospect of a consistory court is enough to prevent them from ever proposing change, or once proposed to abandon a project.

2.5. COMMON THEMES

2.5.1. Two forms of discourse

The documents considered above show two sharply contrasting forms of discourse, the dividing line being drawn through the issues of our relation to the past and the place of local communities. The SPAB *Manifesto* focuses on the history and aesthetics of old buildings, excludes local people from any consideration of their importance, and asserts a discontinuity with the history that produced them. The *Duffield* judgment demonstrates the continuing influence of this understanding in the absence of reference to people or theology in the reported comments of the national amenity societies and Historic England; the chancellor's 'fixation with fixity' and his dismissal of the theological aspects of the petitioners' justification mirror these same assumptions.

Taken together, the two Historic England documents, by contrast, attempt to give local communities a say in heritage decisions, referring specifically to churches as living buildings, and seeing continuity between the past that produced the heritage, and the present and future. Between these two very different forms of discourse lies a curious hybrid in the form of the Faculty Jurisdiction system which, from an understanding of the continuity of the Christian tradition, accords community a central role. At the same time, however, this system can only work from the legislation it seeks to interpret, which belongs firmly to the first form of conservation discourse and which can trace its lineage back to the selfsame concern with monument protection that animates the SPAB *Manifesto*. In this way, the interests of local communities are excluded from the assessment of the importance of historic buildings, and relegated to the compensatory mechanism of 'public benefit'.

A 2017 consistory court judgment in the Diocese of Southwark in the case of *Waterloo, St John* illustrates these tensions. The scheme was for extensive internal alterations to an 1824 neoclassical Commissioners' church designed by Francis Bedford, which was bomb damaged in 1940 and restored by Thomas Ford to serve as the official church for the 1951 Festival of Britain.¹¹ The Twentieth Century Society became party opponent, with former chairman Dr Alan Powers giving evidence, supported by Historic England and the local planning authority. It is noteworthy that the extensive testimony of these objectors is entirely art historical in nature. The DAC

¹¹ The 1818 Church Building Act created a Commission to build new churches in populous parishes. These 'Commissioners' churches' were also seen as an act of national thanksgiving for victory at Waterloo, and thus became labelled 'Waterloo churches'.

supported the proposals, with architect Sherry Bates's appendix arguing from *Conservation principles* for a rounded assessment of impact across the four classes of values, including communal, and identifying enhancement as well as harm. The CBC was also supportive. Eric Parry, architect for the scheme, argued for the integrity of the proposals from a nuanced understanding of the building's development, noting that there would be harm to 'individual elements of the interior but not to the interior as a whole' (para. 145). Unlike the *Duffield* judgment, *Conservation principles* is widely referred to in the judgment, though ultimately to little effect; the chancellor focused on a narrow understanding of significance and an inflated sense of harm, and at one point subsumed communal value within historic significance (para. 261). The chancellor found against the proposals and the church decided not to appeal, even though leave to do so was granted by the Dean of Arches precisely because of the questions raised over how serious harm is assessed in grade I and II* listed buildings (George 2017).

2.5.2. Community placed

The hybrid nature of the Faculty Jurisdiction system provides succour to *both* forms of discourse; as a result, the same issues are repeatedly revisited, at significant cost to individual churches and in contradiction of current heritage guidance. However, as long as the legislation remains unreformed, it seems that this is the best that local communities can expect. It should be noted that *Conservation principles* was written in the context of the then 'impending reform of legislation and the need for more integrated practice' (HE 2008: 1). The 2008 Heritage Protection Bill had been expected to rebalance that legislation to better represent the interests of local communities in the conservation process; its subsequent abandonment leaves those communities where preservationism placed them: on the outside looking in. Any effort to better represent local community needs within the current legislative framework – as does the Faculty Jurisdiction system – necessarily must rely on the compensatory mechanism of 'public benefit'.

It is striking how eerily silent the *Duffield* judgment is on the question of values; the word does not appear at all within the text. One of the grounds for appeal had been that the chancellor 'did not consider the [Historic England] guidance given to assessing whether the changes to a listed building could be considered acceptable', with specific reference to paragraphs 138 and 149 of *Conservation principles* (para. 50). This was dismissed, in part because, citing the foreword, it is 'not a document directed to actual decision-makers ([such as] diocesan chancellors) but, rather, to EH's own staff' (ibid.). Equally clearly the consultees had not invoked this document including, it seems, Historic England's own case officer. So while at appeal (though not in the original

hearing) the petitioners had sought to make use of the more positive approach of *Conservation principles*, this part of the argument proved entirely ineffectual. Bruce-Lockhart's foreword states that 'Our success will also be measured by the extent to which this document is taken up more widely in the sector' (2008: 1); it seems that, in the absence of matching legislative reform, many of the potential benefits of the approach taken remain unrealised, with the discourse all too readily collapsing back into the familiar constraints of architectural and historical interest.

The conflation of change and harm which is typical of the preservationist approach is, in a sense, self-defeating. If all change represented harm to significance, then very few of the country's medieval churches would have any significance 'left' at all, since almost all have experienced an ongoing history of change throughout their lives. The fact that the current generation has received a given building as an object of great significance *through* that narrative of ongoing change suggests that the equation of change with harm is fallacious, that the significance of living buildings is more robust and enduring than many assume, and that they are richly significant precisely *because of* that history of change, not in spite of it. Change, and the interests of communities that cause it, are built into the very nature of a living building such as a parish church; they are integral to, and enriching of, its significance.

To include 'communal value' in the determination of significance, as *Conservation principles* seeks to do, would radically alter the conservation landscape. For the *Duffield* framework to reflect a broader, communal-value-inclusive understanding of significance one might split question (1) into two parts: (1a) would address harm *severally*, that is, to *any* of the areas of value/interest, and (1b) would assess the level of *overall* harm. There would therefore be not one but two distinct stages of balancing: not only the balancing of harm to significance against public benefit in step 5, but prior to that within step (1b) a balancing of harm against enhancement to significance to determine 'overall harm'. As noted in Section 2.4.3, the judgment explicitly anticipates the possibility of this second preliminary balancing. Furthermore, this would bring the process into line with *New work*, Historic England's most focused guidance for churches, which notes the ability of new work 'to enhance or better reveal the significance of an historic place of worship' (HE 2012: 4), as discussed in Section 2.3.1.

2.5.3. Bridging the gulf

More broadly, the gulf between the two forms of discourse identified can perhaps be bridged if we address another hidden assumption, namely that the criteria for identifying the significance of a building in use should be the same as those that justified its listing in the first place. This does not necessarily follow. The process for listing of buildings

employs the criteria of architectural and historical interest to establish and then preserve a ‘national collection’ of heritage assets, with roots in nineteenth-century concerns of national identity and connoisseurship, key aspects of Laurajane Smith’s (2006) AHD. The second communal-value-inclusive form of discourse does not reject the importance of the architectural and historical, but understands that they do not of themselves account for ‘significance in use’. To exclude the communal from consideration of significance is to detach a building from its community and cultural contexts. This argument does not, therefore, necessarily pit one form of discourse against the other, but it does seek to constrain the application of the first form, resisting the expansionist tendency of any bureaucracy to control more and more, and instead champions a form of localism. It is noted that paragraph 29 of *Conservation principles* (HE 2008) anticipated a broadening of the statutory basis of designation to address this glaring disparity between designation and management of significant places.¹²

The beautifully crafted and powerful polemic of the SPAB *Manifesto* has been used to represent the first form of discourse. Its argument hinges on the specifically modern assumption that historic buildings are ‘ancient’ and that the tradition that produced them is dead. The animating power of a framing device such as this is difficult to overstate; changing that foundation changes everything. Take, for example, the following reshaping of Morris’s final plea based on an alternative understanding of continuity:

It is for all these buildings, therefore, of all times and styles, that we plead, and call upon those who have to deal with them, to put [Tradition] in the place of [Protection], to stave off decay [of balanced heritage] by daily care [...] and otherwise to resist all tampering with [the ongoing cultural production that is] the building as it stands...

Such an exercise in ‘creative writing’ should not be seen as an act of trivialisation or revisionism that detracts from the original, but as an act of playful and respectful homage that takes Morris’s words seriously as an invitation to dialogue rather than the object of veneration or blind adherence. From Chapter 4 onwards the implications of reversing Morris’s belief in cultural discontinuity will be explored.

This chapter has been chiefly concerned with the way in which a representative sample of official documentation defines duties and responsibilities in relation to the care of historic buildings, and the often marginal place accorded to local communities by that official discourse. This, therefore, has been the view ‘from above’, and approximates to the first (universal) form of ethics proposed in Section 1.1. In the next

¹² Claire Price’s current Collaborative Doctoral Award project at the University of York – “Beyond the List”: a critical examination of the development and impacts of statutory and non-statutory heritage lists on the national management of heritage in England’ was commissioned by Historic England to review the legislative framework and seek ways of addressing this disparity.

chapter we turn to the view 'from below', to the experience of the communities responsible for some of these living buildings, and who find themselves on the receiving end of the conservation process.

3. The community view: a case study of five medieval parish churches

There is a vacancy in history.

Alan Bennett (2004: 11)

The Anglican Diocese of Norwich has some 650 usable church buildings across 570 parishes.¹³ Of these buildings, 89% are listed grade I or II*; 620 are medieval, making it the largest grouping of medieval churches (including the additional ruined churches) in Western Europe. This chapter considers the experience of five congregations within the diocese which attempted to bring significant change to their building.

Each of the church buildings in this case study is medieval in origin, with two listed grade II* and three listed grade I; of these, one is a 'major parish church'.¹⁴ In each case, the proposals were sizeable, and arose from the changing requirements of a lively church community; one scheme was for entirely internal alteration, one for a completely new building adjacent to the church, with the other three involving substantial extensions. Between them, these five churches encompass a variety of project outcomes: two schemes have been successfully completed, one developed substantial proposals before implementing a more modest alternative, and another is still reconsidering its options after a negative response from Historic England and the planners. A fifth example, of a large modern extension to a grade II* listed church was abandoned after planning was refused.

Taken together, the interviews and the documentary evidence throw up a variety of themes of relevance to the central issue of change to historic buildings in community ownership. The structure of this chapter mirrors the typical progress of a project. Section 3.1 deals with context, including the community setting, the needs out of which projects grow and the theological aspect of church buildings. Section 3.2 then considers the church communities' experience of the process, including the relationships with external bodies and the demands such projects place on church

¹³ The statistics in this paragraph are drawn from diocesan sources (DN 2017) and Inge (2015), together with unpublished data from the Diocese of Norwich provided by Matthew McDade (DAC Secretary) and personal comments from Richard Halsey.

¹⁴ 'Major parish churches' are designated by the Church Buildings Council following a 2016 report by Historic England (CCBD 2017d).

leadership. Section 3.3 then describes the outcomes of the projects, including their legacy and reflections on the criteria for a successful outcome, and Section 3.4 reflects on the nature of historic buildings and the understanding of change revealed in the interviews.

Further information for each church is included in the appendices, including list entry descriptions (Appendix 2) and key items of correspondence (Appendix 10). Appendix 1 provides additional detail on the interview methodology, and the interview transcripts are included in pdf form in Appendix 11. The interviews have been anonymised, though most interviewees were happy to be quoted by name. Interview quotations are referenced by interviewee and the numbered turn in the conversation; for example 'A1: 10' refers to turn 10 of the interview with the first contributor at Blofield (Church A).

3.1. PARISH CONTEXTS AND NEEDS

This first section introduces each building and outlines the nature and outcome – or current status – of each project; two or three drawings for each project can be found in Appendix 3. As explored in Chapter 2, the current system places considerable stress on the identification of robust needs; a discussion therefore follows of how the needs these projects address were identified and presented.

3.1.1. The case study churches



Fig. 1: Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield – view from north west

The Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield (Church A – NR13 4NA) is a large, grade I building of fourteenth-century origin, comprising a four stage west tower (fifteenth-century), north aisle, north porch, south aisle, nave and chancel; the nave arcades and chancel arch are late fourteenth-century while the north boiler house and south vestry are nineteenth-century additions. There is a medieval rood screen base, with 12 painted saints in the panels, and medieval poppy-head bench ends, some with seated or kneeling figures. A Georgian timber screen across the width of nave and aisles creates a ‘narthex’ area (Fig. 2) which included the font, and the last three rows of pews, of similar date, progressively rise in height to meet this screen.



Fig. 2: Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield – internal view looking east

The scheme at Blofield (Drawings A1–A3) was for a substantial gallery in the narthex area, connecting to the existing ringing gallery, an upper tower room created by glazing the tower arch, a new heating system and relocation of the font into the main body of the church. The gallery would have created a large welcome area for use by community groups through the week and for children’s work on Sundays. The then incumbent, Revd Paul Cubitt (interviewee A2), together with Sue Shillam, a key member of the laity with project management experience (interviewee A1), were the main client representatives. An initial scheme was sketched by then church architect, Terry Norton, in 2010; on his retirement, this was developed by Jeremy Bell (interviewee A3) of Oxfordshire firm JBKS. By 2014 this scheme had been abandoned, when it became clear that the condition of the tower was deteriorating, necessitating substantial expenditure. Subsequently, elements of the project were realised, including new heating and the move of the font. A faculty was granted in 2015 for a far more modest scheme

to refurbish the kitchen and re-floor the narthex, designed by the current inspecting architect.

The Church of St Laurence, Brundall (Church B – NR13 5NA) is a small building of grade II* listing (because of its interesting font) set in a very large churchyard; the building is thirteenth-century, with nineteenth-century chancel and south porch, a north aisle c. 1900 and a modest 1950s west extension. In the 1960s a modern vicarage was built at the front of the site, screening the church from the road. In the 1970s a detached hexagonal ‘Church Room’ was built to the north west, and a utilitarian temporary building (‘the Rainbow Room’) currently stands to the north east.



Fig. 3: Church of St Laurence, Brundall – view from south



Fig. 4: Church of St Laurence, Brundall – view from north with Rainbow Room to left and Church Room to right

After several decades of developing various ideas, a scheme was submitted for planning in 2009/10 for a substantial extension that replaced the two detached buildings and removed the current north aisle, creating a much larger worship space with meeting rooms, kitchens and other facilities, and retaining the existing nave and chancel as a chapel space for smaller, more traditional services (Drawings B4, B5). This scheme was refused planning permission in March 2011, principally due to vociferous opposition from some immediate neighbours who saw the proposed changes in profoundly negative terms. Since then the incumbent moved to a different parish, and no further attempt was made to pursue that scheme. The current incumbent is pursuing other means of growing the church community, including through multiple smaller congregations. Two of the church members who had been closely involved in the project were interviewed together (B1 & B2). At the time of the interviews there was no plan for addressing the substantial issues of the disparate buildings on the site; a very modest scheme was being undertaken to extend the Church Room to address some of the immediate needs, and this scheme had been granted both planning permission and a faculty.

The Church of St Andrew, Holt (Church C – NR25 6BB) is listed grade II* and is described in the listing as ‘fourteenth-century and later, much restored by William Butterfield in 1864’. The town of Holt was largely destroyed by fire in 1708, leaving the church significantly damaged (C1: 80). Prior to the building project, the south porch was used as a vestry, with a more modern boiler house attached to its south wall. The completed project created a glazed link from the reopened south porch to a separate building of modern design that stands immediately outside the churchyard; in other respects the church itself was unaltered.



Fig. 5: Church of St Andrew, Holt – view from south

Prior to the current scheme (Drawings C6, C7) there had been proposals going back 20–30 years, including for a substantial building to the north of the church, and

subsequently for a far more modest extension butted up against the south aisle, but the church leadership had latterly concluded that this did not provide adequate space to meet their needs. In 2009 it became possible for the church to purchase additional land to the south of the churchyard from the adjacent school, enabling the construction of the extension in its current form, which was completed in late 2012. Interviews were held with the Rector, Fr Howard Stoker (C1), and Glyn Purland (C2), who was churchwarden and who led the project from 2009.



Fig. 6: Church of St Andrew, Holt – view from west



Fig. 7: Church of St Andrew, Holt – view of courtyard from east with churchyard wall to left

The Church of St Edmund, Taverham (Church D – NR8 6SY) is listed grade I and has an eleventh-century round tower with fifteenth-century octagonal second

stage. The north wall of the church is visually the least appealing, but archaeologically the most interesting, with some of the earliest fabric, including a possibly eleventh-century doorway in the north wall. The south aisle and porch were added in the 1860s and make this the more visually attractive facade. Internally, there is a medieval timber chancel screen and choir stalls. A group interview was held with three members of the church's building team (D1, D2, D3).



Fig. 8: Church of St Edmund, Taverham – view from north west



Fig. 9: Church of St Edmund, Taverham – view from south west

The proposed scheme, at concept design stage at the time of the interview, is for a detached building of curved form and modern design that provides meeting rooms and ancillary facilities and that creates an external welcome space between it and the south side of the church (Drawings D8, D9); this would involve the removal of some trees and the moving of some burials. A meeting was held in late 2014 with representatives of the Diocesan Advisory Council (DAC), Church Buildings Council

(CBC), Historic England and the local authority; while the DAC and CBC are broadly supportive of the strategy, the other two bodies prefer a detached building on the field to the north, thereby ignoring the expressed need for the new accommodation to be closely integrated with the old.

The final building is the grade I listed **Church of St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury, Wymondham** (hereafter ‘Wymondham Abbey’ – Church E – NR18 9PH), which is classed as a major parish church, and described as a building of ‘international historic and architectural importance’ (Appendix 10.E17: para. 4). Originally built in 1107 as a Benedictine priory, the church is the surviving fragment of what, prior to the dissolution of the monasteries, was a much larger complex. The church as it now stands has two towers, one at each end of the nave, and large side aisles. In addition to the other buildings associated with a substantial monastic community, the church itself had also previously had an extensive chancel to the east of the now ruined east tower for the use of the abbey community, while the nave served as the parish church. The church also has twentieth-century work of note in the form of an elaborate altar screen by Sir Ninian Comper. As well as being listed grade I, the ruined east tower and adjacent standing remains are a scheduled ancient monument, and the land to the south is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



Fig. 10: Wymondham Abbey – view from east (June 2015)

Interviews, which took place during the latter stages of the construction phase of the project, were held with two leading members of the client team, Fr Christopher Davies (the incumbent, interviewee E1) and Mike Halls (E2), and with the architect, Henry Freeland (E3). The scheme, which was under development for some 15 years,

aimed to provide meeting rooms and ancillary facilities, to open the church up to visitors and to create an education and interpretation centre; this involved the removal of some internal accretions, the reopening of the west door for ceremonial use, and two extensions (Drawings E10–E12). Of these, the northern extension to the east of the north aisle was uncontroversial as it replaced a derelict boiler room on the site of the Lady Margaret Chapel, and is largely bounded by existing walls. The focus of concern was the southern extension, which enlarges the south aisle eastwards to flank the east tower, and whose architectural language is strikingly contemporary. Stakeholder consultations resulted in substantial reservations, particularly from SPAB and the CBC, with other concerns expressed by Historic England. None of these organisations wished to become party opponent to the scheme, and the chancellor relied on their earlier written representations in reaching her judgment to grant a faculty in July 2013; construction was completed in late 2015.



Fig. 11: Wymondham Abbey – view from south east (June 2015)

3.1.2. Recognising needs

Each of the case study churches has an active congregation, and it is this activity that gave rise to each project. Active churches, particularly in rural areas such as those in the case study, have a mixed demographic and generally wish to cater for families with school age and younger children as well as for older people, and to extend the use of the building through the week. These activities typically translate into the need for a

range of flexible smaller rooms for Sunday school and midweek use, with supporting facilities of WCs and kitchens. Providing these spaces internally to the church building involves the subdivision of smaller spaces from what is usually a single large main space, as in the proposals for Blofield. Alternatively these spaces might be provided externally to the original building, as in the other four examples; but whichever strategy is adopted, meeting such needs involves substantial change and significant expense.

Many congregations are in decline (Brierley 2014), and that is the picture most often portrayed in the media; the contrast with the case study churches was foregrounded by some contributors (e.g. A3: 28, B2: 203). The health of the church community inevitably impacts on the buildings themselves; one incumbent noted that some church communities 'are in danger of thinking we have to become another village hall, because actually church life is so fragile, and we can survive that way, rather than being re-energised as Christians' (A2: 114). Jeremy Bell (A3: 36) explicitly linked the health of church communities to that of their buildings, again in the context of change:

Dioceses are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, and so there is less and less money available for the heritage assets to be maintained. But purely looking at it from a point of view of preservation of the heritage assets, adaptation is essential. And at some point there's going to be a huge outcry because churches have declined into such small numbers that there are unsustainable levels of finance available for the heritage assets.

Bell subsequently underlined this linkage, noting that 'there's no cognisance of the effect that the preservation agenda is having on making it so difficult to make adaptations to listed places of worship' (A3: 38).

Both growth and decline are in part driven by wider changes in social fabric. The market town of Wymondham and the village of Brundall are both experiencing substantial growth in population with the building of new housing, and these churches saw responding to this as both an opportunity and a responsibility. Such population growth presents significant challenges for churches; for example, with the expansion of Wymondham servicing employment in Norwich, Fr Davies (E1: 100) pondered 'how, if we can, can we relate to these people, who simply come home to sleep, and [for whom] work and leisure is elsewhere?' Responding to this social change itself generates additional needs, and thus pressure for change to church buildings.

The current approvals process requires church communities to develop a clear articulation of their needs – in a 'statement of needs' (Section 2.3.4) – before they can apply for a faculty. Since this requirement was introduced into the faculty system in 2000, the use of this document has subtly changed; it is now usual for DACs and the CBC to request it be prepared much earlier in the process, and other statutory stakeholders will often not attend even an initial meeting unless one has been

circulated. A statement of needs is often therefore an iterative document that develops through the pre-construction stages of a project; one was in place for each of the case study projects with the exception of Taverham.

Many interviewees well understood the importance of a clear articulation of needs; B3 (38), for example, asked: 'What is it that we're going to use these spaces for? Because there's no point in embarking on any expensive reordering or refurbishment unless we're really clear about what the use is going to be.' And it was partly a reflection on whether the church's needs were being met that led to the abandonment of the unrealised south aisle scheme at Holt, for which permission would likely have been forthcoming, in favour of starting afresh on the more substantial scheme that has now been completed (C2: 26–30).

Of course not all will accept the validity of the link between change in the activities of the church or the wider community and the need to change the building; it is evident that some amongst the immediate neighbours at Brundall were content to see the church unchanged, with the effect, in the view of one contributor, of reducing it to no more than 'a quaint little church that looks twee, and takes a nice photo, and which nobody ever comes to' (B2: 105). Even here, however, with the dust settling after the failure of the building project, it appears that some of the principal objectors were concerned more at the scale of the proposed change rather than the principle of development and change in itself (B3: 60).

Many churches recognise the wisdom of spending time listening to their local community before progressing too far with a project proposal. At Brundall, open days were organised to update the community, but reportedly attempts were made by those opposed to the development to disrupt these events (B2: 127–129). The consultation at Blofield proved more successful (A2: 10–12), starting with a questionnaire distributed after each of the Christmas services in 2010 and followed by an open day. This was a sophisticated exercise: the questionnaire was well structured, the public meeting carefully framed, and the responses thoroughly analysed. Contrary to expectations, the feedback 'was incredibly positive' (A2: 12), and provided valuable statistical evidence of widespread community support for change, strengthening the subsequent application documentation.

3.1.3. Articulating needs

Statements of needs are intended to be more than a list of requirements; the pro forma offered by the CCBD (2017f) encourages churches to reflect on 'public benefits... such as liturgical freedom [and] pastoral wellbeing' and it is often evident in the language

used that undergirding the list of requirements is a sense of vocation, of the church being called to be a missional community. One contributor wanted

a bigger vision of what mission means in this community. I do get concerned at the number of churches that are awarded quite substantial grants for reordering, that actually have no sense, or very little sense, of mission, and what it'll mean, or how [the building] can be used as a tool for mission.

(B3: 104)

Common to the three successfully or partially completed projects (Holt, Wymondham and Blofield) is a coherent sense of vision that was well articulated by the leadership of the church. Architect Jeremy Bell suggested that in terms of client capacity, this ability to articulate vision was 'the essential skill' (A3: 42). Rooting this in the biblical quotation 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29.18), he went on to spell out the corollary that vision is central to human flourishing. This example illustrates how naturally some within the Church (in this case an architect with Christian faith) will interrelate a practicality and a theological/spiritual understanding. Another contributor (B1) emailed me shortly after the interview to express his regret that our discussion had focused too much on process, insisting that the project had been the subject of much prayer, and reflecting in terms of their relationship with God on its ultimate failure. Similarly, both contributors at Holt were at ease situating the project firmly within a theological/spiritual context (e.g. C2: 44).

For some conservation professionals who may not share a Christian faith (and even for some who do) this intrusion of religious discourse may be viewed with suspicion and discomfort. Yet the logic of the current values-based conservation process is that at the very least the importance for the community of this religious discourse should be acknowledged. Hence, under the umbrella of communal value, Historic England's *Conservation principles* explicitly identifies 'spiritual value', which 'can emanate from the beliefs and teachings of an organised religion' (2008: 32). If such a value is to be engaged with at all, it should be taken seriously, and not reduced to purely secular terms. However, funding criteria – for example for the Heritage Lottery Fund – encourage this secularisation of vocabulary in the grant application process, with the strong implication that the theological is an exclusively privatised concern.

By contrast, we should note that, for these communities, there is a much bigger picture in play than a secularised description of a particular proposal or piece of historic fabric allows. And once the theological is accepted as a valid form of discourse we can see this ability to situate the particular in the broader picture as a substantial *strength* of this sort of community. It is therefore not necessary to hold a Christian faith to recognise the relevance of this theological/spiritual dimension, and which the interviews show is not only present but central to every one of the case study projects. At issue here is the

question of how different traditions – in this case Christianity and secular modernity – are able to talk to one another, a crucial theme considered further in Chapter 4.

The identification and articulation of needs was critical to the conservation outcomes for each of the projects considered in this chapter. Additionally, the religious nature of these buildings means that those needs are articulated in explicitly religious terms by the core communities responsible for instigating the work. It should be noted that the centrality of this religious discourse has the force of law; as discussed in Section 2.3.4, and explicitly pointed out by Jeremy Bell (A3: 28), the 1991 Measure requires all those involved with the care of church buildings to ‘have due regard to the role of a church as a local centre of worship and mission’. The extent of ‘due regard’ goes unexplained, but as will be seen in the next section, this law seems ‘more honoured in the breach than the observance’.¹⁵

3.2. PROCESS

3.2.1. Experiencing the process

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those involved in the successfully completed projects generally raised fewer criticisms of the approvals process; that said, regardless of outcome, many found it complex or difficult. A number of images, some commonplace and others more striking, were used to describe it, including ‘red tape’ and ‘clunky’ (both B3: 92), ‘tortuous’ (B1: 187), ‘jumping through the hoops’ (B2: 155, 160, 162), walking the ‘tightrope’ between preservation and need (B3: 80), buildings being ‘conserved in aspic’ (C1: 176) and the ‘stranglehold’ that the current (secular) historical understanding has over outcomes (A3: 62). Some found the process bruising: ‘I think we’re buffeting our way with blinkers on’ (D2: 161), because of all the people whose cooperation is needed in order for the project to progress; another added that ‘it just feels incredibly overwhelming, because there are so many people involved’ (D3: 348).

Even for Glyn Purland at Holt, the process is a complex one (C2: 24), and this from someone with a lifetime’s work in NHS project management, including of the construction of the Queen’s Medical Centre in Nottingham. Sue Shillam, also retired from a career in project management, noted that the process she might adopt from the corporate world ‘absolutely doesn’t work’, and commented on the need to take a slower approach, ‘a bit more of a scenic route’ (A1: 54). However, she did not see a need for major change to the system, presumably reflecting her experience of successful outcomes across a variety of projects within that process (A1: 36, 78, 82). Perhaps the correlation of project managers with successful projects indicates not only

¹⁵ *Hamlet* (Shakespeare [1603] 2008), Act I, scene 4.

their professional relevance, but also that without that particular expertise communities may be significantly disadvantaged. Viewed from a discourse analysis perspective (Chapter 2), the construction of the system might itself serve to exclude those without a comparable professional background, in a form of (unintentional) systemic restrictive practice. However well intentioned the actors within the system might be, this may place project success beyond the reach of many Church communities.

Frustration at the extended timescales was a common theme; at Taverham, it was felt that the process ‘just moves incredibly slowly’ (D3: 23). Indeed all five of the case study churches had been trying to do something for many years, often decades, and the comment made early in the first conversation at Brundall could stand for the experience of many churches: ‘There’s *always* been a building project’ (B1: 8). For Fr Christopher Davies, the process at Wymondham ‘feels like a lifetime’s journey’ (E1: 48), and when asked what one thing he would like to see changed it was ‘the timescale, the time in which it takes to get everybody on board and the permissions’ (E1: 110). In the same passage he goes on to reflect that this does have advantages – the ability to refine the scheme – alongside the disadvantages. Indeed, in her judgment, the chancellor noted the wide consultation as that project developed and ‘the willingness of the petitioners to take account of other opinions which did not perhaps accord with their own’ (Appendix 10.E17: para. 6). However, the impact of the extended timescales was mostly viewed negatively by contributors, mindful perhaps of the cost for volunteer organisations such as churches, a theme returned to below.

Another near-universal theme was the need for early consultation (e.g. A2: 78, C1: 146). At Wymondham, at the architect’s suggestion, a stakeholder consultation was held at a very early stage that included the DAC, Historic England, the conservation officer, and the amenity societies (E2: 14); Mike Halls believes this exercise was central to their subsequent success in gaining all the required permissions. At Holt, too, the importance of early and wide consultation was identified (C1:146–154). And in reflecting on how a future project might be approached differently at Brundall, one of the key points was the need to listen in consultation, and to ‘get alongside the District Council people [...] from the very start, not just at the end’ (B2: 221).

In the case of Blofield the unexpected need to spend substantial sums on rectifying defects in the tower shifted the focus away from the gallery scheme, which had drawn significant comment in the written representations from stakeholders, and the memory of those exchanges was largely absent from the interviews. None of that comment was in outright opposition, but was questioning details of the scheme, and particularly the impact of the proposed gallery extending into the side aisles, for example in the letter from Historic England dated 01/12/2010 (Appendix 10.A04), and

again in one from SPAB on 21/03/2011 (Appendix 10.A05). It is impossible to tell whether these comments would have hardened into objections to the scheme had it progressed – there appeared to be a number of substantial issues to be resolved – or whether the dialogue was a more positive one because of the nature of the proposals and the thorough preparation the church had put into their presentation. One exchange, between the incumbent and the CBC (Appendix 10.A08), demonstrates a refreshing concern for the impact of official communication on non-professional recipients.

3.2.2. Stakeholder support and opposition

Aside from Brundall, where consultation records are partially missing, each of the other schemes had drawn substantial reservations or outright opposition from one or more of the statutory consultees. As noted, at Taverham the initial round of consultation resulted in the Historic England case officer and the conservation officer being opposed to the current scheme, with the CBC, DAC and SPAB broadly in favour. And the consultation for the successful schemes at Wymondham and Holt did not resolve every disagreement; indeed in Mike Halls' view (E2: 22), 'and I don't mind saying it, SPAB will always object to any extension'. At Holt, SPAB warmly welcomed the proposal for the 'link-detached' building, saying in a letter of 13/07/2010 (Appendix 10.C09) that in contrast to the earlier south aisle scheme 'the result is a much more confident structure and one which is of greater interest but without competing with the historic building'; and at Brundall, in their letter of 09/09/2009 (Appendix 10.B02) they raised no objection to a proposed intervention that it could be argued would have overwhelmed the original building. Clearly Mike Hall's view is not always justified, but the fact that it is held by a chartered town planner who has specialised since the 1960s in conservation planning is telling. It suggests the visible interventions by consultees conceal a markedly different, and sometimes antithetical, understanding of historic buildings, and therefore of what types of change might be acceptable; or as one contributor put it, each 'has their own axe to grind' (D2: 208). Equally, it may simply reflect the way reputations, once formed, endure.

At Holt there were two significant points of conflict with stakeholders. The first was an initially negative response from Historic England once the additional land to the south became available and the current scheme began to be explored. The view taken was that breaching the churchyard wall was unacceptable because the boundary was an ancient one. In response to this, the rector wrote directly to the then Chief Executive of English Heritage (now Historic England), Simon Thurley, questioning the approach taken by the local case officer. Thurley suggested that a meeting be convened with the

case officer and the local authority conservation officer, at which a compromise was agreed which orientated the new building to the geometry of the churchyard, with the glazed north wall preserving the line of the ancient boundary (C1: 126–136).

The second point of conflict was a last-minute formal objection to the scheme by the Victorian Society, who because of the lack of Victorian fabric had only been consulted late in the process. In a letter of 20/04/2012 (i.e. after the DAC had issued its recommendation of approval to the chancellor; Appendix 10.C12) the Society agreed with many aspects of the scheme, including the principle of the extension and the treatment of the glazed link; it was the modern architectural idiom of the proposal which particularly ‘dismayed’ them. The line of argument is of interest; given the general lack of external fabric falling within their remit, the objection was argued on the basis of opposition to the removal of an entirely nondescript early twentieth-century boiler house:

The Committee’s view was that the building should be less conspicuous and not compete for attention with the listed church. Consequently, the Committee felt that the loss of historic fabric demanded by the works – in particular, the early twentieth-century extension to the South Porch – was not justified by the quality of the new building.

This tactic of using an insignificant element of fabric to argue a quite different point, and one relating to aspects of the building outside their remit, again suggests the animating power of an underlying belief about what is appropriate in such circumstances, and how susceptible historic buildings are to harm. In a hastily convened telephone conference between Glyn Purland (C2), the Diocesan Registrar and Tom Ashley (the Victorian Society’s Churches Conservation Advisor at the time) the formal objection was not withdrawn, but the Society agreed not to pursue it, allowing the faculty to be granted and work to start on site a week later (C2: 66–84). The episode also illustrates how easily an amenity society response can become unremittingly negative which, in the long term, risks undermining their authority: in discussion after the interview had formally ended, Fr Howard Stoker specifically returned to the Victorian Society as the one body who had opposed the scheme; in his telling, ‘They just said “No!”’

3.2.3. Diocesan Advisory Committees

Given its central role in the approvals process, the DAC unsurprisingly drew significant comment. The current DAC Secretary, who had been in post for just under a year at the time of the parish interviews, sees his role as less administrative and more as a ‘critical friend [...] to parishes in enabling them to try and think more creatively and holistically about what they want their church to be’ (N1: 4); this proactive approach has been greatly appreciated (e.g. A1: 38). At Blofield there was significant frustration directed towards the DAC, evident in some of the project correspondence and the interview with

the then incumbent (e.g. A2: 18), but in general the DAC's role was viewed very positively (e.g. E1: 54). However, for Jeremy Bell (A3: 28) a typical DAC shows too great a focus on the past and a timidity that flows from the contingent nature of the ecclesiastical exemption:

But the DACs guard this [ecclesiastical exemption] very carefully by trying to demonstrate that they know more about conservation than the conservation officer. And so they tend to be architectural historians, and historians, and art historians, and archaeologists, and people who love history. No, I value their input, it's enormous, but absent from the groups is any major voice with academic clout saying 'Despite the history, this church will only have a future if this and this happens.'

By contrast, Bell judges Norwich DAC 'quite forward thinking' (A3: 34).

The issue of the variability of DACs between dioceses is something that is more evident for those outside the parishes who work across a number of dioceses. Revd Paul Cubitt was also aware of this variance through exposure to church projects across the country via *Church Building* magazine. This led him to suggest a market liberalisation on the model of utility suppliers: 'in the same way that you can get Scottish Water from here, and I can get Southern Power, why can't I go to Bristol DAC for a faculty?' (A2: 106). Another contributor questioned the need for the DAC at all: 'I mean I would be radical and say why are those hoops there anyway. They're not a help, they're an added cost. And that centrally there should be a department that is there to actually help you forward.' (B2: 221). This was not a plea to escape statutory control; 'you've still got to do your homework' (B2: 221) in talking to Historic England and other statutory consultees. It should be noted that these last comments were made in the context of a proposal for a predominantly new building, and where the church had felt let down by the DAC, who had declined to write a letter of support to the planning authority (B2: 153).

3.2.4. Stakeholder accountability

The architect Henry Freeland, who himself serves on Ely DAC, made an important distinction between the potential lack of accountability of individual voices from the secular side of the process, with the essentially consensual nature of the DAC:

very often in a [local authority] there is quite a powerful conservation officer who has very strong opinions about something, and the planners are not capable of forming their own opinion, because they're relying too much on the conservation officer's views. And so internally you're not getting a consensus of opinion and a balanced view about it, you're getting an individual who is really deciding whether they think it's appropriate or not. I think the DAC situation is better, because you have a number of people who are coming to a consensus of opinion. [...] It's the same with [Historic England] probably, if you get a particular officer who is dealing with it, that can influence the situation quite strongly.

(E3: 58)

For Freeland this has the bizarre implication that change to a modest grade II cottage, where responsibility for approving a proposal effectively rests with a single conservation officer, can be harder than for a grade I listed medieval church of national importance, where the process is more complex but is conducted as a dialogue (E3: 90).

Another contributor noted that they had had no problems with the local authority conservation officer: 'Why did it work well? It worked well because we never dealt with him alone' (C2: 238). And Mike Halls, after a career as a conservation planner, called for tighter integration between the DAC, the planners, and other statutory bodies, to avoid each separate party making their own evaluation of the building, and instead 'getting their processes working a lot closer together' (E2: 50). It is unclear how realistic this is, and the current system places ultimate responsibility for reconciling these differences on the chancellor. Even at Wymondham, with its thorough early consultation, the process did not result in consensus. Churches are often surprised when heritage experts hold differing views; a lack of consistency between organisations, and even within a single organisation over time, undermines credibility, making the process as a whole seem incoherent. Perhaps, however, this simply indicates that expert opinion is itself an ongoing dialogue, a reality that experts themselves, concerned to defend their authority, may not advertise.

On the other hand there was widespread acknowledgement from contributors that churches need input from outside bodies. At Taverham, the view was expressed that

It's right that there are these checkpoints in place, because I think if everybody's perspective is only on what you want to do, you could actually ruin [...] all kinds of things. So I think it's right that those checkpoints are there.

(D1: 265–267)

However, the input that was received in that case was felt to be lacking; D1 continues: 'But it almost seems that you expect to fight with [Historic England], and that says something about their lack of understanding I think about where we're coming from.'

For another contributor the DAC strikes the right balance:

the DAC now, I really think is very good at seeing what the need is now, and walking that tightrope between the preservation, but actually understanding what the need is. So I think that the process, and the conversations that we can have, have improved.

(B3: 80)

The interviews showed that the process is experienced as highly complex, even by those familiar with construction projects, and the extended timescales were a common source of frustration. However, when the system works as it should, several interviewees could see the advantages in early and broad consultation; some of the most negative comments arose where consultees had engaged in declamation rather

than dialogue. Furthermore, at its best a DAC brings together an unrivalled breadth of experience. Questions of the composition and chairing of the DAC fell outside the scope of the interviews, but given the central position of the DAC in the operation of the system, these are significant factors in the outcomes achieved for church communities; a recent CBC report (Appendix 9) demonstrates this is a current concern.

3.3. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT FOR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

Of the five projects considered, two are successfully and fully completed. The project at Taverham is notionally still in process, but at the time of writing had progressed no further in the two years since the interviews; it seems that the vehemence of the opposition at the meeting on 2 October 2014 has caused the project to stall (Matthew McDade, pers. comm. 12/09/2017). In the case of Brundall the project was abandoned, with much of the focus (particularly in the first interview) on the relation of the church to its neighbours and the staunch and well-organised opposition to the project from some within the community. One contributor reflected that the failure of the project was not necessarily a bad thing, because it enabled a fresh start and the rebuilding of relationships (B3: 54–56); this was in the context of a wholly different approach to ministry (B3: 18). At Blofield, the gallery project had been reduced hugely in scope following the diversion of funds to address structural problems in the tower. While various elements of the Blofield scheme had subsequently been pursued piecemeal, one of the principal drivers of the project was left unfulfilled as there was still no means of having smaller groups concurrently undertaking different activities within the building (A1: 58, A2: 38); achieving this, however, remains a possibility for a future project.

3.3.1. Leadership and capability

Changes to the building are, however, only one type of project outcome; the interviewees had much to say on the demands placed upon, and consequent impacts for, the people involved. One common theme was the pivotal role of the incumbent. For Fr Davies ‘a project like this could not succeed unless the incumbent was absolutely foursquare behind it. [...] And seen to be’ (E1: 68–70). As well as being the one who articulates the vision, and who encourages the community to hold its nerve, for Revd Paul Cubitt the incumbent represents the idea

that change is possible, change brings renewal, change brings new life, and change brings people together, if it's done the right way. If you're happy with mediocrity, and buildings covered with green slime, I don't think it's a place of worship. It's meant to say something about the goodness of God, is it not? – [laughs] – a place of fellowship and nurture and teaching, and if it's skanky and manky it just tells a horrible story, and the Gospel's got to be a good news story, hasn't it?

(A2: 54)

The theme of narrative introduced here is elaborated in Section 3.4.

Another significant issue raised is the skills base and organisational capacity within each church community. Each of the schemes that to date have successfully produced tangible results – Blofield, Holt and Wymondham – had an incumbent who was able to articulate a clear vision for the project and actively address opposition as it arose, for example where Fr Stoker ‘took on’ Historic England (C1: 130–132), as described above. This requires skills that are unlikely to have formed part of ordination training. In each of these three cases the incumbent worked with a retired lay person with relevant and substantial professional experience, two in project management (A1 and C2) and one in conservation planning (E2). The project at Brundall, which failed for reasons of local politics, was similarly ambitious and led by a similar combination of articulate incumbent and (semi-) professional laity, though perhaps without the specific skills available in the other examples.

At Taverham, by contrast, the project team lacks anyone with direct experience both of building projects in general and the successful operation of the faculty process in particular. Doubts were voiced in the group as to their capacity to manage their project: ‘I’m not sure ... that between us we have all the skills that are needed to drive it forward properly’ (D3: 156). Many such churches rely on their architect (D3: 348), but architects cannot and should not carry a project on their own; a successful outcome depends on the church maintaining their morale and sense of purpose yet, as seen in the previous chapter, much conservation discourse serves precisely to erode these essentials. It should also be noted that Taverham was the project which generated much the greatest level of criticism of the process.

The interview material illustrates the significant demands the process places on church communities, a burden often carried by a handful of individuals. Fr Stoker at Holt described the process as good, ‘but not without its difficulties’, and specifically highlighted the importance of ‘having the right people’ (C1: 120, 122). Glyn Purland, who led the project at Holt, was adamant that there should not be one person seen to be driving the project, and the structures were deliberately pared down and unified with those that already existed; hence his involvement was by virtue of, and indivisible from, his role as churchwarden, and there was no separate building committee (C2: 88). This collaborative approach was also articulated in noticeably religious terms, for example in his seeking to maintain an ‘attitude of servant rather than master’ (C2: 142; cf. Matthew 23.10–12). The wisdom of the client employing an open organisational structure was also noted from the outside by Henry Freeland, who observed that the progress on the Wymondham project prior to 2007 had been ‘intermittent’ because those leading the project had at that time been unable to persuade the rest of the PCC to pursue it (pers.

comm.). How the church leadership (and particularly the incumbent) relates to the vision for the project is critical; if the vision was developed by the leadership but not subsequently owned by the congregation, then the project will often stall, or be abandoned altogether.

The need for 'the right people' extends to the professional team required for these kinds of projects. At Wymondham the church quickly realised they did not have the skills necessary to make the quality of HLF bid required, and employed a specialist consultant for this. Amongst a suite of other documents, the proposals were supported by a full Conservation Management Plan prepared by Stuart Davies Associates (Appendix 10.E06) and an Archaeological Assessment and Mitigation Strategy by Dr Roland Harris (Appendix 10.E05); both of these are leaders in their field, as is the architect, Henry Freeland, who has an excellent reputation for work in sensitive historic locations. Without doubt the strategic choice of professional team, complemented by the capacity and confidence within the PCC, lent credibility to the project in the process of gaining permissions and funding.

3.3.2. Counting the cost

Corresponding to the prominence of their role, the direct cost to the clergy can be substantial, involving not only reputational risk, but also a great deal of time devoted to something few would see as part of their vocation. Despite being able to work alongside the very able Sue Shillam, one can hear the weariness in Revd Cubitt's comment (A2: 48) that the project

still needed a lot of incumbent's time to push it, sell it, jump on the DAC, and rattle bars, and I think, towards the end, almost every week, once or twice a week, I was having building meetings week after week, year after year after year.

For Fr Davies at Wymondham (E1: 52), one of the biggest challenges was a potential loss of nerve in the development phase of the project, as expenditure on fees topped £100,000 with nothing concrete to show for it:

So it was really a matter of refining the vision, refining the vision, and holding your nerve, and trying to keep people on board, which in a voluntary organisation is not a mean feat. [...] Everybody is a volunteer and it's [done] by cajoling and convincing rather than by clicking your fingers.

Again this underlines the central importance of clarity of vision if a project is to survive the process and reach a successful outcome.

The complexity of the process can have a significant cost for church communities; at Brundall, for example, that cost is in terms of disillusionment, and a dissipation of the energy the church needs to thrive:

I just think it's costly for volunteers, I think, for people who give up a lot for the church already. I look at the church building project that was abandoned, and I inherited a weary church, because they had put so much of themselves into not just the DAC application, but the other things that went round, and actually have had nothing to show for it.

(B3: 94)

As others at Brundall put it, 'The church family lost heart in the end. That's why we never took it any further' (B2: 223).

Glyn Purland commented on what he described as the 'hinterland of the project' at Holt, by which he meant the consequences of the scheme for the subsequent financial health of the church community (C2: 224). Substantial projects that add facilities to a community building, particularly in the case of extensions or additional buildings, will increase the regular outgoings and maintenance liabilities; it is therefore one thing to raise the capital to build a scheme, but quite another to ensure the community has sufficient revenue for its financial stability in the long term, and therefore to deliver the other outcomes that form the broader vision for the project. Happily, in the case of Holt, the church have taken a robust attitude to overall financial management, including charging, where appropriate, for the letting of church facilities; with the help of a new and more proactive treasurer, the church is now able to meet its liabilities in full (C2: 216–224).

It is striking that the three churches with successfully concluded projects each had an incumbent capable of articulating a coherent vision supported by competent lay professional support. There are many more churches in a diocese such as Norwich with equal needs that lack these necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for successful change; the fact that only a handful have succeeded speaks of the fragility of more typical communities. A second strong theme from the interviews was the extent of the demands placed on these volunteer organisations and their leaders, and the weariness and depletion of energy that results from the drawn-out nature of the process. For these reasons the threshold of engagement with changing historic buildings is very high, much to the detriment of what has been described in Chapter 1 as 'balanced heritage'.

3.3.3. Community and theology

Another complementary theme was a ready engagement with non-physical aspects of heritage, with various contributors commenting on the close relation between their historic building and the communities that call it their own. B3 would like to see the 'clunky' faculty system overhauled, but 'doing it in such a way that actually the integrity of the building, and the integrity of those who care for it, can be maintained' (B3: 92); clearly for this contributor the link between the building and the people is a close one.

By implication, safeguarding the integrity of the core community should be a major concern of any process, and is essential to the health of the building. For Fr Stoker at Holt the completed building is 'bringing people into contact with the church', and 'has put the church back at the heart of the community' (C1: 26, 28). And Revd Cubitt recalled another building project with which he had been involved in Yorkshire, saying

the effect on the congregation was vast. [...] There was [...] the sense the building had become damp, uncared for, and it *did* affect the congregation, who also came across as damp [laughs] somehow, and nothing was ever going to change. And that sense of renewal of the building brought a real sense of renewal and hospitality. It was just amazing.

(A2: 58–60, emphasis original)

In the same passage the change was delightfully illustrated in terms of biscuits, from the rationing of Rich Tea before the project to the free availability of a chocolate assortment after its completion.

At Taverham, the first amongst a number of points noted in the DAC minutes from the consultation meeting on 02/10/14 (Appendix 10.D03: 2) reads:

The concept behind the hall was to emphasise the liminal spaces within and around the church and to accentuate the concept of journey through and with the architecture. It was noted that an external narthex would, in effect, be created and that the model had clear Trinitarian overtones.

This use of the language of journey and of threshold, and the depiction of the proposal in explicitly theological terms, suggests that the church and its architect conceive of the building in non-physical as much as physical terms; in the interview material this link between church and new hall was described as 'psychological' (D3: 42, 309). Since the minutes were written by the DAC Secretary it is equally clear that this nuanced understanding is shared by representatives of the DAC, with the notion of journey returned to in the last sentence of the summary of the DAC position (p. 3). Concerns over the size of the proposed building were shared by the CBC (letter of 20/11/14: Appendix 10.D04) and SPAB (letter of 28/11/14: Appendix 10.D05), but these letters were broadly supportive of the strategy of building to the south; both restrict their commentary to physical aspects of heritage, with the exception of a single sentence in the CBC letter listing a number of church activities. By contrast the representatives of Historic England and the local authority were opposed not only to the size but to the location of the proposed building, and the impression left on the church was that they 'had not engaged at all with our vision [and had] only engaged on a purely physical and practical level' (D3: 227). Taken together, the comments above show sharply varying degrees of engagement with what the Historic England methodology terms spiritual and communal value. In some cases these values are entirely absent from the

stakeholder contributions, and it is only in the DAC minutes that they play any meaningful role.

The interview at Taverham also produced a clear statement of two contrasting views of churches seen either as monuments ('stately homes') or as living buildings, the difference flowing from one's understanding of the relation of the building to Christian faith and practice:

Christianity in many of these places is old hat now, they really aren't interested. It's purely the visual impression, the maintaining of a stately home type thing. With a stately home things are going on to preserve the actual aura of the home, but here, what goes on here, is a Christian fellowship. Very often you have to change the building around ... like you do in your own homes [... when] family come along and this sort of thing.

(D2: 264)

The same contributor saw some of the external stakeholders having 'their own axe to grind', while the church see the building as a means 'to bring God's message to as many people as we can' (D2: 208). Later in the interview he characterised the building as 'the living church' before declaring, in a seemingly unknowing reference to Thomas Hardy's 'incompatibles' ([1906] 1967), 'It's a workshop, for Christian service' (D2: 281).

3.3.4. Churches as community hubs

Nowhere within the interviews with parishes was the view expressed that the historic nature of a medieval building was a problem; rather, the complaints were against those making claims over the buildings on the basis of their presumed fixity. One contributor, while acknowledging that 'lots of people [within the Church] complain about the medieval churches', insisted that they were an 'asset for mission' (B3: 104). Relating the contemporary desire to get more community activity back into churches with the way 'churches were used centuries ago' (B3: 90), the same contributor characterised them as 'hubs of community' (B3: 90, 110). Describing this as a 'return to the roots of the church, where we don't just see it as a place for worship on a Sunday', he believes that 'the challenge for the Church is whether they're willing to grasp that opportunity and use their church buildings, and reimagine the use of their church buildings as ways of serving community' (B3: 114). He subsequently added that 'I don't think it's too extreme to say that the survival of the Church depends on it' (B3: 120).

Another contributor, also at Brundall, well understood that multiple activities would at one time have occurred in the church, 'that in medieval times [...] the biggest building was the church, so if you wanted an event, a market even, you went to the church' (B2: 105). The proposal at Brundall, which was perhaps the most radical of all the schemes covered in this case study in the scope of its transformation of the original building, was justified in these terms of the community hub. The medieval building 'was

the centre of the village [...] We want it to be the heart of the village again' (ibid.). The National Churches Trust used its most recent annual report to set out a five point plan to secure the future of the UK's church buildings (NCT 2017), including the wider introduction of 'modern facilities, such as toilets, kitchens and heating' to support a greater range and level of community activities, citing opinion poll data demonstrating strong public support for 'the use of church buildings as "community hubs"', reflecting the broader re-emergence of this medieval paradigm.

The animating idea of the community hub reflects an understanding of 'balanced heritage' that integrates building and community. This understanding requires an integrated or, in the terms set out at the start of Chapter 1, synthetic approach; and it follows that the analytic approach adopted from the earliest days of conservation and embodied in legislation and current guidance can only misrepresent the hybrid nature of what were described in Chapter 1 as living buildings. It is noted firstly that the community voices collected in the interviews rejoice in this hybridity, something the consultee responses generally avoid, and secondly that the current system, at least as reflected in the consultee responses, ignores the communal with such ease. It is clear, therefore, that the synthetic approach demanded by the particular challenge of living buildings must be constructed on a different theoretical foundation.

3.4. REFLECTIONS ON CHANGE

3.4.1. Balancing past and future

Many of the interviewees showed a sophisticated understanding of change, and one which did not appear in the written stakeholder representations. Many interviewees complained that others often failed to understand that historic church buildings have typically undergone repeated change through their lives (e.g. B3: 12), what one called the 'genesis of change' (B1: 138). Revd Cubitt, in rewriting the guidebook for his current church, opens with the thought that 'What you see today is not what you would have seen yesterday.' He continues:

The biggest cultural problem we have in all of our churches is this belief by not only church folk but the parishes, that it has never changed. And it has always been like it, so *to change it is to damage what has always been the case*. So my approach is always, always to try and show people either through pointing out through a guidebook or whatever else, actually it's constantly evolved. Church buildings change when they have no money, and they can't afford to repair stuff, or they've got lots when they can afford to make changes, and they change for theological purposes and understandings, whether it be the Reformation or whatever else. But theology and money and a bit of the social make-up of a place have always led to church fabric changing.

(A2: 72, emphasis added)

Not only does Revd Cubitt identify that we often limit what we can imagine of history to the horizon of our memory, he also spells out a crucial implication of this, that change becomes conflated with harm, a misunderstanding that runs right through the current conservation process, as seen in Chapter 2.

The passage from B1: 132–139 provides a more extended example of this understanding of change. It reveals an appreciation of the distinction between the use of the site ‘since Saxon times’ and the building as it stands now. It also shows an understanding that some of those opposing the scheme like the church as it is: ‘they think it’s been like this since time immemorial, when it hasn’t. [...] some people wanted it to remain as they had always known it’ (B2: 132). The same passage displays a close familiarity with the different stages of development of the building, the archaeology that might be found beneath the building, and recent quirks such as the brickwork at high level where the thatched roof was removed in the Victorian restoration. Fr Davies articulates this same understanding of change at Wymondham (E1: 88):

So in a sense the building has never been static, never. The monks had barely finished it when they were arguing with the town about putting up another tower or whatever. So it’s been an ongoing thing.

Along with other contributors, Fr Davies showed a nuanced appreciation of history, and an active and ongoing engagement with the building through that sense of history. Describing its importance, he says:

For me personally, the very fact that for 909 years people have used it as a place of worship; that’s the single most important thing for me and I think for most of the congregation there is a sense of continuity. I always say to couples who come to get married here, when I take them through the preparation and the lead up to the wedding and I say at the rehearsal ‘You’re standing on the spot where for 900 years couples have exchanged their vows’, you can almost see the frisson. And as I say, that’s the world of difference between coming to a place like this and going to the registry office in Norwich.

(E1: 46)

Taking these two quotes together, it is clear that this ‘sense of continuity’ does not rely on keeping things the same, but is *dynamic*, a crucial distinction to be made when considering living buildings such as churches. The same idea is seen in the way Sue Shillam described the character of Blofield church: ‘The church, it is continuity, the building, because we are the church, the building is continuity; it has stood here all this time from 1400 with various changes and things’ (A1: 24). Not only is the building able to preserve its identity through change, it is also seen to provide continuity to the church community with which it forms a unified whole, suggesting the difficulty of separating tangible from intangible forms of heritage (Rudolff 2006, Poullos 2014). This sense of the continuity of identity through change emerges from the interviews as an important theme and will be explored more fully in Chapter 5.

Revd Cubitt (A2: 86) placed a sense of history within what could be termed a broad temporal footprint that concerns itself as much with the future as the past: ‘Understanding history, where you come from, helps you then to move forwards.’ He then went on to underscore the theological aspect of historic church artefacts by adding that ‘in order to respect the past you have to know what function something played in the past’. For Jeremy Bell there is too great a focus within conservation on the past, ‘because there’s very little difference now between the word “conservation” and the word “preservation”’ (A3: 36). In response to the ‘magic bullet’ question asked at the end of each interview (Appendix 1) he proposed the creation of a hypothetical organisation to provide greater balance in the conservation process:

I think I would start something called the “Council for the Future of the Church”, in order to evaluate and to form a body of opinion and an investment where the long term future of the Church takes a higher priority than the preservation of its past.

(A3: 58)

The conversation at Brundall shared a similar concern for the future and the need to pass something seen to be of great value on to the coming generations; once again that concern is rooted in an explicitly Christian understanding:

But as a true Christian, I’m thinking of those that come on, or ought to follow on, you know. It’s not about me, and people of my age, being happy with what we’ve got. But that’s no way to be a Christian, I don’t think. You’ve got to look beyond that, otherwise it’ll just go, it’ll just disappear.

(B2: 139)

In this case the ‘it’ clearly refers both to church as building and church as community; once again, for this contributor the two are indivisible parts of a rich and multilayered whole.

3.4.2. Evidence of narrative

In a number of interviews the idea of narrative emerged unprompted, and this often flowed naturally out of a discussion of change or continuity (e.g. A2: 54, quoted above). Fr Stoker, for example, is of the view that the majority of the statutory consultees

realise that every generation has left their mark on a building, that they’re not static, they’re not conserved in aspic, they’re not just stuck in a particular time. And so I think there is a willingness for a new generation to leave their mark. I think what they’re concerned about perhaps is that the integrity of the building is not lost or perhaps, you know, allowing the building to tell its story, architecturally, and so are not losing any of the story.

(C1: 176)

This optimistic view of consultees’ willingness to countenance change was not endorsed by some of the other contributors, nor indeed by this church’s experience of the Victorian Society’s late intervention (Section 3.2.2). However, the linking together of

the idea of churches as living buildings undergoing constant change ('they're not just stuck in a particular time') with an understanding of narrative (in 'allowing the building to tell its story') is significant, and echoes the central themes of this thesis. The key question, first raised in Section 1.4.1 and addressed in the following chapters, is what measures or processes can be created to ensure that 'the integrity of the building is not lost'; in short, what does it mean to change well?

Sometimes the building itself presents an overt invitation to continue the narrative, as at Wymondham, where the east wall of the south aisle had been temporarily infilled with brick, apparently in anticipation of a subsequent extension (E3: 24). In founding the abbey in 1107, William d'Aubigny had stipulated that the church should be shared between the religious community and the town (E2: 34). The pattern of its subsequent development, the 1249 ruling by Pope Innocent IV in an argument between the monks and the parish, and the survival of such a substantial fragment of the building after the dissolution of the monasteries, is an outworking of that foundational element of the narrative. Kristi Bain documents the hostility between the parish and the monks at Wymondham, and reflects on more recent use of that medieval narrative up to the present day, noting that 'the parish church as physical structure and ideal has had the potential to motivate community action and shape community identity today' (Bain 2014: 12). And to extend the literary metaphor further, the widening of access to the building which is a central feature of the recent project receives ample justification as the reincorporation of a theme first introduced at the outset of the narrative as a central part of the founder's vision.

3.4.3. Conflating change and harm

In contrast to the interview material, discussion of change in the documentation from statutory consultees is often couched in terms of fear and loss. For example, referring to the extension at Holt, the Victorian Society foresaw that 'as currently designed its impact would be greatly to the detriment of the sensitive church building and its setting' (Appendix 10.C12). Yet the response to the completed scheme from the local community has reportedly been very positive (C1: 20–26, C2: 216), suggesting that the risk of loss was far less, and the robustness of the church far greater, than the Society's dire warnings allowed. In similar vein, in a letter dated 03/01/2013 (Appendix 10.E11), SPAB urged the local planning authority to refuse planning permission for the scheme at Wymondham, anticipating 'that the proposal will have a major and detrimental impact on the character and significance of the building and its visual appearance'. Yet with the building now complete, and given its long history of change, it is very difficult to see this 'detrimental impact' on the building's significance, suggesting that concealed

beneath the surface of what is said lie radically different understandings of the fragility (or conversely the resilience) of that significance, and of the buildings themselves.

It is interesting to note the use of the word ‘detriment’/‘detrimental’ in both of these representations. The Oxford English Dictionary defines detriment as ‘the state of being harmed or damaged’; it is a late Middle English word from the Latin *detrimētum*, in turn from the stem of *deterere* ‘to wear away’. ‘Detriment’ is therefore closely related etymologically to ‘deterioration’, the *prevention* of which in historic buildings is of course a primary concern of conservation. But if change is also seen in this way, it is unsurprising that proposals for change, which church communities might see as desirable and life-affirming (as, for example, at A2: 54, quoted above), should attract opposition; after all, no one involved with these buildings would be happy to see them deteriorate. In part the difference is explained by the conflation of change and harm in official conservation discourse, as explored in Chapter 2, and in part church communities seem more able to countenance change as capable of enhancing the significance of their building (e.g. D2: 36). Indeed at Wymondham, in order to create ‘a worthy addition to a great building’, this encouraged a bolder solution, ‘something which makes a statement and doesn’t look like a little pimple on the side of a work of art’ (E1:22).

Fr Davies suggested another contributory factor, when he distinguished between the ability of the church (in this case the project steering group) to grasp the big picture of why the project was important, while the statutory consultees focused on fragments of the whole:

clearly they all have their own brief, and their own mantra. [...] But apart from us, the steering group, nobody could see the overall vision of what we hoped to achieve; or perhaps they could see it, but they weren’t particularly interested in it.

(E1: 76)

In similar vein, Revd Cubitt describes statutory consultees as ‘a one-dimensional argument’ (A2: 78). He then outlines a robust but nuanced approach to dealing with this potentially fragmentary input from external stakeholders, including the need to seek out and listen to the arguments against a proposal:

I think it’s really important to listen to those. And then you have to sit back and when they start to say ‘No you can’t do [that],’ you listen to the objections, which I think is really important. What are they objecting to? Is it that the objection is that it’s simply a change, and they can’t cope with a change? Is it because this thing that you wanted to get rid of has actually got a huge amount of value to it, and its destruction is unforgivable? You have to listen to that.

(A2: 80)

3.4.4. Reframing change

Another lay church contributor expressed an attitude to the past that would be regarded as wholly unacceptable in a conventional conservation setting. Referring to the chancel screen at Taverham as ‘Fred Bloggs, 1400’, he asked (D2: 210) ‘What’s the matter with Fred Bloggs 2015?’ While this could be dismissed as a callous disregard for history, it is also possible to see within it a broader and deeper understanding of history. The justification that immediately follows – ‘because that 615 years, in the eyes of God, is absolutely nothing’ – once again makes it clear that for this contributor the fabric of the church building is part of the much bigger context of a community’s ongoing and active relationship with God; indeed, the building is not an end in itself, but its purpose is ‘to bring God’s message to as many people as we can’ (D2: 208). He concludes ‘And I think we definitely put too much emphasis on history’ which, in another form, is once again a call for a broader temporality.

The section which immediately follows contains material strikingly similar to some of the themes raised in Siân Jones’s (2004) study of local attitudes to the Hilton of Cadboll cross slab, for example in bewilderment at the claims of officialdom from outside, in the intimate engagement with the historic artefact, and perhaps most notably in treating that artefact as a person in its own right:

Why should the dead and those who’ve gone generations before be calling the shots for people who are here now? Now I’m not saying we should throw out the baby with the bathwater, and [we should] use common sense with it, because there’s good old, and there’s bad old. But it seems as if there are some groups that don’t seem to know the difference where what can stay, and what can go; which is an enhancement, and which is detrimental. It’s all old, so it must be good. And I must admit I don’t like that old door, that old Saxon door at the end there. ‘No you can’t take that [out]’. Well that’s a tatty old thing, and if Alfred the Great was around now he’d say ‘Why don’t you change it?’ [laughs]. There are some things we should just be able to get rid of and say, ‘Well you’ve done your purpose, you’re only a door, after all’.

(D2: 212)

Some conservation professionals would conclude from the above that historic buildings should be removed from the care of local communities. Both the chancel screen and the doorway are explicitly mentioned in the listing text, and the ‘rare Saxon doorway’ was one reason DAC members opposed development to the north side of the building. But this contributor is not suggesting that the church should be able to do anything it likes; he is clear that we shouldn’t ‘throw out the baby with the bathwater’ (ibid.).

Most of the contributors articulated the view that their church building should be allowed to change. Architect Henry Freeland was unsurprised by the opposition to the changes at Wymondham from SPAB (speaking as a long time member), since they

would say 'it's a fine old crumbly thing and it doesn't need any new interventions' (E3: 52). In the same passage he goes on to reflect on the danger that SPAB

will be left behind in the debate, if they can't move a bit. Because I think everybody else has moved. I think that if we were trying to do that 20 years ago [Historic England] would say 'Oh no, this is a museum'. And I think [...] that life has moved on and everybody realises that if our churches are going to be kept going they have got to adapt.

For Freeland such interventions need to be of the highest standards, using traditional materials in a modern way, as opposed to creating a historical pastiche. He puts the movement in official attitudes down to the gradual accumulation of successful exemplars, citing the recent conversion of Astley Castle by Witherford, Watson and Mann, which was awarded the 2013 Stirling Prize (E3: 54–56). But he sees a mixture of responses among different bodies: 'whether somebody like SPAB and the Victorian Society will move from their positions I don't know, but they're quite still "No, no, no". I think the problem with their position is that [...] they don't get taken seriously because they're so negative' (E3: 96).

With one exception (B2: 221), most interviewees saw the need for some control, that an 'any change' approach was neither desirable nor appropriate (e.g. B3: 94). Referring to Wymondham Abbey, the vicar Fr Davies (E1: 78) combined these two thoughts with his insistence that

this place is not a museum. It is a building, a facility which has to, within the constraints of its fabric, and there are clearly constraints, has to within those constraints serve the community in which it finds itself now. Because otherwise, what is it? Is it a museum, or is it a space for the community? There's no doubt in my mind which it needs to be [...] The end result [of the project] will be that we have enhanced the building.

This willingness to countenance change to historic buildings cannot be dismissed as ignorant and cavalier, for all the interviewees care deeply about the buildings for which they are responsible; rather, these exchanges indicate an alternative and richer understanding of history. For example, in the quote above, the idea that the historic building is capable of being *enhanced* suggests a view of history based on the continuity of past, present and future, and provides an account of how heritage is produced, something that is almost entirely lacking in orthodox conservation. At times, such confidence may prove misplaced, but we should not assume that always to be so. More positively we can see these as communities displaying 'ontological security', a phrase derived from Anthony Giddens (1991) and deployed in a heritage context by Jane Grenville (2007), denoting a degree of confidence in identity, purpose and action. Here that confidence can be seen to derive from the communal distinctiveness of the Church, and is closely related to the themes of tradition and narrative explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

The interviews present a broadly consistent view of change as positive and, at least potentially, non-harmful. This positive account of change is attended by a seemingly innate awareness of the intimate relationship between buildings and their core communities, and an understanding of a broad temporal footprint which combines past, present and future. This could not contrast more sharply with the typical approach of statutory consultees as seen in the case study correspondence; their input appears impoverished by a lack of recognition of this ‘balanced heritage’ and a narrow temporality that seems to accompany an often periodised brief. Hence contributor D2, for example, with his intimate involvement with that site through weekly maintenance of the grounds and building, resists the idea that ‘it’s all old, so it must be good’ (D2: 212).

Rather, the interviews suggest that once living buildings such as churches are brought from the distant past into meaningful (historical) dialogue with the present then it is legitimate to ask questions of them, and that those questions flow naturally from that dialogue, provided the core community is not excluded. How this is possible – through a hermeneutic rather than an aesthetic-historical understanding – is explored in Chapter 4. And while we might baulk at entrusting the fate of historic fabric to the fickleness of ‘common sense’, the use of that overworked phrase signals that external interventions that dictate the sanctity of particular aspects of the building, not least when they merit mention in the listing, often make little or no sense to those who expend great care and effort on the upkeep of their building. Jeremy Bell again characterises this in theological terms as the secular worship of history (A3: 62). These are valuable insights that demand the attention of conservation professionals.

3.4.5. Hybridity and the nature of church buildings

The scheme at Wymondham has the benefit, for our purposes, of the diocesan chancellor’s closely argued judgment, from which a mixed view of the nature of church buildings emerges (Appendix 10.E17). After praising the comprehensive statement of significance provided by the Conservation Management Plan, and the Archaeological Assessment, paragraph 17 goes on to comment further on the issue of significance:

It is abundantly clear, from these as well as other documents, that the significance of the church comes in large part from the development of a range of historical architectural styles over the centuries.

This sentence suggests an understanding of historic churches as fundamentally dynamic in nature and therefore, one might think, more accommodating of new interventions. Yet the paragraph continues:

Given this unique combination of architectural variety on the grand scale which exists at Wymondham, it is proper to regard the proposed works as resulting in harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

Viewed in light of the research questions identified in Chapter 1, these two sentences appear incompatible, unless it is supposed that the ‘unique combination of architectural variety’ has resulted in a completed art work whose significance is fixed. Paragraph 20 asserts that ‘It is clear that the principal harm occasioned will be the aesthetic impact of the new extension on the building’, underlining the potential for conflating change and harm under the aesthetic-historical view that, it is argued, still animates the current conservation process.

The judgment, however, has more to say on the question of architectural treatment. In paragraph 20, the chancellor also states that it is not for her to impose her own ‘aesthetic sensibilities’ on the petitioners. She then quotes from the 1998 *Blackheath, St John the Evangelist* judgment:

it is part of the joy and interest of listed buildings, and in particular churches, that they include accretions, many of which are not entirely consonant, with what was there before. If the accretion has merit, then normally it should not be removed, even in the interest of historical or architectural purity.

She then goes on to note that these ‘aesthetic considerations’ had been fully considered in the granting of planning permission, with the support of the conservation officer and Historic England, and need not be revisited. The *Blackheath* judgment points up a contrast of approach between ‘historical or architectural purity’ on the one hand, and an appreciation of what, following Latour, we might term ‘hybridity’ on the other, with the chancellor coming down firmly in favour of the latter. This ‘hybridity’ of these churches is of course one aspect of their historic and ongoing development as living buildings. Following the textual metaphor, this hybridity makes historic church buildings more of a conversation than a monologue, a ‘multivocality’ that fits well with the view of heritage as discourse.

CONCLUSIONS

For Hans-Georg Gadamer ([1960] 1989: 383), ‘a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to have’, and if that was true for at least some of the contributors, it was also true for this interviewer. From professional experience I was expecting to find more uniform frustration with the process, but the range of responses was both more varied and more nuanced. In reviewing the stories of the five projects that make up this case study it is clear that it is perfectly possible to achieve substantial change within the current system, as the examples of Holt and Wymondham demonstrate. However, in both cases these successes relied on churches with skills capacity, time and access to money, and the interviews also reveal that the cost of engaging in a building project is often very high. For many more typical churches – those who do not have access to professional skills within the church, and for whom St Edmund’s Taverham is perhaps

representative – this high threshold can act as a huge disincentive, leading to detachment of communities from their buildings. It is surely significant that this church has progressed no further with their project in the three years since their first bruising encounter with the conservation system. The uncomfortable truth is that a process that conceives of heritage in narrowly architectural and historic terms – as does the current legislative framework – may easily become complicit in the destruction of that which it seeks to protect.

A number of common themes emerge from the material. The first is the importance of a clear articulation of the vision for the church community and for the building project, both to sustain the community through what is usually experienced as a long and exhausting process, and to justify the need for change to multiple external bodies. Consultation responses rarely acknowledged the life of the church in question, beyond the need for them to justify functional requirements in terms, for example, of the size of kitchen suitable for a given range of activities. Early and thorough consultation is a theme common to each of the successful projects, and church communities generally recognise the value of the input of specialists. But those external views might have greater impact, and the quality of dialogue be much improved, if that input could be contextualised within the bigger heritage picture of the purpose of the community and its building, of what a church (community/building) is for.

A second theme is that the success of these projects revolves around people. In order to undertake a project in the first place, churches need access to capable people with organisational skills, though it was noted that these skills are not always directly transferrable from the commercial world to a conservation setting. Not only are people essential to make things happen, they are typically seen by churches as the principal criterion of a successful outcome. Perhaps it is unsurprising that this ‘pastoral’ aspect was most clearly articulated by the incumbents that were interviewed, for whom such concerns are the natural focus of their working lives. The ability mentioned above to root the particular in the bigger picture is a substantial contribution that church communities can make to ‘humanise’ what many find to be a baffling process; and that bafflement is as much an indicator of the inadequacies of the process as of the limitations of a particular community.

Thirdly, many of these church communities show a more sophisticated understanding of the way church buildings have changed than is usually evident elsewhere, including among many conservation professionals. This was matched by the striking readiness with which contributors discussed their building in terms of narrative, which is the linguistic form through which we account for continuity of character

through temporal change; the relevance of narrative to historic buildings is explored further in Chapter 5.

Fourthly, and related to this, there was a strong sense that the past remains in active dialogue with both the present and the future. In part this seems to be related to a perceived sense of continuity that presumably attends a conscious identification with an active tradition; this is in marked contrast to the sense of discontinuity from the past which Poullos (2014), Wijesuriya et al. (2017) and others identify as characteristic of modern conservation. Since this sense of continuity often receives expression in theological language, one might make a distinction between a Christian view of history and a secular one, but that would be to confuse the medium for the message; there is nothing uniquely *Christian* about such an understanding, and these views of history might better be labeled as 'narrow' and 'broad' respectively. I suggest that this breadth or narrowness of view is at the root of the differences and disagreements that often arise in the conservation process; properly assimilated, a broad view of history has the potential to enrich conservation practice of all kinds.

A final observation is the nature of the exchanges between the church community and external bodies; at times this can be a dialogue of the deaf, with the church talking in religious terms of mission and vision, and being answered in secular categories of loss, fabric, justification etc. As noted, the 1991 Measure, in setting the legal framework, foregrounds the worshipping and missional life of the church, but it is difficult to see evidence of this in the operation of the system. Instead it is notable how readily religious discourse/spiritual value becomes sidelined, raising the critical question of what the appropriate terms of debate should be. To take community seriously demands an understanding of the workings of the particular tradition represented by these particular buildings and communities; it is from this that their side of the dialogue, and the operation of tradition more generally, flows. From this it may then be possible to determine more transparent criteria for judging change, discerning good from bad, and this forms the focus of the following chapters.

4. Understanding tradition: questions of change and continuity

[He] who controls the past controls the future.

George Orwell (1954: 199)

Few would suggest that the cultures from which historic buildings have emerged are irrelevant to the form that those buildings take. It is equally clear that cultures change and evolve, and that our present culture is markedly different from the pre-modernity that produced many of our listed buildings, whether churches, castles or, indeed, houses. While the relevance of that earlier pre-modern understanding, and the distance that separates us from it, may be uncontroversial, the question of how accessible that pre-modernity is to us is less so. How that temporal and cultural divide might be bridged, and therefore the scope for that earlier understanding to address us and inform our present-day approach to historic buildings, are questions of hermeneutics, that is, of interpretation. From such a perspective, the suggestion that the past is straightforwardly accessible using only the resources of our contemporary culture is hermeneutically naive.

Rodney Harrison (2013: 18) helpfully explores the links between unofficial heritage and customs and traditions; the very everydayness of these practices guaranteed that they were ignored until the late twentieth century by official Western heritage management processes, whose concern was the remarkable rather than the quotidian.

Unofficial heritage also often refers to [...] “custom” or “tradition”: a set of repetitive, entrenched, sometimes ritualised practices that link the values, beliefs and memories of communities in the present with those of the past.

(Harrison 2013: 18)

This linking role between past and present via community and tradition is central to the alternative model developed in this thesis. While acknowledging the importance of this temporal connection, it is noted that Harrison does not give an account either of its mechanics or its theoretical foundation, which forms the focus of this and the next chapter.

Pre-modern historic buildings, including the church buildings on which this thesis focuses, can be described as ‘traditional’, including in the literal sense that they are the

products of a tradition. Two interrelated and central tenets of the Enlightenment were a radical discontinuity with the past and a deep distrust of tradition; the Enlightenment appeal to universal reason was precisely an attempt to escape what were seen to be the oppressive and stultifying effects of tradition (Bristow 2017). Bound up as it was with the aristocracy and the Church, tradition was easily portrayed in pejorative terms, and this attitude became foundational for the modernity that followed. Françoise Choay (2001: 15) recounts how the idea of the historic monument first emerged in 1790 in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution. The question arose of how properties confiscated from the Church and the nobility, recognised even then as of great historical and architectural importance, were to be cared for once they had been removed from their original ownership and cultural context. The invention of the term 'historical monument' effectively allowed a reclassification of these products of tradition to suit a radically changed cultural situation.

The legacy of this reclassification endures. Bound up with the question of how we approach the built remains of the past is the issue of what we see as the relevance (or otherwise) of tradition; this itself of course flows from what we understand tradition to be. If a modern (and thus critical) approach to tradition is adhered to, our ability to read pre-modern buildings in their appropriate cultural context will be frustrated. What seems unsupportable is the idea that tradition has no relevance, when conservation is concerned with the care and change of buildings that are themselves the products of tradition. In attempting to engage in a hermeneutically literate way with the objects of pre-modern tradition, it is therefore not unreasonable to look beyond the Enlightenment's partisan portrayal of tradition and to consider the pre-modern understanding that preceded it. Not only does this seem to be a prerequisite for an adequate engagement with this particular type of building, it may also offer resources of broader relevance which may help address some of the contemporary challenges facing conservation that emerged from the case study and preceding chapters. If those resources can inform contemporary questions of culture, then this argument would have relevance to the conservation of buildings of all eras.

The following chapters explore these themes in greater detail. This present chapter draws chiefly from the work of two philosophers who have both engaged with the question of tradition – Hans-Georg Gadamer and Alasdair MacIntyre – with the aim of considering what benefits and implications a pre-modern understanding of continuity within tradition might bring to the conservation of historic buildings. Chapter 5 will then go on to explore the temporal dimension of this understanding of tradition in the form of narrative, asking how it might inform the practices of conservation. Chapter 6 then

explores the application of these revised concepts of tradition and narrative to conservation for three distinct non-academic audiences.

4.1. MODERNITY, TRADITION AND CONTINUITY

The Enlightenment may have been ill-disposed towards tradition (singular) from its inception, but traditions (plural) have remained in plentiful supply. Eric Hobsbawm notes the ease with which modernity invents traditions, and the ‘contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some part of social life within it as unchanging and invariant’ (1983: 2). They are of particular relevance to the relatively recent innovation of the nation-state, which ‘generally claim[s] to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed’ (1983: 14). Conservation, which since its inception has been implicated in the creation of national identity, can be described as traditional in this modern sense.

Two traumatic episodes of unnecessary loss of historic fabric – both seen in terms of national crisis – stand out as central to the self-understanding of the modern conservation movement in the West: firstly the nineteenth-century passion for the restoration of historic buildings, and secondly the wave of reconstruction following World War Two. Responding to the first of these episodes, the 1877 SPAB *Manifesto* was William Morris’s direct attack on the contemporary practice of the restoration of medieval churches, as discussed in Chapter 2. The *Manifesto* rails against this abuse of the past:

a church of the eleventh century might be added to or altered in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, or even the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; but every change, whatever history it destroyed, left history in the gap, and was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning.

(Morris [1877] 2009)

And there was indeed a sharply observable difference in the way the nineteenth century typically dealt with historic buildings. But what is it to ‘leave history in the gap’? And what is meant by ‘the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning’? Both phrases clearly seek to raise the question of tradition by setting up a contrast between a modern understanding of old buildings and an earlier one which it replaced. Morris was of the view that this tradition, which he calls the ‘religion, thought and manners of time past’ that had produced these buildings, was finished. As a consequence, ‘leaving history in the gap’ was no longer possible, and he therefore concluded that the only legitimate option for such buildings was preservation.

This section explores these themes of the relation of modernity to tradition and continuity in the twentieth century. This is illustrated firstly through the early challenge to

the conventional modern understanding of tradition within literary criticism, and secondly through conservation's second 'trauma' of post-war reconstruction and one prominent reaction to this within the architectural profession.

4.1.1. Of canon and tradition

In general cultural terms, the contemporary understanding of a canon fulfils much the same function as did the notion of tradition which it largely replaced. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines canon, among its non-religious meanings, as 'a standard of judgement or authority; a test, criterion, means of discrimination'. Within a given area of the arts it is therefore common to refer to a small selection of works as 'canonical' to denote that these are regarded as being of the highest quality, and therefore both representative and definitive of the art as a whole. For works to be deemed canonical they must be both sanctioned by an authority and agreed to be authentic. The idea of canon is religious in origin, denoting those writings that are divinely inspired and therefore regarded as Scripture, and the idea retains a quasi-theological dimension in the reverence with which canonical works are frequently viewed. Indeed the frequent use of sacral language to describe objects of high culture such as listed buildings, a theme already noted in Section 2.1 with respect to the SPAB *Manifesto*, is indicative of secular modernity's use of aesthetics as a substitute for the sacred.

'Canon' also refers to law, and implies a degree of permanence and fixity, characteristics which are often assumed to apply to tradition, and both ideas can provide a basis for judging the quality of other works. In its secularised form, the notion of a canon of works has been highly influential in literature and the arts more generally; for example, the critic F. R. Leavis (1948) proposed a series of canonical works that together defined the English novel. Such attempts to define a canon of work is closely analogous to the collecting together of treasured objects in the traditional museum, or indeed a national collection of treasured buildings. Hence Harrison identifies the development of 'a *canonical* model of heritage [...] that was distinguished markedly from the everyday' (2013: 18; emphasis original), as opposed to unofficial forms of heritage which accommodate continuity with the past, as discussed above and in Section 1.2.2.

Given their proximity, it is helpful to distinguish the two ideas of canon and tradition from one another. The philosopher of literature Stein Olsen (2016: 158–160) concludes his recent examination of canon by teasing out of dictionary definitions four significant aspects of tradition that are absent from canon. Olsen firstly tells us that tradition is tied to the notion of practice, that is, to the way in which a work is *produced*; it is on the basis of this set of practices that it is possible to determine what counts as

excellence. We can add therefore that a focus on the *means* of cultural production, while missing from canon, contributes to tradition's normative power, a theme also addressed by sociologist and philosopher Richard Sennett, in his attention to the role of craftsmanship (Sennett 2009). Secondly, 'tradition has continuity', with subsequent generations of authors placing themselves in relation to those that have gone before. Again we can add that in a tradition this continuity is intergenerational, resulting in a richer communal landscape of reference and that the setting of a new work within that landscape of tradition is a key determinant of how the quality of that work is judged. Thirdly, tradition is anonymous and collective, an 'immemorial usage'; a tradition cannot be created, nor its development dictated, by any one individual, as can a canon. Olsen adds that a tradition develops; we will go on to argue that a tradition is *necessarily* developmental and dynamic, and for conservation this is perhaps the single critical differentiator between tradition and other approaches to the past. And fourthly, tradition is closely related to locality: 'traditions are culturally embedded and are by their nature local and culture specific' (Olsen 2016: 159). Olsen concludes that, while the concept of tradition of itself does not definitively settle questions such as what is a great literary work or the value of literary practice, it does provide a framework within which these issues can be profitably explored, something that is not possible within the closed system of a literary canon.

The theme of the open-ended and developing nature of tradition is drawn out by the poet and critic T. S. Eliot as early as 1917 in his celebrated essay 'Tradition and the individual talent'. For Eliot (1920: 44), to work within a tradition requires the author to possess the 'historical sense [which] involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence [...] of the timeless as well as the temporal'. Furthermore, in Eliot's understanding, tradition is fundamentally dynamic rather than static; not only should a new work of art be judged against the tradition which precedes it and not in isolation, but most startlingly, in the process of the new taking its place, the existing order is modified:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted.

(Eliot 1920: 44–45, emphasis original)

In this context, conformity to tradition need therefore be neither stultifying nor conservative, but profoundly creative and, for the poet who understands tradition, brings with it both 'great difficulties and responsibilities' (ibid.).

Eliot's claim that the past is modified by the present on account of the continuity of a tradition is extraordinary, and runs counter to the conventional modern understanding of culture, and the canonical. In applying Eliot's understanding to the buildings of a tradition, it is self-evident that a building does not literally have its physical fabric modified by later work, aside from the particular case of two episodes of creative work to the same building. Nevertheless, following Eliot, the cultural landscape of which the old building forms a part *is* modified by the new, and with it therefore the old building itself, since it is the altered 'landscape' through which that building is necessarily interpretively approached. Indeed it is the efficacy (or otherwise) of this interpretive claim made by the tradition as a whole on the individual part that provides the most obvious measure of the vitality of that tradition, a theme returned to in the final section of this chapter.

4.1.2. Continuity and post-war reconstruction

The second episode of unnecessary loss of historic buildings highlighted above was the wave of reconstruction following World War Two. The nineteenth century had been a time of competing nationalisms, with built (and other) forms of heritage deployed and indeed appropriated to further those nationalist projects. In the twentieth century the disastrous consequences of that nationalistic phase were played out, with huge loss of life and the inevitable targeting of cultural property, particularly in the aerial bombing campaigns of the Second World War, initiated by the Axis powers and 'perfected' by the Allies. The result after the war was the urgent need for reconstruction in many European cities, including many historic ones. But this was not the only operative factor; long before the onset of hostilities pressure had been mounting to address a series of problems resulting from nineteenth-century urbanisation and industrialisation, including often insanitary housing for the working classes and increasingly inadequate transport infrastructure.

Some architects, particularly of a younger generation, were much influenced by the CIAM (the International Congresses of Modern Architecture) doctrine of the 'Functional City'. First promulgated in the early 1930s and subsequently published by Le Corbusier as the *Athens charter* ([1941] 1973), this favoured the radical replanning of cities on 'rational' principles that typically sought to sweep away existing urban infrastructure to start again from a *tabula rasa*. Reconstruction after 1945 favoured the deployment of the mechanisms of big government (and in Britain included the

introduction of powers of compulsory purchase) which, married to a degree of utopianism and a flight from nationalism, facilitated the imposition of more ‘modern’ and less place-specific solutions.

While influential, the Functional City doctrine was not unopposed, with the focus of the resistance in England centred at the *Architectural Review*, owned and edited by Hubert de Cronin Hastings, and assisted by various others including J. M. Richards and the art historian Nikolaus Pevsner. Erdem Erten (2015) describes Hastings’s use of the *Review* to pursue a project of cultural continuity from the early 1940s onwards. A special edition entitled ‘Rebuilding Britain’ was published in April 1943 to accompany an RIBA-organised exhibition of the same name. Before addressing specific building types such as civic buildings, housing, schools etc, the issue deals first with heritage, in the context of a call for ‘town and country planning on a national scale’ (Hastings 1943: 87–88). At the outset the article attempts to balance conservation – ‘Before replanning can start, it is necessary to decide what must be preserved’ – with change – ‘And yet it’s not the slightest use setting out to preserve all this as a museum-piece; if the country is to live the country has got to develop.’ The choice of what should be preserved is not limited to individual buildings, since almost any town is ‘a store-house of good building’. This appreciation of the easily overlooked historic buildings that would never warrant statutory protection in their own right but that are nevertheless important for the identity of a place stands in stark contrast to the Functional City approach; I have argued elsewhere (Walter forthcoming) that this aspect of the *Review*’s policy and its elaboration in the long-running ‘Townscape’ campaign was foundational for the subsequent development of conservation, not least in the creation of legislation allowing for the designation of conservation areas.

In the very same month that the *Review* published its ‘Rebuilding Britain’ edition, another exhibition was held in London under the title ‘The continuity of the English town’ at the St Martin’s School of Art, jointly organised by twelve societies which the accompanying publication described as ‘interested in the historic development of our buildings, their planning and their preservation’ (Esher 1943: 115). The coalition of organisers is interesting in itself, including many groups that retain a prominent campaigning role to this day, such as the National Trust, the Georgian Group, the British Archaeological Association, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Town & Country Planning Association. 11 of the 13 daily lectures were published by the Ecclesiological Society whose patron, Viscount Esher, stated in his foreword that:

the associated Societies desire that in post war reconstruction the natural variations of scale, materials, and lay-out in our towns and cities shall be maintained, and realising that

interest has been awakened and fostered to a great extent by the Press and by the reconstruction schemes of public bodies, they wish to draw public attention to the value of our architectural tradition.

(Ibid.)¹⁶

The foreword also quotes W. S. Morrison, Minister of Town and Country Planning, promising 'to give special consideration to the matter of the preservation of ancient and historic buildings' in the parliamentary debates that resulted in the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act.

Despite the exhibition title, only two of the lectures made mention of the word 'continuity' at all. Edward Yates FSA, made passing reference to it in his talk on 'The medieval town', but it is only in 'The English town tradition' by the architect Herbert Austen Hall for the Council for the Preservation of Rural England that continuity is explicitly addressed. In an interesting insight into the relationship of modernism to tradition, he quotes Dutch modernist architect Willem Dudok, designer of the much admired Hilversum Town Hall, saying on a visit to Hampton Court Palace that 'I cannot understand why you copy me, when you have this noble tradition of building in England; in that lies the line of your true development, for there is the national spirit of your country' (Austen Hall 1943: 164). Austen Hall goes on to suggest that

There is room for all schools of design within the framework of the national tradition, the development of which is far more important than occasional brilliant successes outside it. What we are concerned with is the general advance in good design, not the great and rare achievements of genius.

(Ibid.)

Criticising the contemporary 'foolish desire for novelty' and arguing that 'the Book of Architecture is written chapter by chapter' (Austen Hall 1943: 165) his vision is of change that is incremental:

Aristotle says that the quality of poetic language is a continual slight novelty [...] It is by inflection and not infraction that continuity with development is achieved. The mysterious growth of the centuries has not ended, it will never end while time lasts, and our modern contribution is the mark of our own times in a story that was begun before our recorded history.

His argument was not against change as such – 'Our forefathers accepted change gladly, and rejoiced in the developments of their own times' (1943: 163–164) – but that change should be in a context of continuity rather than revolution, as a chapter in an ongoing narrative. These themes will prove productive when we return in Section 5.4 to the relevance of narrative for conservation.

¹⁶ Oliver Sylvain Baliol Brett, 3rd Viscount Esher (1881–1963); father of Lionel Esher (1913–2004), the architect, author and contributor to the *Architectural Review*.

4.1.3. Townscape and the Picturesque

The *Architectural Review's* Townscape campaign was the most influential and sustained form of resistance to radical reconstruction that arose during this period within the architectural profession. While not itself a heritage movement in the contemporary sense, it was nevertheless far more amenable to the retention of what would now be classed as heritage assets, whether buildings of individual importance or broader urban areas of a particular character, and played an important but under-recognised role in the development of contemporary conservation in Britain. A key figure in the Townscape project was the art historian Nikolaus Pevsner, now a household name and a major figure in conservation, for example for the subsequent transformation of the Victorian Society under his chairmanship and his still influential Buildings of England series (Yale University Press 2017).

Central to the development of Townscape thinking was Pevsner's rehabilitation of the English Picturesque, though precisely because of this link Townscape was frequently misread as being merely concerned with the visual. Erdem Erten (2015: 51) cites Pevsner's speech on receipt of the 1967 RIBA Gold Medal in which he suggested that the historian's contribution to architecture was, above all, that he brought 'a sense of continuity'. Perhaps it is this historically and culturally literate approach to the design of cities and buildings based on continuity that accounts both for the pivotal importance of Pevsner's contribution to the development of Townscape thinking, and for the enduring relevance of the Townscape approach. Whatever the case, it is clear that, had this 'contextual modernism' prevailed at the time of post-war reconstruction, then Britain's historic cities would have suffered far less damage than they did.

Several Townscape principles are of enduring relevance to the built environment generally, and conservation particularly. The first and perhaps most fundamental of these is the separation of architecture from planning. The English Picturesque offered Pevsner a model for how disparate elements of varying architectural language and quality could be combined into a coherent whole. In no sense was this in opposition to the need for planning – that is, the deliberate (re)design of cities to create better living and working conditions, communications etc. – nor to the creation of adventurous modern architecture. And, at least from the current historical vantage point, this separation of architecture and planning into separate categories seems vindicated: it very much appears that the lasting successes of the period are in its individual buildings (with many post-war examples now being listed) rather than in modernist Functional City planning, with its abstract layouts imposed onto the existing topography or urban grain.

A second Townscape principle is respect for the existing character of a site. In *The Englishness of English art* Pevsner quotes Alexander Pope's injunction to 'consult the genius of the place in all...' (Pope [1731] 1903) – foundational for English landscape design and often quoted in Townscape literature – stating that this *genius loci* 'is, in a town, not only the geographical but also the historical, social and especially the aesthetic character' (Pevsner 1956: 168). The misreading by others of Townscape as a question solely of aesthetics, which is so readily suggested by the attendant labels 'Picturesque' and 'visual planning', contributed to the trenchant divisions over this issue within the architectural profession in the post-war period. Pevsner equivocates, both attempting to resist a reduction to the visual while at the same time stressing its centrality. But the clear intention of this focus on *genius loci* is to promote *continuity*. This has two dimensions: firstly in the physical sense of a new building relating to its neighbours, needing to understand the pre-existing urban grain and respond to it; and secondly in the temporal and cultural sense, demanding that the designer engages with the grain of tradition. This idea retains currency, for example in the National Trust's inclusion of 'spirit of place' in its *Conservation principles* (NT 2017; Lithgow and Thackray 2009). It is also striking how closely Pevsner's definition of *genius loci* can be mapped onto the four value classes of Historic England's *Conservation principles* (2008), indicating his enduring influence in the shaping of the training and practices of conservation professionals from the post-war period onwards.

A third principle, closely related to the last, is the sense of geographical specificity that is an important element of this *genius loci*. This was and is an important differentiator from the placelessness that accompanies the inevitable abstractions of the internationalism to which Pevsner was reacting. *Kunstgeografie* was a central theme for Pevsner's teacher and early mentor Wilhelm Pinder, who remained in Germany and developed this idea to nationalist ends; the same accusation of nationalism was made of Pevsner also. But attempting to respond to specificity of place does not imply any such commitment. As Erten (2015) demonstrates, one of the key intellectual underpinnings of Hastings's project of cultural continuity was *Notes towards a definition of culture* (Eliot 1948), an extended essay in which T. S. Eliot articulates very similar themes in his discussion of (sub-national) regionalism as an essential constituent part of culture. With specific reference to the 1945 draft UNESCO charter Eliot critiques the misuse of the word 'culture' 'as a kind of emotional stimulant – or anaesthetic' (Eliot 1948: 14), and argues throughout for the priority of the particular and local over the universal.

A fourth principle can be deduced from the first three regarding the nature of change in the built environment. The understanding of modernity that animated CIAM's

Functional City was consistent with the Enlightenment's profound antipathy towards tradition, while the more reflective modernity of Eliot, Hastings and Pevsner was far more willing to work with the existing tradition in the way Austen Hall was advocating, as above. Both forms of understanding accept that change is necessary, and indeed desirable. For the former, change would tend to be wholesale, a new beginning from a *tabula rasa* with at best the retention of isolated buildings as specimens in a historical collection; for the latter, change is usually incremental, and thus far more likely in a reconstruction context to favour the retention and celebration of existing street patterns (and therefore below-ground archaeology) and historic fabric. If those proposing more radical change might see this as hopelessly timid, as at times did architectural critics such as Colin Rowe and Reyner Banham, then so be it. The Townscape approach has the far more important benefit of better enabling the public to maintain a sense of rootedness, desirable at any time but even more important in the aftermath of conflict, without the need to reconstruct a facsimile of whatever has been destroyed.

These four principles drawn from the British response to post-war reconstruction combine to offer an alternative and richer understanding of heritage, based on continuity of tradition. A reductive view of continuity, focusing solely on physical fabric, will tend towards preservationism and stasis, an accusation levelled (often justifiably) at subsequent conservation practice. By contrast, a dynamic view of continuity understands that a degree of change is both desirable and necessary if a culture is to remain alive and regenerate itself. Facsimile reproduction with its focus on the past implies a crisis of contemporary cultural production; by institutionalising the form of the old (often characterised in terms of the sacredness of the past) the possibility of future heritage is destroyed before it can be created, the past is cut adrift from any sense of contemporary cultural production and (precisely in holding too tightly to the past) continuity is lost.

By contrast, a radical reconstruction with its focus on the future implies that the past has nothing of relevance to say in the present. While future creativity is possible it has been bought at an unacceptably high price, with the wanton destruction of the traces of the past, traces which are essential to our ability to orient and root ourselves geographically, temporally and culturally. The promise is of progress, but the results are all too often barren, an adjective used of much of the architectural mediocrity characteristic of Britain in this period. In the 1980s the architectural theorist Kenneth Frampton coined the term 'critical regionalism' in opposition to both universalism and sentimental populism, and called for architecture to assume

an *arrière-garde* position, that is to say, one which distances itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress and from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the preindustrial past.

(Frampton 1983: 20; emphasis original)

This preliminary conclusion of the importance of continuity of tradition drawn from the opposition to radical reconstruction within the architectural profession informs the theoretical framework developed in this and the next chapter. T. S. Eliot provides a common link between the three sections of this chapter, which, taken together, argue that the revolutionary break with the past claimed by modernity was, and remains, contested. Conservation is an area where the question of continuity remains absolutely central but these findings also pose important questions for its cultural commitments. Two complementary lines of theoretical enquiry will now be followed; the first, relating to tradition, is explored in the remainder of this chapter, and the second, relating to time, is considered in Chapter 5.

4.2. TRADITION AND HERMENEUTICS

We now turn to consider the hermeneutics of Hans Georg Gadamer, one of the foremost philosophical voices to challenge the Enlightenment emasculation of tradition. The section begins by questioning the modern categorisation of tradition as a subset of conservatism, and the extent to which buildings can be distinguished from works of art. The etymology of the word tradition is then considered together with the critique of romanticism and genius within Gadamer's hermeneutics. Finally, his vision for understanding as the 'fusion of horizons' and Charles Taylor's analysis of the implications of this are examined. Engagement with these themes will lay the groundwork for the development of an alternative theoretical approach to the treatment of the objects of tradition.

4.2.1. Tradition and conservatism

Tradition has not been a major area of recent concern for philosophy. Neither the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy nor the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy have articles covering the topic, though the former makes reference to it in its article on (political) conservatism (Hamilton 2016). Robin Downie's (1995) entry for tradition in the Oxford Companion to Philosophy defines it as 'customary sets of belief ... which are transmitted by unreflective example and imitation', and as elsewhere frames it as of 'particular interest in political philosophy'. The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry for 'Tradition and traditionalism' by Anthony O'Hear (1998) is again classified under 'political philosophy', and deals principally with Edmund Burke and Friedrich Hayek, though concludes with a section on the flexibility of traditions which discusses John Henry Newman's approach to tradition in a theological context. O'Hear is also the

author of entries for ‘conservatism’ in both the Routledge Encyclopaedia and the Oxford Companion.

It is clear, therefore, that at this level of the encyclopaedia definition tradition is principally seen as a question of political philosophy, and in that context as an adjunct to conservatism. It is this entanglement of tradition within the definition of conservatism in the wake of the French Revolution that accounts for the typical opposition of tradition to reason. While O’Hear (1998) does nuance this by suggesting that ‘traditions often turn out upon inspection to be not so much irrational as subtle and flexible deployments of reason in particular spheres’, his treatment of tradition remains constrained by its categorisation within political philosophy, and is thus of limited use for our purposes.

Andy Hamilton (2016), a philosopher of politics and aesthetics, presents a more nuanced, but still primarily political, view of conservatism. He draws extensively on a paper in which the Marxist political philosopher G. A. Cohen defends the ‘small-c conservatism’ of valued things, and its compatibility with a Left-leaning liberal modernity.¹⁷ Cohen uses the example of cathedrals, which we keep not

just because they’re beautiful, but also because they are part of our past. [...] We want to be part of what Edmund Burke (famously) called ‘the partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.’

(Cohen 2013: 168–169)

Hamilton expands on Cohen’s theme of cultural conservation, touching on William Morris (as an example of socialism cohabiting with conservatism), the Cambridge Camden Society, post-war reconstruction and T. S. Eliot. He then specifically relates medieval church buildings (and towns) to society:

Cohen’s conservative model would encourage the organic development exhibited by medieval English towns and buildings—perhaps especially by churches—and which parallels the organic model of political development. This model rejects the blueprint model involving an individual creator. Rather, the town or building evolves— apparently spontaneously, over generations—without reference to a blueprint, and often without stylistic consistency. The church as a building—or on the conservative model, a society—are like organisms, seemingly not the product of individual intentional action, but evolving naturally.

(Hamilton 2016)

Hamilton is thus making many of the same linkages as proposed in this chapter, and with Cohen seeks to demonstrate that small-c conservatism does not necessitate embracing large-C Conservatism. The difference, for both, is a question of justice. However, both are political philosophers with an explicit interest in conservatism, and

¹⁷ Chapter 8 in Cohen (2013) is a subsequent revision of Cohen’s (2007) paper.

accordingly both treat tradition as a secondary issue. For Cohen, tradition is to be held lightly, and the preservation of identity (in this case the identity of All Souls College, Oxford) is not active but the passive ‘result of our not aiming to change it’ (2013: 169).

For a more transformative understanding of tradition that does not constrain it within a primarily political frame it is necessary to look further afield to those who question the fundamental assumptions of the Enlightenment; notable amongst these are Hans-Georg Gadamer, the pre-eminent exponent of philosophical hermeneutics, and the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. While each approaches tradition in the context of contrasting philosophical projects and from very different philosophical backgrounds, they nevertheless hold much in common; MacIntyre’s (2002) essay contributed in honour of Gadamer’s one-hundredth birthday casts more light on both difference and debt. Both Gadamer and MacIntyre are profoundly critical of the ‘Enlightenment project’ (MacIntyre 1985) and seek to rescue tradition from the position to which modernity has demoted it; as part of this, both are adamant that the conventional opposition of tradition with reason, a founding principle of Enlightenment thinking, is mistaken. Where Gadamer’s argument concerns the (central) place of tradition in understanding, MacIntyre gives a fuller treatment of tradition in the context of moral philosophy, and explores questions of competing rationalities. Both draw significantly on Aristotle, with his stress on the role of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) alongside theoretical knowledge; this complements the concern with practice that is foundational for conservation. And both root their respective explorations of tradition firmly in a thorough engagement with pre-modernity. The remainder of this chapter will firstly focus on Gadamer’s hermeneutics, noting Charles Taylor’s response to Gadamer, before considering MacIntyre’s distinctive contribution to the theorisation of tradition.

4.2.2. Architecture and hermeneutics

Gadamer’s particular relevance to this project lies in his understanding of the extent to which we can access the past, and the mediating role that tradition plays in that process. Gadamer stands at the centre of the development of hermeneutics in the twentieth century; following his former teacher Heidegger, he redefined the role of hermeneutics as the basis for all understanding in the humanities. For Gadamer, understanding flows from the linguistically mediated event of tradition: ‘belonging to a tradition is a condition of hermeneutics’ ([1960] 1989: 291), which is to say that we rely on tradition (acknowledged or otherwise) for all understanding. Where modernity depends on method to validate its truth claims, Gadamer seeks to assert the validity of the pre-modern understanding of tradition as the source of that authority. For him, an understanding of truth rooted in tradition has three sources, in art, history and language

respectively. His *magnum opus*, *Truth and method* ([1960] 1989), is accordingly divided into three parts, dealing with each of these in turn.

In considering Gadamer's approach to tradition in the context of conservation it is worth noting that he explicitly discusses the role of architecture, regarding it as exemplary amongst other forms of art, since a building always points back to 'the contexts of purpose and life to which it originally belongs [and which it] somehow preserves' (Gadamer [1960] 1989: 156). This is in contrast to his contemporary Cesare Brandi, more familiar within conservation and whose work formed the principal theoretical source used by those drafting the enduringly influential *Venice charter* (ICOMOS 1964). Missing from Brandi's writings such as his *Teoria del restauro* ([1963] 2005) is this critical distinction between architecture and art in general, a conflation which endures, for example, in Muñoz Viñas's *Contemporary theory of conservation* (2005). By contrast, for Gadamer ([1960] 1989: 156) this distinction is crucial:

A building is never only a work of art. Its purpose, through which it belongs in the context of life, cannot be separated from it without its losing some of its reality. If it has become merely an object of aesthetic consciousness, then it has merely a shadowy reality and lives a distorted life only in the degenerate form of a tourist attraction or a subject for photography. The "work of art in itself" proves to be a pure abstraction.

Brandi's assumption that architecture is reducible to a work of art ignores the functional and 'living' character of many historic buildings, and thus their history of change at the hands of multiple 'authors'. To fail to differentiate it from art in general renders it an abstraction; this implied challenge to the aesthetic-historical approach is pivotal for the argument of this thesis.

It is also worth recalling the evocative first sentence of the preamble to the *Venice charter*, which positions historic buildings, termed 'monuments' (cf. Choay 2001), as 'living witnesses' of 'age-old traditions' (plural), with no acknowledgement of the creative workings of tradition (singular) or the potential of buildings to exercise agency. These 'witnesses' may be described as 'living', but this is in the minimal sense of having survived; if we think of old buildings as people, then this would be the passive life of the contemporary old peoples' home, rather than the vitality and agency of a multi-generational community. Meanwhile, Article 3 of the charter states that 'the intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence'. This also has profound implications: to change evidence is to falsify it, and to change a work of art is to destroy its integrity; clearly the approach of the *Venice charter* is not one that can easily accommodate change. Gadamer goes on after the quote above to declare that 'works of architecture do not stand motionless on the shore of the stream of history, but are borne along by it'. It will soon become apparent that Gadamer does not have in mind the minimal interpretation

that history will inevitably leave its mark on a building, romanticised by Ruskin ([1849] 1903: 234) as the 'golden stain of time'; instead he is stating that, since historic buildings partake in and of tradition, change is in their nature.

4.2.3. Etymologies

The English word 'tradition' is derived from the Latin roots *trans-* (over) and *dare* (to give): tradition is therefore that which is 'given over' or passed on from generation to generation, often implying at least a degree of authority and stability, and the possibility of an orientation towards 'keeping things the same'. Raymond Williams (1976: 269) observes that the word 'tradition' brings with it 'a very strong and often predominant sense of this entailing respect and duty' and that it does not take long for something to become traditional, but that this is natural, since tradition is an active process. He notes with regret the way in which the meaning of the word is constantly pulled 'towards age-old and towards ceremony, duty and respect' which he judges to be 'both a betrayal and a surrender'. For these reasons the traditional is often placed in opposition to the progressive.

Aside from the appropriation of *die Tradition* as a loan word, German has two other words rendered in English as 'tradition'. The first is *Überlieferung*, which follows a similar logic to the English word 'tradition': *liefern* translates as 'to deliver', hence *die Überlieferung* is that which is 'delivered over' by one generation to the next, and the verb *überliefern* means to hand down or bequeath. The second is *Brauchtum* which translates as traditions or customs (from *Brauch*, custom), and providing a useful distinction between tradition in general, and traditions or customs in particular. In *Truth and method*, the bulk of references are to *Überlieferung*, with *Tradition* usually denoting or implying a specific tradition, and *Brauchtum* used least frequently to denote a custom. In addition, the translators at times render *Überlieferung* as '[a] traditionary text' (e.g. p. 277), that is, as a specific work of tradition (literary or otherwise); the adjective 'traditionary' draws a deliberate distinction with the more familiar 'traditional', to avoid the suggestion of traditionalism as generally understood.

For Gadamer, tradition (*Überlieferung*) is not an abstract body of knowledge, but something with which one engages in conversational partnership:

Hermeneutical experience is concerned with *tradition*. This is what is to be experienced. But tradition is not simply a process that experience teaches us to know and govern; it is *language*—i.e., it expresses itself like a Thou. A Thou is not an object; it relates itself to us. [...] For tradition is a genuine partner in dialogue, and we belong to it, as does the I with a Thou.

(Gadamer [1960] 1989: 358, emphasis original)

This sense of agency ascribed by Gadamer to tradition is echoed in the less-prevalent but still current English verb form ‘to tradition’ as, for example, the seventeenth-century usage ‘this I may call a Charitable Curiosity, if true what is traditioned’ (Fuller [1662] 1811: 278). Tradition is thus an ongoing (that is, intergenerational) conversation; it is that which not only lies behind us but, most crucially, also confronts us in the present. G. K. Chesterton’s notion that tradition is ‘democracy extended through time’ was noted above; in the same passage he asserts that ‘all democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death’ (1908: 83). As the translators of the second revised edition of *Truth and method* say in their preface, a Gadamerian understanding of tradition ‘precludes complacency, passivity, and self-satisfaction with what we securely possess; instead it requires active questioning and self-questioning’ (Weinsheimer and Marshall 1989: xvi); this theme is developed in Section 4.2.7.

4.2.4. Romantic and classical approaches

Romanticism is often seen as the principal form of opposition to the Enlightenment. In Gadamer’s account, however, romanticism merely involves the reversal of the Enlightenment’s distrust of myth, and this mirroring implies acceptance of the fundamental assumption that myth and reason are incompatible. Both are based on a faith in perfection; for the Enlightenment it is the perfection of reason and freedom from superstition, and for romanticism the perfection of ‘the “mythical” consciousness’ and the promise of a ‘paradisiacal primal state before the “fall” of thought’ ([1960] 1989: 274). Gadamer explicitly suggests that romanticism results in ‘the paradoxical tendency toward restoration – i.e., the tendency to reconstruct the old because it is old’ (p. 273). This cultural observation resonates in the world of conservation, in its self-definition against restoration; but the observation is equally applicable to conservation as a whole, suggesting that what to many heritage professionals appears to be a primary division – between restoration and conservation – shares the same philosophical foundation.

While Gadamer acknowledges the ‘great achievements of romanticism’, he argues that where the Enlightenment ‘measured the past by the standards of the present’ (p. 275), romanticism brought about a revaluation of the past, ascribing to it a value of its own. This created the illusion of a historical science delivering an objective knowledge of the past achieved through entering the mind of the author of the text, and standing on a par with the ‘grasp’ of the natural world (as a detached object over against a knowing subject) achieved by modern science.

The fact that the restorative tendency of romanticism could combine with the fundamental concerns of the Enlightenment to create the historical sciences simply indicates that the same break with the continuity of meaning in tradition lies behind both.

(Gadamer [1960] 1989: 275)

For Gadamer, then, the ‘historical sciences’ share with the Enlightenment the same misplaced orientation towards a supposedly objective knowledge, and a view of history as fundamentally *discontinuous*.

This romantic-scientific approach to the past can be mapped onto the concerns of conservation discussed earlier. Although conventionally placed in diametrical opposition to one another, it is striking how similar, or at least how compatible, are the preservationist understanding of historic buildings proclaimed in the SPAB *Manifesto* (Morris [1877] 2009) – and illustrated by Thomas Hardy’s proposed museumisation of heritage ‘in a crystal palace’ ([1906] 1967: 205) noted early in Chapter 1 – with the approach to the isolated retention of historic buildings espoused by Le Corbusier ([1941] 1973), discussed in Section 4.1.2. The vast difference in the overall thrust of their arguments makes the compatibility of their respective approaches to history all the more telling; for both are united in seeing history as discontinuous, with the effect that in both cases old buildings become objects displayed as the retained relics of the past, that is, as monuments.

By contrast, the critical importance of the continuity of history is brought out in Gadamer’s distinction between romantic and classical hermeneutics. Working from Hegel he asserts that ‘this is just what the word “classical” means: that the duration of a work’s power to speak directly is fundamentally unlimited’ (Gadamer [1960] 1989: 290). A romantic hermeneutic addresses the past by attempting to get inside the mind of the author, and in so doing history is bracketed and separated, deprived of the ability to address us directly, and thereby forced to relinquish any claim to truth. By contrast what Gadamer terms a ‘classical hermeneutic’ supposes a fundamental *continuity* between past and present. For Gadamer, one particularly relevant characteristic of a work of art is its ability to address us *directly* in the present moment, no matter how old it might be. The meaning that work has is negotiated in dialogue with the present, and its significance is therefore in a sense iterative and never complete. Gadamer insists that the process of integrating the new or alien into the present understanding is not one of ‘subsumption’. As Nicholas Davey (2016) comments of Gadamer’s position, in terms strikingly similar to those used by T. S. Eliot (1920) above, ‘integration implies a reciprocity: the integrated changes its character as well as the character of the whole within which integration occurs’. This reciprocity is a key aspect of what the pre-modern understanding of tradition can offer a revised conservation philosophy.

4.2.5. Genius and authorship

The romantic approach to the past is predicated on the ideal of the individual as a realm of inner meaning; in turn this is closely related to romanticism's account of creativity as the working of inner genius. Romanticism's elevation of genius is in opposition to the role of reason, with the attendant implication that genius, and the creativity that is supposed to flow from it, is fundamentally irrational. This is important in the context of developing an understanding of change; whatever the other benefits of the current values-based methodology, conservation lacks any theoretical foundation or shared rational basis for recognising good change. If creativity is the product of genius, then its source is both individual and abstract; by contrast, if the product of tradition, it is (at least in part) communal and embodied.

Individual biography is one of the principal modes in which history has been written since Thomas Carlyle popularised the so-called 'Great Man theory' in his *On heroes, hero-worship and the heroic in history* (1840). It is similarly prevalent in architectural history, epitomised by Sir Howard Colvin's *Biographical dictionary of British architects 1600–1840* ([1954] 1995); one implication, as Dana Arnold (2002: 35) notes, is that 'buildings without architects are pushed to the sidelines of history'. Hence the radical nature of Bernard Rudofsky's 1964 book *Architecture without architects*, published to accompany an exhibition of the same name at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and which precisely sought to draw attention to this marginal zone of 'non-pedigreed' architecture. In his preface Rudofsky (1964: 1) declares that

architectural history as we know it [...] amounts to little more than a who's who of architects who commemorated power and wealth [...] with never a word about the houses of lesser people.

He quotes American architect Pietro Belluschi's definition of communal architecture as 'not produced by a few intellectuals or specialists but by the spontaneous and continuing activity of a whole people with a common heritage, acting under a community of experience' (Rudofsky 1964: 3–4). We noted in Section 4.1.2 Herbert Austen Hall's preference for good design over the achievements of genius, and the valuing of anonymous architecture by the *Architectural Review* (Hastings 1943: 87–88), which helped prepare the ground for the post-war listing of examples of vernacular architecture and the introduction of conservation area legislation.

When it comes to change proposed by a designer to a historic building, the romantic understanding implies that that change is at least partially arbitrary. Without the resources of communal architecture grounded in ongoing tradition and intergenerational practical knowledge, there are no shared criteria to evaluate the quality of proposed change, and such judgments will at best be made reluctantly. In

such circumstances the name of the designer (as individual genius) becomes a principal determinant of value, whether from the past (Pugin, Scott, Comper et al) or the present. The architectural historian John Harvey's *English mediaeval architects: a biographical dictionary* (1954) can be seen as an anachronistic attempt to apply this understanding to the pre-modern period. This reliance on 'great names' is hugely frustrating for practitioners outside the charmed circle of established genius (itself something of a contradiction), and is a major obstacle both to the development of design talent and the production of new work of quality. By contrast, if creativity is placed within the context of tradition, that tradition provides a common framework within which the worth of proposed change can be judged since, following both Gadamer and MacIntyre in their adoption of Aristotelian ethics, that is precisely part of the purpose of tradition.

4.2.6. The fusion of horizons

For Gadamer, historical objectivity is illusory, since we are always already part of the process of interpretation. In a key section, Gadamer coins the phrase *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*, opaquely translated as 'historically effected consciousness', to insist that historical phenomena cannot be isolated and understood 'innocently', but always have an effect in history.¹⁸ Accordingly, when we attempt to understand a historical phenomenon, we 'are always already affected by history' ([1960] 1989: 300). To be historically literate means to acknowledge the operation of this historically effected consciousness, which is 'already effectual in *finding the right questions to ask*' (p. 301, emphasis original). From this understanding of the hermeneutical situation Gadamer builds the concept of horizon, which he defines in general terms as 'the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point' (p. 302). In place of the negative connotations (of limitation and constraint) that the idea of a horizon typically receives in Enlightenment thought, Gadamer suggests that having a horizon means not being limited to what is nearest to hand, but rather being able to judge the relative significance of everything within that horizon (p. 302).

From here Gadamer goes on to suggest that in the process of understanding a historical 'text' there are always two horizons - that of the interpreter and that of the historical situation to be understood. Historical understanding is neither the imposition of the interpreter's horizon on the past nor, as romantic hermeneutics supposed, the acquisition of an alternative horizon from the past. Instead, what Gadamer terms a 'classical' approach allows history to address us directly and thereby to venture its truth

¹⁸ II.II.1 (B) (iv), 'The principle of history of effect (*Wirkungsgeschichte*)' ([1960] 1989: 300–307).

claims, through what he terms a 'fusion of horizons' between present and past. For this, an engagement with tradition is indispensable:

In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly foregrounded from the other.

(Gadamer [1960] 1989: 306)

In these Gadamerian terms much of conservation follows the logic of its roots in romanticism by explicitly foregrounding the old. This serves to cut the old off from that fusion of horizons which in a traditional understanding is essential to the ongoing health of both the tradition as a whole, and of the 'object' in question within that tradition.

In relation to this fusion of horizons Gadamer introduces another idea, that of *conversation*. In a genuine conversation between two or more people, each party puts themselves at risk, and as a result the outcome of a genuine conversation cannot be known at the outset. Contrast this with the frustration we have all experienced when attempting to engage with someone who insists they already have all the answers. That frustration derives from the feeling that nothing is at stake for the other party; there is a strong sense that someone is not 'playing by the rules', and that a social norm has been violated. Gadamer's point is that we have the same choice in the way we approach the past: either on the one hand as something we treat as an object of study and which, in principle at least, can be fully known, or on the other hand as something approached dialogically which might challenge our assumptions and change the questions we ask. No party in a genuine conversation can remain unchanged:

To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were.

(Gadamer [1960] 1989: 379)

In *Together* (2012), his recent examination of cooperation which forms another part of his 'homo faber project', Richard Sennett helpfully distinguishes between *dialectic* conversation, in which participants move towards a common understanding and, following Mikhail Bakhtin, *dialogic* conversation

which does not resolve itself by finding common ground. Though no shared agreements may be reached, through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of one another.

(Sennett 2012: 19)

In this connection he praises the British for their 'indirection', expressed in the use of the subjunctive mood, which serves to open up a more creative social space in which we learn about the other without being forced into agreement. It is clear from the case

study experience in Section 3.2.2 that the conversations that are integral to current conservation consultation processes can be dialectic or dialogic, but also that some participants have gained a reputation for failing to engage at all. Rodney Harrison describes a *dialogical* model of heritage, referring both to the importance of connectivity ‘as part of a dialogue between people and things’ and to what he terms ‘hybrid forums’ that combine ‘experts, non-experts, ordinary citizens and politicians’ (2017: 229, 230) engaging on equal ground. In Gadamer’s terms, Sennett’s ‘indirection’ shifts the focus from the answer back to the question; both would agree that this is an essential aspect of civil society. In this connection it is telling that Sennett describes social cooperation as a craft (2012: ix).

This primary orientation towards the cultural question rather than the answer is a key part of Gadamer’s approach, and, as Davey (2016) notes, the resulting dynamism is essential to his understanding of tradition:

Movement and development is intrinsic to the German word for tradition: *Überlieferung* has the active connotation of both transmitting and handing something on. What a tradition transmits from age to age are questions, problems and issues. The importance of canonic works is not that they are peerless exemplars of an idiom or style but rather that they raise issues and difficulties in an exemplary way.

It might be preferable to speak of the exemplary rather than the canonical, since in light of Olsen’s distinction in Section 4.1.1 the latter suggests at least a degree of immutability. By contrast, the inherent mutability of Gadamer’s dialogical understanding brings with it a profound implication for our understanding of tradition. Common to almost any form of life is change and movement, and Gadamer specifically describes our horizon as ‘something into which we move and that moves with us’ ([1960] 1989: 304). He goes on to suggest that ‘the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion’. He insists that the horizon ‘is not set in motion by historical consciousness. But in it this motion becomes aware of itself’ (p. 304). In this context the distinction between seeing a historic building as living and subject to further development on the one hand, or as a completed monument on the other, takes on a particular relevance.

4.2.7. Understanding the other

Gadamer’s treatment of horizon has been productively applied by Charles Taylor to what he sees as the greatest contemporary challenge to society, that of understanding the other, with obvious application to the increasingly participatory nature of conservation. For Taylor, it is in challenging the notion of objectivity in the social sciences that Gadamer made a ‘tremendous contribution’ in proposing an alternative model ‘which is much more fruitful, and shows the promise of carrying us beyond the

dilemma of ethnocentrism and relativism' (Taylor 2002: 279).¹⁹ To claim objectivity is to avoid putting one's identity at risk, something demanded by Gadamer's dialogical model; this is why scientific knowledge tends to progress by breakthrough and consolidation, as elaborated by Thomas Kuhn in *The structure of scientific revolutions* (1970). While a paradigm of detached objectivity may well be productive for the natural sciences, Gadamer's argument is that it is wholly inappropriate to the so-called 'human sciences', which are concerned with continuity and relationship. Taylor turns this around, suggesting that the slogan for Gadamer's approach might be 'no understanding the other without a changed understanding of self' (Taylor 2002: 295). As discussed in Section 4.2.3, Gadamer would apply this to the 'historical other' through a dialogical understanding of tradition – that in engaging with history we are changed – and, as we saw in Section 4.1.1, Eliot (1920) argued that the relationship is reciprocal, with the tradition itself changed by a genuine addition.

Taylor contrasts knowing an object and reaching an understanding with an interlocutor as two entirely distinct forms of activity, a direct parallel with the central distinction for this thesis between an aesthetic/historical and a hermeneutic understanding of historic buildings. Taylor suggests that there are three features of the latter that do not fit the usual model of the former derived from Enlightenment epistemology – such processes 'are bilateral, they are party-dependent, they involve revising goals' (Taylor 2002: 281). While Taylor's concern in his brief paper is with what we could term the 'social other', as opposed to the 'historical other' which is our current focus, the force of Gadamer's argument proves equally applicable to both. If we are to seek the sort of historical understanding necessary for responsible change to historic buildings within a living tradition, as opposed to the mere historical knowledge of the antiquarian, then we should expect conservation to display the features that both Taylor and Gadamer associate with reaching a mutual understanding.

Taylor's third criterion – that Gadamer's model involves the revision of goals – has significant practical implications: 'taking in the other will involve an identity shift in us. That is why it is so often resisted and rejected' (2002: 295). Let us take the example of a historic church building encountered by a heritage professional for the first time. If one adopts the representational epistemology on which modern science is based, then the thrill of encounter is the thrill of potential intellectual 'possession' of the 'object', of filling in a lacuna in one's knowledge (whether personal or corporate), perhaps of adding to one's 'collection'. In this context, historical information is separated from present day concerns around the use of the building, the stock of such historic property is

¹⁹ A different version of the same paper appeared as 'Gadamer on the Human Sciences' in Robert J. Dostal (ed.) (2002), pp. 126–142.

understood to be finite and diminishing, and change is almost inevitably seen as loss. But in approaching the building in this way, in bracketing and isolating it through the use of what Gadamer would term a romantic hermeneutic, we silence its voice; there can be no conversation, no 'fusion of horizons', no surprises, and in that sense we can learn nothing. By contrast, the Gadamerian model offers a positive role for change, building it in from the outset: both a change of horizon, and from this therefore a change of identity for the participants in conversation, both the building and the professional. Change to historic physical fabric makes demands on both but also opens up possibilities for both; carried out within the boundedness provided by an active tradition it is, in principle, to be welcomed.

The relevance of this discussion of hermeneutics is to suggest that the differences of approach to the process of managing change to historic buildings are animated by differences in the understanding of understanding, as proposed by Gadamer and elaborated by Taylor. The adoption of a romantic approach to historic buildings by anyone involved in their care isolates that party in three important respects: firstly from reaching a historically grounded understanding of the building in question, secondly from the truth claims that the building will make on us in the process of our 'dialogue' with it, and thirdly from the stakeholder conversation from which a common understanding of appropriate change is supposed to develop.

It is interesting in this connection to recall some of the differences of approach between statutory consultees and community representatives in the five case study examples in Norwich diocese in Chapter 3. Any approach that refuses to put at risk its own assumptions (and every position has such assumptions) will be incapable of reaching agreement with those operating from non-identical assumptions. The more closely defined a stakeholder body is around the preservation of architecture from a particular age, the more that organisation will struggle to engage in meaningful dialogue, or to countenance change. More than one respondent in Section 3.2.2 identified the Victorian Society as one such body with whom dialogue proved difficult and that was predictably opposed to change. This Gadamerian analysis suggests that the very specificity of its self description – the current strapline is 'campaigning for Victorian and Edwardian architecture' – leads the Society to adopt a framework that is ill-suited to the hermeneutic task at hand. In the process it risks marginalising itself, and thereby depriving the process as a whole of the valid and much-needed contribution it could make.

4.3. VIRTUE ETHICS

In Section 1.1.4, it was suggested that conservation is a form of applied ethics and, following Wells (2004), that it can helpfully be divided between universal, subversive and virtue approaches. Having thus far explored the modern understanding of tradition and some of the implications of Gadamer's hermeneutic alternative, the chapter now returns to that explicitly ethical framework. This section therefore briefly examines the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's revival of virtue ethics, noted in Section 1.1.4 as characterised by a concern with the development of moral character, and its implications for conservation, before focusing on the pivotal role of living traditions within such an approach.

4.3.1. MacIntyre's contribution

Three interrelated volumes published between 1981 and 1990 – *After virtue* ([1981] 1985), *Whose justice? Which rationality?* (1988) and *Three rival versions of moral enquiry* (1990) – form the basis of MacIntyre's approach. Together, these offer a critique of modernity as hopelessly fragmented and propose a revival of virtue ethics on the Aristotelian model. The books are written in an open and readable style, and are aimed as much at the general reader as the academic philosopher; as D'Andrea (2006: 290) notes, this choice of style is in deliberate opposition to the academisation of philosophy, and its separation from the social practices of the culture as a whole. As touched on at the start of Chapter 1, this specialisation to which MacIntyre is reacting afflicts much of our culture, not least the professions and the academy, and is paralleled within the historic environment in the redefinition of conservation in predominantly technical, rather than cultural, terms. MacIntyre's concern with practice and tradition should provoke the interest of the conservation community for other reasons too: in its focus on traditional craftsmanship, conservation is also very much concerned with specific practices of making; it is concerned with the objects of tradition in the form of old buildings and artefacts; and as a form of applied ethics, it constantly involves deciding what should be done in the best interests of the health of those buildings.

In the first of these three books, *After virtue*, MacIntyre observes that central moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia are particularly difficult to settle within our contemporary culture, in stark contrast to the modern ideal that these should be resolvable within a secular morality based on reason. Nietzsche understood that this secular morality was inherently dishonest in its presentation of inherited ideals in rational clothing, and went on to generalise this challenge to modernity into a 'genealogy of morals', from which postmodernism would subsequently develop. MacIntyre, however, accuses Nietzsche of failing to recognise the mistake of rejecting Aristotle's ethics and

politics which lies at the root of what he terms ‘the Enlightenment project’, going on to suggest that a moral Aristotelianism, rightly understood, cannot be undermined by Nietzsche’s critique.

MacIntyre therefore proposes a return to a pre-modern approach, central to which are the virtues, which he seeks to rehabilitate. His account of the moral virtues has a multilayered structure comprising practices, from which is developed the narrative order of a single human life, which finally is located within a moral tradition (1985: ch. 15). In applying this to the concerns of conservation we could expand the narrative element from the personal to include the narrative order of a local community, particularly that of a community with responsibility for the care of a historic building.

In *Whose justice? Which rationality?* (1988) MacIntyre challenges the Enlightenment opposition of reason to tradition, and develops an account of rationality consistent with tradition. Starting from three alternative ideas of justice – from ancient Greece, medieval Europe and eighteenth-century Britain respectively – he demonstrates that these alternatives are not resolvable by rational argument within a neutral framework, as supposed by the Enlightenment view, since the claims on which each idea judges the rationality of an argument are incommensurate. In Chapter X (‘Overcoming a conflict of traditions’) he uses the example of St Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, which reconciled what hitherto had seemed the largely incompatible philosophies of Augustine and Aristotle. This reconciliation was possible not by means of abstraction away from these competing traditions but by entering them fully, exposing each to the resources of the other.

MacIntyre also makes the observation that for all its size, the *Summa theologiae* is unfinished, not only because some of the third part remained unwritten at the time of Aquinas’s death in 1274, but more significantly on account of its construction. Each article within the work is taken as far as it needed to be in light of Aquinas’s knowledge of contemporary discussion of the topic, but leaving it open to be taken further. MacIntyre argues that this is an important aspect of Aquinas’s method of enquiry and, in the present context of living buildings, offers a useful indication of an alternative notion of completeness: that the argument, like the building, can always be taken further, and that the author/builder can and should construct the work in that full knowledge. MacIntyre’s wider point is that the working of a tradition in good health is dialogical in nature, and this has profound implications for our understanding of the provisional nature of the completeness of historic buildings, particularly those that have been formed through a process of varied change.

The last of the three books mentioned, *Three rival versions of moral enquiry*, considers three publications from the late 1870s – the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1875-1889), Nietzsche's *Genealogy of morals* ([1879] 1998), and Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* ([1879] 2017). Simplifying considerably, these texts stand for modernity, postmodernity and pre-modernity respectively, with the first representing modernity's ambition to create an all-encompassing and internally consistent account of the entire sum of human knowledge. MacIntyre critiques both 'Encyclopaedia' (modernity) and 'Genealogy' (postmodernity) for claiming to stand outside tradition; while thereby lacking many of the resources which he sees as necessary to rational thought, they nevertheless operate as traditions of sorts. While on MacIntyre's account the Encyclopaedist ignores tradition, believing that 'both truth and rationality are independent of our apprehensions of or strivings towards them' (1990: 202), all the Genealogist can do in his belief that truth is relative 'is to flirt with different traditions, rather like an actor playing different roles, yet all the while maintaining a certain degree of knowing irony and distance' (Fuller 1998: 132). As repeatedly seen in Chapter 2, mainstream conservation practice largely ignores the ongoing and tradition-formed particularity of historic buildings in favour of a supposedly independent truth and rationality furnished by its methodology (e.g. HE 2008), but which in practice is anything but. In an age of public participation the universal approach, which once seemed so authoritative, now appears increasingly threadbare.

If the old interpretive certainties of a universal approach will no longer suffice, how can a descent into the relativism of the Genealogist be averted? How can the conservation process arbitrate between Hardy's 'incompatibles', those radically different readings of the importance of a historic building thrown up by the current process? MacIntyre (1990: 81) suggests that one possible answer to the question of which rival form of moral enquiry might prevail over the others

was supplied by Dante: that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it, not only to retell their stories as episodes within its story, but to tell the story of the telling of their stories as such episodes.

Accordingly MacIntyre proceeds to demonstrate the shortcomings and inconsistencies of each of the first two rivals *in their own terms*. He concludes that only the Aristotelianism of Aquinas, represented however imperfectly by the last of his three 'rival versions', is capable of both presenting a coherent account in its own right, and crucially of providing resources to resolve outstanding issues within the other rival traditions.

4.3.2. The vitality of tradition

For MacIntyre, tradition is anything but conservative, and he goes out of his way to differentiate his understanding of the working of tradition from that which, as we saw in Section 4.2.1, has been constrained within political conservatism:

We are apt to be misled here by the ideological uses to which the concept of a tradition has been put by conservative political theorists. Characteristically such theorists have followed Burke in contrasting tradition with reason and the stability of tradition with conflict. Both contrasts obfuscate. For all reasoning takes place within the context of some traditional mode of thought, transcending through criticism and invention the limitations of what had hitherto been reasoned in that tradition [...] Traditions, when vital, embody continuities of conflict. Indeed when a tradition becomes Burkean, it is always dying or dead.

(MacIntyre 1985: 221–222)

By contrast, he defines a living tradition as ‘an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition’ (ibid). On MacIntyre’s view, Burke’s mistake, writing in the aftermath of the French Revolution, was to accept the Enlightenment’s opposition of reason to tradition and simply to reverse it.

Gadamer ([1960] 1989: 273) similarly sees Burke’s critique of the Enlightenment as facilitating the rise of German romanticism and, as we have seen in Section 4.2.4, noted the selfsame reversal. Burke accepted the Enlightenment’s failure to understand that a live tradition is very much concerned with reason, since a key concern for any such tradition is the ongoing debate about its own nature. In contrast to Burke’s understanding of tradition as static, MacIntyre’s is necessarily and unashamedly dynamic; in this, as in much else, MacIntyre and Gadamer are in agreement. Burke also played an important role in the development of eighteenth-century aesthetics through his highly influential *Philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful* (Burke [1757] 1990). Ruskin was clearly influenced by Burke, quoting him in his formative *Modern Painters vol. I* (Ruskin [1843] 1903: e.g. p. 128); through Ruskin and then Morris, Burke thus also helped to shape the development of modern conservation.

Over the last 60 years much work has been done in philosophy to question modernity’s aversion to tradition, and it has been argued above that this alternative stream of theory employing the resources of pre-modernity offers the prospect of a far more interesting, creative and productive relationship between conservation and tradition. Nicholas Davey (2016), in commenting on Gadamer’s contribution, contrasts two distinct approaches to tradition:

A commitment to tradition is not a commitment to an academic antiquarianism. It is, essentially, a commitment to a field of debate. Tradition is presented as a resource and a provocation for thinking and creativity: whereas sameness is the currency of a conservative conception of tradition, instability, questions and the challenge of otherness are the drivers of Gadamer's more dialogical concept of tradition.

Contemporary conservation practice in India presents just this contrast, with two quite distinct attitudes to heritage protection working in parallel. On the 'antiquarian' side, a relative handful (some 5,000) of designated monuments are protected at national level by the Archaeological Survey of India, which from its creation in the nineteenth century during British rule has pursued a Western approach to cultural heritage; a few thousand more buildings are cared for at state level in a similar manner. On the side of a 'dialogical' concept of tradition, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has developed a charter for the protection of unprotected heritage (INTACH 2004), with an approach that stands in marked contrast to the 'antiquarian' one. In this, INTACH reflects the increasing pluralism in heritage practice since the 1990s, specifically quoting (and reproducing) the *Nara document on authenticity* (UNESCO 1994).

However, INTACH goes further, stating that in preference to 'official and legal guidelines' such as the *Nara document*,

The traditional knowledge systems and the cultural landscape in which it exists, particularly if these are 'living', should define the authenticity of the heritage value to be conserved.

(INTACH 2004: Article 3.1.1)

Under the conservation objective to retain visual identity, the charter notes how this unprotected architectural heritage is important to the 'specific visual identity of a place', but insists that 'this image should not be preserved in the manner of legally protected monuments, but must accommodate the imperatives of change in making the heritage relevant in contemporary society' (Article 4.1.1). Within INTACH's remit, authenticity resides less in material fabric and more in embedded practices, including religious observance, and accordingly the charter places considerable stress on the retention and development of craft skills.

Rodney Harrison (2013) has suggested that one of the principal challenges to the Western notion of World Heritage came through its forcible engagement, on the basis of its very claims to universality, with alternative and non-Western models of heritage, such as those to which the *INTACH charter* responds. However, Harrison points out that the resulting adoption of concepts of intangible heritage and cultural landscapes are 'fundamentally at odds with the Indigenous ontological position' (2013: 204) to which these innovations sought to respond. By contrast, in a close parallel to the

argument of this thesis, he proposes 'a relational or dialogical model, which sees heritage as emerging from the relationship between a range of human and non-human actors and their environments' (ibid.).

CONCLUSIONS

The conservation of historic buildings is the culturally critical project to safeguard the physical remnants of the past, that is, the objects of tradition, of whatever age. Central to the argument made in this chapter is the observation that since conservation is a product of modernity, and since modernity is at the very least conflicted in its relation to tradition, then we should not be surprised that conservation itself is conflicted. The ongoing argument over the status of modernity is well beyond the scope of this research; for the present purposes it has been enough to observe the antipathy the Enlightenment displays towards tradition, and to make the minimal assertion that to approach conservation through the theoretical framework of, and employing only the resources offered by, modernity is neither transparent nor straightforward. In marked contrast, pre-modernity stands for the 'vitality of tradition', both in the sense of its central relevance, and that it is itself living.

From a non-Western perspective such as that of the *INTACH charter* it seems strange that so many conservation professionals, particularly in the West, should hitherto have ignored the 'dialogical concept of tradition', which offers obvious potential for productive overlap with the contemporary concerns of conservation, including the central question of appropriate change. In Section 4.1.1 we noted the characteristics that Stein Olsen sees differentiating tradition from canon: that it is concerned with practices and with continuity, that it is often marked by anonymous and collective cultural production, that it is developmental and that it is culturally embedded. These characteristics will inform the application that follows in Chapter 6. But first, Chapter 5 considers another area of significant difference between pre-modernity and modernity, that of temporality, and how different concepts of time relate to the two approaches to tradition, the antiquarian and the dialogic, noted in Section 4.3.2. From there the chapter examines the positive role that narrative might play in addressing some of the inherent weaknesses of modern conservation identified in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

5. Telling stories: the uses and abuses of narrative

*Live in fragments no longer. Only connect,
and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.*

E. M. Forster (1910: 184)

A sense of history is fundamental to any account of the development of human culture. History is concerned with how things change through time, with accounting for the respective roles of human agency and of material circumstances in those changes, with tracing causal linkages, and with presenting an account of the whole in more or less coherent form. Conservation can be described in much the same terms, and is just one of many disciplines with an interest in history; an interest, that is, not only in the minimal sense of intellectual curiosity, but in the fuller sense that its outcomes are strongly influenced – or arguably determined – by the particular understanding of history adopted.

As discussed in Section 4.1, the SPAB *Manifesto* (Morris [1877] 2009), a foundational document for modern conservation, champions the defence of history when it contrasts the modern age of the nineteenth century with earlier centuries in which ‘every change, whatever history it destroyed, left history in the gap’. Restoration is vilified for the belief ‘that it is possible to strip from a building this, that, and the other part of its history – of its life that is – and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living’. But other, contrary voices also appeal to history, as when the critic and arch-modernist Reyner Banham dismissed the conservation movement as the ‘preserve-at-all-costs’ brigade, labelling them ‘*anti*-historians, trying to deny or destroy history, like someone trying to make the good times last by nailing up the hands of the clock’ (Banham 1963: 529, cited in Whiteley 2002: 266, emphasis original).

It is striking that each of these opposing voices not only lays the same charge of violating history at the door of their opponent, but does so in almost identical terms. That their approach can be so similar yet their positions with respect to historic buildings so divergent firstly suggests that these two opposing views may share more in common than at first seems likely, and secondly questions the adequacy of the account

of history, and behind that of temporality, which they apparently share. Banham continues thus: 'For history is about process; the objects the process creates are incidental...'. While we may take issue with this further step in Banham's argument, we should take the implication of his argument seriously: that is, that the conservation movement fundamentally misunderstands the objects of tradition which it seeks to safeguard because it misunderstands history.

This chapter is concerned with that understanding of history. It begins by considering some aspects of temporality, and particularly the question of whether history can be said to be narrative in structure. From there it looks at the implications of narrative theory in other fields, notably in ethics, together with some of the principal objections to these uses of narrative. The chapter concludes by considering the relevance and suitability of narrative as a model for conservation.

5.1. TEMPORALITY

5.1.1. History and transition

Like any established discipline, history has a history. That history of history can be told as a narrative with a beginning, middle and, if Francis Fukuyama (1992) is to be believed, even an end. In terms of beginnings, Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) is viewed as the 'father' of modern history because he was responsible for its differentiation as a discipline in its own right, distinct from philosophy and literature. For Richard Evans (2001: 25), von Ranke

had distinguished in his day between the rigorous principles of source-criticism needed for an accurate representation of events in the past, and the intuitive method needed to establish the 'interconnectedness' of these events and penetrate to the 'essence' of an epoch. It was this latter operation, which Ranke conceived of in romantic and religious terms, and [G. M.] Trevelyan in literary and aesthetic terms, that made the difference, in the view of both of them, between the chronicler and the historian. History, said Trevelyan, was a mixture of the scientific (research), the imaginative or speculative (interpretation) and the literary (presentation).

This concern to account for the interconnectedness of events is a particular preoccupation of narrative and indicates the narrative character of history from its inception as a modern discipline. As noted in Section 4.5.2, one early narrative mode of reading history was the so-called 'Great Man theory', popularised through von Ranke's exact contemporary, Thomas Carlyle (1840). A quite different and non-narrative approach was taken by one of Carlyle's principal critics, the prominent Victorian philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer, who, in *The study of sociology* (1873), suggested that history is in essence a process of social and cultural evolution. Thus began a long-running argument over the extent to which history can or should model itself on the natural sciences and deal only with the hard facts of the particular, or

whether it should address the narrative unity of the whole through Trevelyan's second and third criteria of interpretation and presentation.

The French *Annales* school is one expression of the 'scientific' tendency, with its focus on explanation based on social and economic data, and is directly traceable to Spencer. Perhaps the most celebrated example of this approach is Fernand Braudel's magisterial *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world* ([1949] 1972). On this social history view, narrative modes of history are merely literary, an imposition of an interpretative form onto the raw material of factual events; seen in this way, narrative is not just fiction but deception. In this context, Trevelyan's threefold formulation of research, interpretation and presentation attempts to secure some form of middle ground. However, the thrust of Trevelyan's argument was to defend history as an art, restricting science to the assembling and weighing of evidence, not to questions of causality. The question of the place of narrative in the writing of history remains a critical issue in the philosophy of history, and of salient relevance to our present concerns (White 1984, Roberts 2001).

In her 2017 Reith Lectures, the historical novelist Hilary Mantel (2017: 4) reflected on the relation of the discipline of history to the facts of the past:

History is not the past – it is the method we have evolved of organising our ignorance of the past. [...] It's the plan of the positions taken, when we stop the dance to note them down. It's what's left in the sieve when the centuries have run through it [...] It is no more "the past" than a birth certificate is a birth, or a script is a performance, or a map is a journey.

The language here is playful – as befits a novelist – and suggests that to focus solely on the research part of Trevelyan's threefold formulation not only falls short of engaging with history, but positively *misrepresents* the past. Mantel also helpfully addresses the role history plays in providing an account of change through time. It follows that a different understanding of the structure of time will result in a different form of history being written. Augustine, in one much discussed comment about the nature of time, famously asks *quid est enim tempus?* – 'What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled' (*Confessions* XI 14:17).

Augustine's comment has often been used as the starting point for philosophical investigations of time. One such was Hans-Georg Gadamer's paper on the philosophy of time given at a colloquium in 1969 in honour of Martin Heidegger's 80th birthday, entitled 'Concerning empty and full-filled time' (Gadamer 1970). As could be expected from his hermeneutical approach, Gadamer rejects the idea that the present is the simple abutment of past and future, a dimensionless 'now' that merely 'couples

together what has preceded and what is to come, while it itself does not endure' (1970: 350). Pursuing this opposition he explores the character of transition, noting that

If one looks to the old that passes away, the process looks like a downfall. If one looks to the new that arises, the same process looks like an evolution, a genesis, a beginning.

(Gadamer 1970: 351)

His point is not that transition has two aspects depending on your point of view, but far more challengingly that this sense of 'downfall' is *inherent* to the passage of time and therefore to that which is to come:

And further, the point is that in this insight, time itself is experienced. The distinguishing characteristic of transition is not that it is both passing away and developing at the same time, but rather that the new comes to be as the old is recollected in its dissolution.

(Ibid.)

For Gadamer it is only in this negotiation of loss and gain, in the 'dissolution' and 'development' of transition, that the vitality of what he terms 'organic time' survives. In this light we can see conservation in its more preservationist yearnings as the attempt to avoid transition, to remove the historic object from the flow of time. As discussed in Sections 1.1 and 1.2, this might arguably be appropriate for the static monument, but it cannot be for the living building. Further, on this view, the label 'historic' belongs not to the static/preservationist (monument) side of this disagreement as Morris or Ruskin might claim, but to the dynamic/tradition-centred (living building) side; renegotiating the ownership of the word 'historic' is a central aspect of the theoretical stance developed in this thesis. It is in this Gadamerian sense of history that Reyner Banham could accuse the preservationists of being anti-historical.

What Gadamer expresses as the 'downfall' in the process of change involves a relinquishing of one's grip on the old before fully being able to grasp the new. This requires what we could term the courage of the trapeze artist. Gadamer (1970: 352) notes that 'the ability to bid farewell, just as much as the openness for the new which is undetermined, is in the "all in all" character of transition'. He goes on to relate this to the Christian understanding of hope: 'Hope is only significant when one does not insist upon the old, which is subsiding' (ibid.). Gadamer's broader point is that change is an integral part of life, whether for individuals, communities, buildings, or entire cultures. To partake in history means to engage in multiple transitions; to seek to avoid all 'dissolution' is also to abandon all hope of development; to cease to change is to die (cf. Newman [1845] 2001). More strongly still, the implication is that to preserve, that is, to seek to prevent change is, potentially at least, to kill. Gadamer's point brings to mind Heidegger's essay 'The origin of the work of art' ([1950] 2001: 75) in which he asks whether we give heed to art as an origin,

a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical ... Or, in our relation to art, do we still merely make appeal to a cultivated acquaintance with the past?

For Gadamer (1970: 352), drawing on the poet Friederich Hölderlin, the 'downfall' or 'dissolution' is necessary in opening up the infinity of possibility, and that 'transition [...] is *time*' (emphasis original). He goes on:

If what I have attempted to show is right, viz., that transition is always a strained position between departure and opening into something indeterminately new, then the possibility of something indeterminately new is dependent upon the force with which we are able to bid farewell.

(Gadamer 1970: 353)

To bid farewell, in this context, is an exertion; and it requires courage. It is analogous to the bittersweet feeling a parent commonly has as their child grows into adulthood and leaves home. By whatever means, one knows that to care as before is not what is now needed; indeed to care as when one's child was smaller would now be inappropriate and potentially destructive. Wise parenting in this situation involves a letting go, a bidding farewell, since it is only through the dissolution of one form of relationship between parent and child that another, more adult form, can emerge. This is an example of the 'strained position' that is transition.

Gadamer's language of force is startling; he tells us that the future, the 'indeterminately new' is 'dependent' on this force. That is to say that change is necessarily intentional, that if our trapeze artist holds too firmly to the old they will endanger themselves and never learn their craft, nor can the parent hold too firmly to their child without harming them and failing as a parent. By contrast, some of the case study interviews demonstrated that contributors found many conservation professionals to be deeply distrustful precisely of letting go (e.g. C1, in Section 3.4.2). Rather than change being an expected aspect of living buildings, the doctrine of minimal intervention treats it as the exception that should only be allowed once all other options have been exhausted. This contributes to the extended timescales which are so problematic for church communities, as discussed in Section 3.2.1, and which *in extremis* risk hastening the closure of the building.

5.1.2. Time and narrative

Both Gadamer's 'strained position' and the vertiginous flight of the trapeze artist discussed above are attempts to characterise the middle 'present' in a tripartite process of transition that is narrative in structure. Paul Ricoeur has provided arguably the most detailed exploration to date of that narrative structure, principally in his three volume *Temps et récit*, published in English as *Time and narrative* (1984, 1985, 1988), but also continuing through his later writings. Reviewing the treatment of time through

the history of philosophy, he identifies a recurrent polarity between two incompatible readings of the present – the first is to see the present as a point-like instant, a break between the two halves of past and future; he terms this the ‘external’ approach which sees time as a cosmological/physical problem. The second ‘internal’ approach sees time as a psychological problem, with the present as

a gathering moment where expectation, memory, and present experience coincide. And so, whereas the cosmological instant is a kind of empty place – it is a caesura, a gap between two halves – the present, on the contrary, is a rich resource.

(Ricoeur, in Reagan 1996: 111)

In the ancient world these approaches are represented by Aristotle and Augustine respectively.

The first volume of *Time and narrative* begins by looking in turn at the aporias (contradictions) of the experience of time in Book XI of Augustine’s *Confessions*, and at emplotment in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, setting up an irreconcilable tension between the lived experience of time (termed ‘mental’) and time as something measurable and therefore physical (termed ‘cosmological’). For Ricoeur, the bringing together of these two approaches to time leads him to his central hypothesis that ‘between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity’ (1984: 52). As the work unfolds, Ricoeur illustrates how these two approaches recur in subsequent philosophy, and that narrative uniquely offers a means of bridging between the two.

The first volume also includes a detailed consideration and substantial extension of Aristotle’s understanding of *mimesis*. Ricoeur conceives of *mimesis* as a threefold process of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. Prefiguration refers to the pre-theoretical structure of language, the symbolic fabric of life and its social norms, which are prerequisites which make the telling of stories possible, while configuration involves the bringing of those structures to language, for example in a specific text. The last stage, refiguration, involves the subsequent reading of that text, and this feeds back into the first, giving this threefold structure a circular character.

For Ricoeur, *mimesis* should therefore not be seen in its most obvious sense as ‘representation’ or ‘imitation’, that is, where the form of artistic production (painting, writing, performance, architecture etc.) is understood to present or clothe the intellectual ‘content’ of an idea in a simple relationship of equivalence. Rather, *mimesis* implies a notion of ongoing cultural production, an idea expanded on in a subsequent discussion:

What struck me most in Aristotle, concerning the term *mimesis*, was its belonging to a family of terms ending in -sis, all of which evoke a dynamic operativity: thus *poiesis*, *sustasis*, *catharsis*, etc.; *poiesis*, then, does not designate the finished poem, but the act of poetic creation; in the same way *mimesis* designates a kind of production. This is why to translate *mimesis* by 'imitation' is insufficient.

(Ricoeur, in Carr et al. 1991: 180–181)

This understanding, paralleled by Mantel's comment about the past noted in the previous subsection, foregrounds the essentially dynamic and dialogical nature of material culture, and is of considerable relevance to the particular concerns of living buildings identified in Section 1.4.

The remainder of volume 1 (Part 2) and all of volume 2 (Part 3) of *Time and narrative* consider the configuration of time in historical narrative and fictional narrative respectively. Engaging with a variety of structuralist approaches to narrative and three novels which are concerned with temporality, Ricoeur then proposes that historical and fictional narrative, while distinct from one another, share the same underlying structure. Finally, in volume 3, he suggests that narrative offers a third approach to time, not in the form of a 'solution', but of a creative response. He makes the claim that because most recounting concerns human action – what people do or what they have done to them – and because it must take place in a world (real or imagined), that the act of telling is able to bridge between the two irreconcilable readings of time identified at the outset. If Ricoeur is right in his claim of the ubiquity of this underlying narrative structure, then reading historic buildings in explicitly narrative terms can be expected to contribute fresh and potentially transformative perspectives on a number of conservation's more intractable issues; this possibility is tested on a selection of such issues in Section 6.1.

5.1.3. Double temporality

Ricoeur refers to the three novels examined in the second volume of *Time and narrative* as 'tales about time'. Each displays what William Dowling (2011: 88) calls

the double temporality of narrative structure: a *telos* that carries characters forward in a state of imperfect knowledge about the consequences of their actions, with a narrator who, gazing backward on events from a fixed or *totum simul* perspective, has arrived at certain conclusions about their meaning or significance.

In this, Ricoeur (1984: 159–160) draws on the work of philosopher of history Louis Mink, for whom all understanding has the goal 'of comprehending the world as a *totality*', quoting Mink's linkage to Boethius's definition of 'God's knowledge of the world as a *totum simul*, in which the successive moments of all time are copresent in a single perception, as of a landscape of events' (Mink 1970: 549). This perspective is implied when an author uses a narrator to recount a story in the past tense; the outcome cannot be foreseen by the protagonists who, because they are within the story, lack the

benefit of hindsight. This notion of double temporality is central to Ricoeur's philosophy of time – that the experience from within the narrative is *contingent*, and that it is only the narrator, standing at the end of the story looking back, who can truly assign conclusions about the meaning and significance of the events retold. In this connection Anthony Rudd (2007: 66) notes Kierkegaard's view that

life can only be understood backwards, but has to be lived forwards. But (as I think Kierkegaard was well aware) we only live our lives forwards by living them from the self-understanding that we have come to at any moment by looking back on what our lives have been to that point.

If time does indeed have this narrative structure, then the implications for conservation are considerable. Any assessment of 'significance', whether of the 'modern' variety from the pen of the 'Great Man' (Pevsner et al.), or of the 'postmodern' variety (*Conservation principles* etc.) must be *provisional*. And yet both varieties make the narrator's claim to possess a comprehensive grasp of events. This is to make the same error as the secondary character in a whodunnit who attempts to bring the narrative to a premature close, as though time has concluded and all can be seen clearly. The implication, therefore, for conservation is that we are unable to reach firm conclusions about the significance of the building, and that at best our understanding is provisional. An exception might be granted for living buildings that close and make the transition, a final episode of change, to the status of static monument; but such exceptions prove the rule.

In the light of this, Morrisian preservation is characterised by this same belief that the significance of events can be judged definitively – that is, that there is no such contingency. This is possible either on the basis of claiming the perfect retrospective knowledge of the narrator, or by believing the production of meaning to have stopped. In this Morris follows the broader cultural orientations of modernity, sharing with Banham what is, from the viewpoint of tradition, an impoverished view of time, and a belief in an *ahistorical* present. This should come as no surprise; modernity's promise of a new beginning comes at the cost of temporal continuity. For Ricoeur, by contrast, human action is only comprehensible, indeed only possible, in the context of a broader understanding of the present that incorporates elements of past and future, of meaningful action and projects, of horizons of expectation. This suggests that rehabilitating an understanding of this *historical* present will be of central concern in the development of an alternative framework capable of addressing heritage within a living cultural continuity. In order to do this, it is necessary to consider the workings of narrative in greater detail.

5.2. NARRATIVITY

Narrative is seemingly ubiquitous; as Barbara Hardy (1968: 5), an early proponent, put it, ‘we dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticise, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative’. But beyond its prevalence, many proponents of narrative make strong claims for its foundational role, whether psychologically, ethically or culturally, to name three primary applications. Following Ricoeur and others, narrative is seen to be the key to creating a unity – essential, so the argument goes, for personal identity – from disjunctive parts dispersed through time; drawing on the work of Louis Mink (1970, 1972), Ricoeur (1980: 178) describes this as a ‘grasping together’. This section will start with a brief consideration of questions of genre, before examining two particular aspects of this ‘grasping together’ afforded by narrative – firstly its role in the formation of individual identity, and secondly the relation between narrative and community.

5.2.1. The nature of narrative

At the outset it is worth observing that the derivation of the word ‘narrative’ is itself of interest. The *OED* states that the verb ‘to narrate’ is mid-seventeenth-century from the Latin *narrare*, in turn developed from *gnarus* (knowing); this provides a strong indication of the potential epistemological relevance of narrative. If narrative is indeed a form of knowing, then it is not unreasonable to consider that it might legitimately play a foundational role in our understanding of the world.

The idea that buildings might helpfully be viewed in the narrative terms set out in this chapter has not been previously explored in any detail. Certainly, to treat a historic building as a form of text is not a new idea; for example, it is not uncommon for buildings to be compared to biographies or chronicles, and so the idea of a building as a narrative joins a field of competing textual metaphors. There are, however, distinctions to be drawn between each of these literary forms.

Biography is a specific form of narrative, and certainly includes a significant element of authorial shaping – comparing competing biographies of the same figure reveals the importance of the selection and interpretation of the ‘raw material’ of events, in part determining the nature of the story told. The question of who controls the narration is a central issue for any narrative approach to address; the issue is critical when it comes to a historic building, since the way in which the story is told will significantly shape the future development of that building, and this is considered further in Section 6.1.3. One significant distinction between biography and other forms of narrative is that, whether or not the subject is dead, biographies are most often

presented as *completed* narratives; in this, they should be seen as a special form of narrative that is primarily backward-facing.

'Building-as-biography' is therefore a perfectly serviceable metaphor for, say, the architectural historian. Gavin Lucas has explored biography in archaeology, noting its potential to mediate between the otherwise disparate descriptive and interpretive schools of historical archaeology (Lucas 2006: 41). Matthew Jenkins (2013) uses building biographies to investigate individual houses and entire streets in eighteenth-century York. And in *Medieval life*, Roberta Gilchrist combines methodologies, including object biographies of everything from shoes and wedding rings to buildings, noting that 'the model of the Christian extended life course – from conception to afterlife – was fully realized in the materiality of the parish church and cemetery' (2012: 169). But however productive these uses undoubtedly are, biography does not attempt to shape the *future* of its subject matter, and thus cannot address the particular concerns of living buildings, specifically the ethical question of how they can be changed well. For these, conservation must not only grasp the biography to date, but also decide what next chapter should be written. For living buildings in community ownership the responsibility of conservation is to determine what should be done in the present for the future benefit of that community whose health is inseparably bound up with that of the building in the totality of a 'balanced heritage', as discussed in Chapter 1.

Chronicle is a different sub-genre again. Definitions vary, but a chronicle can loosely be described as a factual account of historical events, and one that follows the order in which those events occurred, so that a chronicle can be seen as a *temporal catalogue* of events. Like a biography, therefore, a chronicle is also backward-facing, but differs from biography in its more overt claim to be factual, resisting the idea that it is created through the interpretative process of selection and organisation. As touched on in Section 5.1.1, the philosophy of history has concerned itself with the distinctions between chronicle and narrative, and the extent to which history can be said to be factual, or conversely that it is inevitably shaped in the telling, that is, the extent to which history is story.

In an article entitled 'Narrative explanation and its malcontents', David Carr (2008) provides two reasons why narrative is readily able to supply a satisfactory account of events. Firstly, the narrative mode of explanation closely matches the way in which an agent might themselves describe the structure of their action; and, secondly, 'narrative explanation is satisfying precisely because it never strays far from ordinary discourse' (2008: 21). Narrative is not a panacea since, however apparently satisfying, it may not reflect reality; but Carr's central point remains that narrative explanation retains its efficacy because of its familiarity, and because it matches the way human

beings typically envisage action, whether in prospect or retrospect. This can be labelled the ‘simplicity argument’; in the context of this research, with its focus on application and public involvement in heritage, that simplicity, if valid, would represent a substantial benefit.

5.2.2. Identity

As indicated above, for its proponents narrative is seen as essential for the creation of a sense of unity, and thus for personal identity; this has formed a major focus in the debate over narrative, not least for its detractors, as examined in Section 5.3. Alasdair MacIntyre, whose approach to virtue ethics is discussed in Section 4.3, was one of the first philosophers to suggest that the locus of ethical decisions is wider than the single act, or the single point of decision in the mind of the single agent. He famously uses the example of a man digging in his garden to highlight the impossibility of discerning the meaning of this action without presupposing a prior understanding of the interrelation of the multiple overlapping answers to that question:

To the question ‘What is he doing?’ the answers may with equal truth and appropriateness be ‘Digging’, ‘Gardening’, ‘Taking exercise’, ‘Preparing for winter’ or ‘Pleasing his wife’.

(MacIntyre 1985: 206)

That is to say that we are unable to interpret an action correctly without first attending to the enfolding narrative histories that provide that action with its essential social setting and context; with respect to buildings, this focus on social context underlines the need for a ‘balanced heritage’.

MacIntyre proposes narrative as a means of relating human action to individual identity:

In what does the unity of an individual life consist? The answer is that its unity is the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life. To ask ‘What is the good for me?’ is to ask how best I might live out that unity and bring it to completion. To ask ‘What is the good for man?’ is to ask what all answers to the former question must have in common. [...] It is the systematic asking of these two questions and the attempt to answer them in deed as well as in word which provide the moral life with its unity. The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest.

(MacIntyre 1985: 218–219)

He goes on to identify two key features of the medieval understanding of quest – firstly that a quest has a direction and aim, a *telos*, and secondly that that which is searched for is inadequately characterised. It is only in the course of the quest itself that the goal is properly understood, indeed perhaps recognised at all. This is a key distinction with immediate application to the process of architectural design. Unlike other forms of quest such as a miner looking for gold (MacIntyre’s example) or a consumer shopping

for clothes, this richer medieval understanding both involves the discovery of the character of the object of the quest and the formation of character of those embarked upon it. MacIntyre's argument is that narrative, quest and identity are intimately related.

Subsequent to the publication of *Time and narrative*, Ricoeur moved on to consider the extent to which human identity is narrative in its construction, in a paper entitled 'Narrative identity' (1991b), and then more fully in the book *Oneself as another* (1992). In an interview from 1988 (Reagan 1996: 113) he reiterates an earlier differentiation between two understandings of identity: firstly as sameness, in the way that a person retains the same genetic structure through their life; and secondly as what he terms '*ipséité*', which one might translate 'himselfness', or 'selfhood' (Ricoeur 1991b: 189). He observes that sameness endures through time: 'Sameness of structure is a kind of denial of time. In spite of time the same structure prevails'. By contrast '*ipséité*' has the characteristic of the experience of responsibility: 'I don't claim to be the same, but I impose on myself the duty to be faithful to my word. This will to keep one's word implies a quite different sense of identity' (ibid.).

Ricoeur himself makes it clear that narrative identity is as applicable to a historical community as it is to an individual (1991b: 188). I propose to extend Ricoeur's insight by suggesting that, within conservation also, 'many of the difficulties which obscure the question of personal identity result from failing to distinguish between these two senses of the term identity' (Ricoeur 1991b: 189). This suggests that many of the disagreements that attend proposals for change to historic buildings stem from the difference between a literalist reduction of identity to sameness of structure and material. By contrast, when viewed within the framework of a 'balanced heritage' comprising both building and community discussed in Chapter 1, identity is primarily a question of *ipséité*. If this is the case, then the principal responsibility of conservation professionals should be keeping alive the cultural questions from which that identity flows, not the preservation of the material half of the heritage narrative in the state this generation happens to find it. Mindful of the framing of conservation as a form of applied ethics in Section 1.1.4, Ricoeur adds that 'it is this narrative identity which is the basis for an ethical life' (in Reagan 1996: 113).

David Kaplan (2003: 89) expands on Ricoeur's distinction of sameness and selfhood by defining selfhood as a dialectic of 'character' and 'keeping one's word'. In what sense then could a building keep its word or remain faithful to its promises? There is certainly a sense of expectation when a building is constructed, for example at the most basic level that it will provide shelter for the activities it is designed to house; this can be seen as a promise made on behalf of the building by those who commissioned it. Of course there is no guarantee that a building will in fact deliver on expectations of

this sort; for example, many owners seem mistakenly to believe that a building ‘promises’ to survive in perpetuity without any basic maintenance or Morris’s ‘daily care’.

When considering community buildings, one such commitment made by previous generations, whether explicitly or implicitly, is to constitute community. We can make this claim in at least two respects. Firstly the construction of a community building is almost never an end in itself; at a minimal level the cost in terms of effort and resources is always, at least to a substantial degree, justified on the basis of the community activities it is intended to accommodate. Secondly, there is the agency of buildings considered in Section 1.3.4 and encapsulated in Winston Churchill’s dictum that ‘We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us’ (UK Parliament 23/10/1943). The first of these grounds relates to the fulfilment of functional requirements, the second to questions of identity. Ricoeur, too, describes this reciprocal relation: ‘I try to say that by telling a story we construct the identity not only of the characters of the story but the character of the reader’ (Reagan 1996: 112).

If indeed we are able to speak in terms of historic buildings ‘keeping their word’, then this has significant implications for their identity and thus for the key issue of how they should change. In interactions between people, it is precisely when circumstances change that one’s ability to ‘keep one’s word’ is tested, and one’s character is proven; hence, as noted, a parent’s commitment to provide for their child is expressed very differently at different stages of that child’s life. If, as suggested, the role of conservation is the passing on of the questions that constitute a building’s identity, then we should expect that when the cultural situation changes (as it is bound to do while a building remains ‘alive’) this commitment to ‘keeping one’s word’ may well demand significant change to that building. We can see the history of this written into any multi-generational building; as previously noted, ‘works of architecture do not stand motionless on the shore of the stream of history, but are borne along by it’ (Gadamer [1960] 1989: 157). What should surprise us is not that buildings continue to need to change, but that anyone could think it credible, as preservationists suggest, that they should be prevented from doing so. For in the context outlined above, to frustrate change in a building is to do it violence, compromising its identity and wresting it from the flow of its development that is its nature. Clearly some buildings are intended to endure unaltered, for example war memorials, to which Riegl ([1903] 1996) attributed ‘intentional commemorative-value’, and these may indeed be appropriately categorised as monuments. In a church context, another obvious example is the medieval chantry chapel, whose creation and endowment were intended to ensure that prayers were said in perpetuity for the departed, but which of course did not survive the Reformation.

However, the exceptional status of both examples serves to highlight that once a building begins to 'live' as a result of initial episodes of change, preservation in perpetuity ceases to be part of its promise, if indeed it ever was.

5.2.3. Community

If Ricoeur is principally interested in bridging the gap between time as experienced and time as recounted, David Carr in his *Time, narrative, and history* (1986) draws out a second unifying aspect (implied by Ricoeur but not his main focus) in which narrative brings together the individual and the communal. Carr is concerned with the pre-theoretical understanding of history, the ways in which we speak of the past in the context of everyday life, and it is this that lies behind his interest in the articulation of common narratives by groups. For Carr, this pre-reflective approach underlies the way the professional historian approaches their task, with clear applicability to the communal aspects of a 'balanced heritage'. Indeed, it is this 'social dimension of narrative which is necessary for the full comprehension of history' (Carr 1986: 17).

Carr builds his case from individual small scale experiences through extended actions to the full lives of individuals, attempting to demonstrate at each stage a narrative structure, and concluding at the level of groups, which in part are constituted by the narrative aspect of a community's traditions. For Carr, the narrative structure of human action means that historians who write in a narrative mode are reflecting the structure of events rather than imposing that structure onto them. But as Noël Carroll (1988: 305) points out in an extended review of Carr's book, historians may yet impose artificial structures on their material since the narratives of historical agents may not be their only, or even main, interest.

It is Carr's insistence on the relation between narrative and the formation of community that is of greatest relevance to the argument of this thesis. For Carr, community identity is formed from events, actions and experiences spread across time. Hence he can state that

the group's temporally persisting existence as a community, and as a social subject of experience and action, is not different from the story that is told about it; it too is constituted by a story of the community, of what it is and what it is doing, which is told, acted out, and received and accepted in a kind of self-reflective social narration.

(Carr 1986: 149–150)

The congruence of the account of the past is as essential to the well-being of the community as to that of the individual. Since the past is readily manipulable, it is a sign of a healthy community that the facts of the past are vigorously debated, 'precisely because they are so important in the constitution of the present and the future' (1986: 172). In a buildings context, the conservation approvals process represents just such a

vigorous debate over the facts of the past, as documented, for example, in the case study projects in Chapter 3.

In conservation practice as it relates to church buildings, such debate often centres on the credibility of two key narrative documents, the statements of significance and needs, which between them situate the proposed next step within an account of the narrative identity of the community and its building to date (Section 2.3.4). Carr's analysis helps shed light on the nature of the disagreements that often arise during the course of stakeholder consultation. While the community is more likely to grasp that it is its future identity that is being debated, the language used by conservation professionals often suggests they imagine the horizon of the discussion extends no further than the physical fabric of the building itself, despite explicit guidance to the contrary (e.g. HE 2008, HE 2012, 1991 Measure: s1). The community opens itself up to external critique in consultation, and its articulation of significance in terms of communal value brings its very identity into play; meanwhile the stakeholders more typically argue their case in the language of history and aesthetics. In this way, in terms of genre, narrative meets chronicle, and the gulf of misunderstanding can be substantial.

5.3. DISPENSING WITH NARRATIVE

The topics of identity and community considered above represent two respects in which narrative can be claimed to create a unifying account of a whole from a set of discrete parts. While much more could be said on both topics, if those claims are valid they demonstrate the potential applicability of a narrative approach to conservation within an ethical framework. Before expanding on the potential relevance of narrative to conservation in Section 5.4, this next section considers how some substantial objections might challenge the unifying claims made for narrative.

5.3.1. Voices of dissent

In a world seemingly awash with narrative theorising, it is important to acknowledge that there are significant voices of dissent questioning the usefulness of narrative theory which demand attention. Typical of the claims made for narrative to which its detractors object is Charles Taylor's statement that, 'in order to have an identity, we need an orientation to the good' and that this 'has to be woven into my understanding of my life as an unfolding story'; further, in order to make sense of ourselves, it is essential 'that we grasp our lives in a *narrative*' (1989: 47, emphasis original). The analytic philosopher Galen Strawson is one of the principal opponents of 'narrativism', and in his article 'Against narrativity' (2004) helpfully differentiates between psychological and ethical forms of narrativity. Of these, the former is the thesis that life is commonly experienced

in narrative form, which he regards as merely mistaken, while the latter, that narrativity is a requirement for a fulfilled life, he sees as positively harmful.

The philosopher Peter Lamarque has expressed a number of concerns with the claims made for narrative in the context of literary aesthetics. In his book of the same name (Lamarque 2014), he refers to the essential *opacity* of narrative, to suggest that at least for literary fictional narratives ‘the events and characters that make up the content are *constituted* by the modes of their presentation in the narrative’ (2014: 3, emphasis original); rather than narrative presenting a window through which one may glimpse a different world, nothing more is revealed than the specific story told. Lamarque agrees that narrative is ‘prominent in human lives’, including ‘in virtually all forms of reflective cognition’ (2014: 51) but that this is of little significance, and that the overrating of narratology stems from its roots in structuralism and literary criticism. He cites Thomas Hardy and Emily Dickinson (2014: 27–28) as providing examples of self-identity articulated in a non-narrative mode. He engages with Alasdair MacIntyre (2014: 60–61), noting his introduction of narrative into ethics to counter the modern tendency to view actions atomistically, before criticising him for overreaching in his argument by exploring the parallels between human lives and fictional narratives, which leads him to suggest we are ‘co-authors’ of the narratives of our lives (MacIntyre 1985: 213). For Lamarque, this is fraught with danger; this aestheticisation

is another form of distortion, promoting quite the wrong kinds of explanations, finding meanings in mere coincidence, finding teleology where there is mere cause and elevating genre over brute fact.

(Lamarque 2014: 30)

Both Strawson and Lamarque are particularly exercised by the application of narrative to personal identity. Strawson makes his argument from the central example of his own experience, and from this differentiates two opposed forms of self-experience, the ‘diachronic’ and the ‘episodic’. To be diachronic is ‘naturally [to] figure oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future’ (Strawson 2004: 430), which the episodic does not. This disposes the diachronic towards the narrativist, and the episodic to the anti-narrativist, position, with Strawson identifying himself firmly with the latter.

In his more recent paper ‘I am not a story’ (2015) Strawson suggests that understanding oneself to be a community of selves – citing figures such as psychologist Erik Erikson and philosopher Mary Midgley – is somehow at odds with an idea of narrative unity. This appears to weaken his position – singularity is not the same as selfhood or identity. The idea of the individual as a community of selves is a fundamental of Jungian psychoanalysis, something Strawson ignores, and is in no way

incompatible with narrative; indeed, for the argument of this thesis it provides a helpful metaphor when considering a communal living building with competing claims of different interests and the contributions of different generations, a theme I have previously explored elsewhere (Walter 2014a). In both cases the issue is how one accounts for that which binds the parts into a more or less coherent whole, and what sort of identity and agency that whole possesses.

The issue of personal identity is not essential for the argument made in this thesis, whereas the identity of the whole with respect to the sum of its parts is pivotal. The focus here is on buildings as a form of text, and the suggestion that narrative is a credible and helpful means of accounting for the nature of a historic building as a complex whole, both in general and in the specific case. It is enough for the current purpose to note that the evident role played by historic buildings such as the English parish church in the constitution of community closely parallels the claims made by those arguing in favour of narrative as an explanatory device, whereas the episodic framework offers little help.

5.3.2. The limits of anti-narrativism

While addressing different concerns to those of this thesis, these anti-narrativist arguments nevertheless offer a framework of sorts against which to assess the claims of narrative as they might be applied to buildings and communities. Three observations are made. Firstly, it is telling that in the one reference Strawson makes to history – ‘the actual history of one’s life’ (Strawson 2004: 441) – equates it to ‘a sequential record’ or, in the terms of Section 5.2.1, to chronicle. It is serious indeed if, for the episodic to avoid narrative, all history must be collapsed into chronicle; and this is suggestive of how much of a conventional cultural life is expendable if the logic of the episodic were to be embraced. This is accompanied by another strand of Strawson’s argument, that memory is of little relevance to identity. Quoting John Updike, he says he has ‘the persistent sensation, in my life [...] that I am just beginning’, and agreeing with the poet Fernando Pessoa that ‘each moment I feel as if I’ve just been born/Into an endlessly new world’ (Strawson 2015). In the context and to the ends to which Strawson deploys them these quotations are strikingly reminiscent of how Paul de Man (1970: 388–389) considers ‘the idea of modernity’ as consisting in

a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a point that would be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure. This combined interplay of deliberate forgetting with an action that is also a new origin reaches the full power of the idea of modernity.

The proximity of these parallel views serves to locate Strawson’s argument as an outworking of this ‘idea of modernity’.

Secondly, and related to this, in Strawson's view the episodic does not conceive of themselves, considered as a self, as having temporal continuity (2004: 430). Even taken on its own terms, the implication is that it is possible to conceive of oneself as a series of disconnected selves, each detached from the next, like so many frames in a film. Whether or not we agree on the level of personal identity, there would be few within conservation who would support the application of this aspect of the episodic approach to historic buildings which, beyond simply enduring, clearly possess a substantial continuity of identity through time. To follow Strawson would prevent us from valuing anything for its time-depth, that is, as historic. Strawson is clear that he acknowledges simple endurance, but that the past and future are not relevant to his sense of identity; he has, it seems, 'no time for history'. To apply Strawson's approach to conservation one would be forced to the position, which some within heritage studies might support, that the significance of a building lies only in the present, and therefore in the ability of those presently associated with it to attach value to it; under such a view, the material fabric is easily eroded. One might imagine Reyner Banham (1963: 529), for whom individual objects are incidental to the historical process as seen above, agreeing, or, in similar vein, Martin Pawley (1998); but these are hardly views compatible with conservation as conventionally understood.

A third observation is that the lack of temporal continuity has an ethical dimension, since it is difficult to see how a person can be held responsible for the actions of their earlier past 'selves' that no longer exist. Integrity is generally seen to be a virtue, akin to honesty; a person of integrity can be expected to keep their word, as discussed in Section 5.2.2. Integrity also implies wholeness (the words 'integer' and 'entirety' also share the same Latin root), particularly in relation to a division into parts, as for example in a nation state 'preserving territorial integrity'. It is something akin to this double sense of integrity that is claimed for narrative, that a narrative structure is implicit in the grasping together of parts into a whole. The case is not being made that 'anti-narrativists lack integrity' in the everyday sense; indeed, the carefully argued prose of the authors cited above suggests the opposite. What is being claimed is that there is a tension between the claims made for the episodic and the ability for something to stand as a whole, rather than merely as a collection of parts. This is precisely one of the major shortcomings in the *Conservation principles* (HE 2008) methodology identified in Section 1.2.2. From the point of view of Strawson's argument this seems uncontroversial – he tells us that he is not concerned with wholes. But conservation is very much concerned firstly with seeing a historic building as a situated cultural whole and secondly with the preservation of its integrity. And the historic building, together

with whatever community formed it and in turn has been formed by it, relies on just such an understanding of temporal continuity for its continued existence.

The relevance of narrative to the concerns of this thesis is not that an individual life/building should have a false sense of narrative closure forced upon it, which is one of Lamarque's principal concerns. This is clear from the discussion of contingency in Section 5.1.3, and Ricoeur does not claim that narrative is determinative of our identity in the sense of providing a single reading: narrative 'is not stable and seamless' (1988: 248). Rather, narrative holds out two important but more basic possibilities: firstly, it provides some means for negotiating the temporal aspect of life, that growth and decay can be reconciled with the endurance of a stable identity; and secondly, it makes feasible the articulation of a coherent (though always provisional) whole from the untidiness of the parts. The point of narrative, seemingly lost on Strawson and other anti-narrativists, is that narrative provides a (perhaps the?) means of engaging with what we could term 'the identity dividend' – that is, whatever we refer to when we speak of the whole being 'more than the sum of the parts'. Or, as Ricoeur (1991a: 21) says of emplotment, 'the recounted story is always more than the enumeration'.

5.3.3. Illustrating the non-narrative

Strawson does not spell out what his preferred episodic approach to time might look like in practice beyond his general satisfaction with the experience – one cannot say 'pattern' – of his life. One non-narrative and highly instrumental representation of time which shares some of the same cultural pedigree, which seems plausibly consistent with the episodic, and which is frequently applied to managing the process of change to buildings, is the Gantt chart. Much beloved of project managers, this divides the duration of a project into equal increments of time and against this temporal structure lays out the tasks necessary for its completion. Tasks are grouped or subdivided, causal relations can be established such that task A must finish before task B commences, and a 'critical path' can be identified showing the minimum time for completion. While this can be a powerful tool for managing progress towards goals, it carries with it specific theoretical commitments, and represents time as undifferentiated and devoid of the texture and pacing it commonly has in lived experience.

In Ricoeur's terms discussed in Section 5.1.2, this equates to the 'external' aspect of time without the 'internal', and lacks the essential resources he identifies in narrative for reconciling these otherwise incompatible approaches. Further, it is a hallmark of project management on this model that the resources required by the process are commodified and interchangeable. As an instrumental tool the Gantt chart has no ethical dimension, no idea of the good beyond the efficient; it cares nothing if

person X is fired and person Y is hired, save only for its impact on programme delivery. Yet in its focus on the interchangeability of means to achieve the desired end, such a tool is not morally neutral, and its inherent commodification of all resources, human and material, militates against any consideration of character, another essential aspect of the narrative approach.

Returning to consider the above examples of an anti-narrativist stance with the tools of discourse analysis also raises the question of the position of community voices. Strawson recognises the popularity of narrativism, but dismissively asserts that ‘theorising human beings tend to favour false views in matters of this kind’ (2004: 439). Similarly Lamarque accounts for the ubiquity of narrative by suggesting its minimal conditions are merely very general features of human discourse, and thus of little consequence. Strawson’s stance in particular is the mirror opposite of Carr’s ‘simplicity argument’ outlined in Section 5.2.1, and both authors suggest an assumed authority entirely at odds with the meaningful public participation that is essential for a credible conservation methodology. By contrast, Carr sees narrative’s proximity to everyday discourse as a virtue. He suggests that narrative is so readily comprehensible because it ‘seems to borrow its form from the very action it is about’ (2008: 20), while a common element of more determinative ‘scientific’ forms of explanation ‘is precisely their departure from common sense or ordinary discourse’ (2008: 22).

5.3.4. The fitness of narrativity

Living historic buildings are complex cultural entities: they call for interpretative engagement well beyond the purities of abstract explanation, they are the focus of concern for a wide range of stakeholders including their non-professional owners, and they are subject to ongoing cultural production (termed the enhancement of significance in the current methodology). The review of some of the potential objections to narrative in this section has done nothing to suggest that narrative cannot offer a credible framework for the interpretation of historic buildings. But these objections make it clear that narrative cannot be, as perhaps some are wont to argue, a panacea for all explanatory needs. Precisely because it allows for communal authorship, a narrative approach cannot ever be wholly determinative; rather, it allows for a degree of contingency, as appropriate for a story that is terminally incomplete.

Strawson notes (in pejorative terms) that many narrativists have a religious commitment: this is true of Ricoeur, Taylor and MacIntyre, but not of Daniel Dennett, a noted atheist and secularist whom Strawson also attacks. Perhaps a more interesting correlation is between narrativity and the playfulness inherent in any creative endeavour and which, at least as argued by Johan Huizinga (1949), is essential to the generation

of culture and the health of human society. Any designer knows that playfulness was present in the creation, and often in the subsequent alteration, of the historic buildings for which conservation professionals care. Similarly, a person's account of their life is something that is constantly and perennially *in play* until the time of their death. In his earlier *Rule of metaphor* (1977), Ricoeur argued for the fundamental fecundity of language, its playfulness and ability to generate new meaning, seeing that book and *Time and narrative* as two parts of a single extended project (1984: ix, 71). Gadamer (1986) also regarded play, along with symbol and festival, as a critical aspect of art and essential to the participation to which art invites us; more than merely describing the state of mind of the creative individual, play provides 'the clue to ontological explanation' ([1960] 1989: 101). The inclusion of a joke as an epigraph to this thesis is, in a similar manner, intended to signal that the historic environment is far too serious a matter to be treated as humourlessly as it typically is.

Whatever its other merits, the non-narrativist argument is constrained by the underlying (and unacknowledged) commitments of 'the modern tradition'. While Strawson's argument may be consistent with the individualism implicit in modernity, it fails to engage with questions of connectedness and community identity inherent in social life, and which are manifested in the particular case of the historic buildings of interest to conservation. Rather, the conclusions to which his anti-narrativism leads him accentuate the ubiquity and utility of the underlying narrative understanding, at least in the present context. If anything, the limitations evident in Strawson's aversion to narrative thereby serve to underline the *appropriateness* of the use of narrative in the context of the concern of this thesis to develop a 'balanced heritage' for the care of living buildings, the implications of which will be explored further in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.4. THE RELEVANCE OF NARRATIVE FOR CONSERVATION

In contrast to Strawson's approach and in confirmation of Carr's 'simplicity argument', Section 3.4.2 showed that the respondents in the case study interviews displayed a striking readiness to discuss their building, and their own involvement with it, in terms of narrative. Most tellingly, in Section 3.4.1 we saw that for a number of participants there was a strong sense that the past remains in active dialogue with both the present and the future. In part this may be related to an understanding of continuity with the past which attends a conscious identification with a tradition; this is in marked contrast to the sense of discontinuity from the past which Poullos (2014: 12) identifies as characteristic of orthodox modern conservation. We also saw in Section 4.1.2 architect Herbert Austen Hall's view that change should be by 'inflection and not infraction' within a context of continuity of development, and that 'the Book of Architecture is written

chapter by chapter' (Austen Hall 1943: 165). But what would the adoption of a narrative approach to conservation entail?

5.4.1. The central metaphor

Stephen Crites, in his essay 'The narrative quality of experience', reflects on the role of storytelling in traditional folk cultures, suggesting that there is

more to narrative form than meets the eye [...] even for a culture as fragmented, sophisticated, and anti-traditional as ours. [...] Such stories, and the symbolic worlds they project, are not like monuments that men behold, but like dwelling-places. People live in them. Yet even though they are not directly told, even though a culture seems rather to be the telling than the teller of these stories, their form seems to be narrative.

(Crites 1971: 295)

This image of narratives as 'dwelling-places' in which people live is richly evocative, and its validity and usefulness are not compromised by its possible inversion; that is, that the 'dwelling-places' around which the identities of communities are structured could helpfully be read as narratives. The following metaphor is therefore proposed, that a historic building is best understood not as a pile of discrete 'gobbets' of significance, as the current methodology might be characterised, but as an ongoing community narrative.

Implicit in this metaphor are two related claims. The first is that a building is meaningful primarily for what it represents as a cultural whole, and only secondarily for its parts, however beautiful those individual parts may be. The second is that there is a directional relationship between whole and part. The current methodology works from part to whole, with significance presented merely as the sum of individual values; yet no clue is offered as to how those parts are supposed to cohere. Statutory consultees, particularly the periodised amenity societies, similarly tend to engage with a building on the basis of the parts that are of interest to them, with the whole relegated to secondary importance or neglected altogether. In the absence of an integrating framework, the mortar between the blocks as it were, it is difficult to see how a stable structure could possibly result.

One mode of viewing a building as a cultural whole would be to see it as poetry, the most concentrated form of linguistic expression. John Ruskin's evocative writing furnishes numerous examples of buildings described in the most poetic of language, and his direct influence is felt in the SPAB *Manifesto*, as noted in Section 1.2.1. Indeed, in the 'Lamp of memory' he states that 'there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality' ([1849] 1903: 224). But to see a building as poetry has significant implications for the way it should be treated. Poetry, as the most

condensed literary form, is also the most resistant to paraphrase, since to change a poem is to alter its structure, which cannot but compromise its integrity. This question of paraphrasability – that is, the extent to which the meaning of a literary work can survive its redescription in other words – is of significant interest to philosophers of literature (e.g. Beardsley 1981: 432–437), bringing with it a distinction between a general text which can indeed be re-expressed, and a work of literature which resists such re-description. A building viewed as poetry in this sense could indeed not, as Morris warned, be meddled with without being destroyed.

An alternative to Ruskin's understanding of poetry is Martin Heidegger's description of *poiesis* as the essence of art, that is, a making or bringing forth into being ([1950] 2001). In his essay 'Poetically man dwells', a reflection on a line from Hölderlin, he states that 'poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building' ([1954] 2001: 213). For Ruskin, the implication of the relation of architecture and poetry, distilled in aphorism 27, is that 'architecture is to be made historical and preserved as such' ([1849] 1903: 225); for Heidegger, 'dwelling rests on the poetic', with dwelling understood as 'the basic character of human existence' ([1954] 2001: 212, 213), and therefore very much alive.

Further, the Ruskinian 'building-as-poem' has two characteristics not shared by the sort of multi-generational community buildings with which Ruskin, Morris and this thesis are concerned. Firstly they are authored by a single voice, and secondly they are completed, usually by design or, as with Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* (1965), by accident. By contrast a community historic building is more like a communally written narrative, with each person (generation) adding a line or a chapter. Following Chesterton's understanding of tradition as democracy extended through time (Chesterton 1908), such a jointly authored communal work can never be regarded as complete while the tradition remains alive, as was observed of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* in Section 4.3.1. Similarly, Tim Ingold applies Davidson and Noble's (1993: 365) 'finished artefact fallacy' to buildings, suggesting that only once the builders move off site and hand it over does the serious work begin (Ingold 2013: 39, 48). Ingold has in mind the effort required to combat the effects of the elements, but the same applies *a fortiori* to the intergenerationally fluid requirements of living buildings as defined in the context of this thesis. It is interesting to note that Ricoeur (in Dowling 2011: 113) mirrors Chesterton's understanding from almost a century earlier, with respect to the classics of philosophy: not only do they stand the test of time, but they form 'the space of a mysterious contemporaneity, in which what might be called a dialogue with the dead is nonetheless conducted by altogether living voices'.

Central to this metaphor of buildings as ongoing narratives is therefore the need to allow for *continuing* cultural production, or as noted with respect to (cultural) landscapes in Section 1.3.2, ‘The decision that each generation [...] has to make, is what will happen next’ (Fairclough 2002: 35). Following the logic of the metaphor, each generation has the opportunity (and arguably the responsibility) to contribute to this ongoing narrative. But if the current chapter is to represent a coherent addition to what in most cases is already a multi-faceted story, then a narrative approach demands that we understand the plot to date as well as we possibly can. What a narrative approach emphatically does not do, therefore, is to excuse us from a thorough engagement with the past. This not only underscores the value of ‘informed conservation’ (Clark, 2001), but goes beyond information and knowledge of the past to engaging with the tradition(s) that formed the narrative to date.

5.4.2. An illustration of narrativity



Fig. 12: Church of All Saints, Fleet – view looking east

One particularly moving example of the indeterminate but non-arbitrary nature of ‘significance, and the possibility of its enrichment in the narrative mode, is the altar at All Saints’ church in Fleet, Hampshire. Built by William Burges in 1862, the building was extended by two bays to the west in the 1930s, and in the 1950s a chapel and vestry were added to the north east. On 22 June 2015 the building was gutted in an arson attack which destroyed the roof and most of the fittings, including the alabaster font,

but which left the brickwork of the walls, arcade piers and ceiling ribs intact (PCC of Parish of Fleet 2017; Fig. 12). Extraordinarily, the altar survived, charred but retaining its finely carved detail (Fig. 13). I had the privilege of visiting the church representing the Church Buildings Council at a meeting to discuss feasibility proposals for the rebuilding of the church.



Fig. 13: Church of All Saints, Fleet – altar

Clearly the altar has been badly damaged, and by virtue of that, much of its original significance in the conventional conservation sense has been lost. However, while not denying the loss, a narrative approach sees that in its survival the altar's meaning has also been *enriched*. Indeed the narrativist claim is that, much as one would wish the fire never to have happened, the meaning borne by the altar in its current form and context is now *greater* than it was before, or arguably even than it would have been had it somehow survived the fire unscathed. The altar itself now embodies the trauma (importantly, to both building and community) of the fire. In jointly drafting the CBC's initial letter of response, my suggestion was that the altar's presence within a recreated church as the focus of worship would be a profoundly theological symbol of redemption and resurrection, speaking poetically both of destruction and of Christian hope.

Leaving aside this specifically theological enrichment, retaining an object such as this altar is important also in acknowledging the trauma, however painful, as an authentic and necessary chapter in the ongoing story of the building and its community. Rather than 'bridging over' the trauma either by like-for-like recreation or by creation of

an unrelated structure *ex novo*, the trauma can be woven into the overall narrative.²⁰ And of course such retentions are hardly a new idea; other obvious examples include the ‘Coventry crosses’ made from the nails of the roof of Coventry cathedral, or the not unrelated example of the remains of the bells left where they fell in St Mary’s church in Lübeck after the Allied bombing of March 1942. These are all examples of what we could term ‘post-traumatic reimagining’ (that is, after forced change) and illustrate how the narrative approach outlined in this thesis offers a theoretical framework that makes sense of a form of creative response which is well understood within contemporary conservation, but which lacks explicit theoretical justification.

The remainder of this section considers some of the other benefits a narrative approach might offer in relation to current orthodoxies. Section 6.1 then looks at the impact that such an approach would have on some questions encountered in conservation practice.

5.4.3. Benefits of the narrative model

Given the ubiquity of narrative discussed above, perhaps the key distinction of the proposed narrative approach is that, rather than relying on the apparatus of modernity, it works with the grain of tradition, traditionally understood. As explored in Chapter 4, tradition is more dynamic than static; it is as much concerned with the generation of new meanings as the preservation of old ones. It is essential, therefore, that any proposed framework for dealing with the objects of tradition includes a future dimension, as does narrative. Part of knowing what we should do at the present moment involves an acknowledgement that, whatever the chapter we end up writing in this generation, future generations will wish to write their own and that this is an inevitable aspect of what it means to be a *living* building. If an intergenerational narrative is to be comprehensive and coherent, the author of each ‘chapter’ has a responsibility to leave ‘plot lines’ open for future generations. This requires a projection forward to imagine what a future generation of that community might need, to ensure where possible that the work currently undertaken does not prevent that future work. For example, where a church puts in a toilet with a view to hosting concerts, it may be worth asking where additional toilets might go once the church becomes a successful venue. Or where a hall is added, it helps to think how it might be extended, or indeed subdivided, and still add up to a coherent whole. The recognition of the changing nature of needs is good design practice but, as seen in the discourse analysis in Chapter 2, it remains unsupported by the current conservation methodology. Indeed the ingrained doctrine of minimal intervention often works in the opposite direction,

²⁰ For a fuller treatment of the contrast between these approaches in the context of post-war urban reconstruction see Walter (forthcoming 2017).

limiting approval to work for which a current need can be demonstrated; in this respect, contemporary conservation methodology is curiously atemporal.

Closely related to this, therefore, is that a narrative approach offers a framework for understanding buildings as developing personalities, rather than as completed biographies, as discussed in Section 5.2.1. Parish churches have often changed markedly through their history, perhaps expanding from a single cell building with the addition (and sometimes subtraction) of chancels, aisles, towers, the ebb and flow of furniture, the installation and removal of galleries, etc. This is compellingly demonstrated in Dyas (2010) through two animations illustrating such changes to a typical church from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries.

It is a commonplace of conservation practice that buildings are better cared for if they remain in beneficial use (HE 2008: 43, 2012: 1), that is, as living buildings; but beyond that assertion one struggles to find any discussion of how this process can be managed in practice. A narrative approach for the first time addresses this need. Crucially, a narrative approach provides an account of change to historic buildings, and can distinguish this from harm, which the conventional methodology fails to do with any consistency. Indeed it can be said that the broader societal point of narrative is that it provides a mechanism for communities and individuals to negotiate such change. Narrative provides a means of understanding character formation in an individual's or a community's response to the events through which they live, and accounts for continuity of identity through the inevitable changes of life. In short it is the best mechanism we have for relating becoming to being.

Another of the principal benefits of a narrative understanding of heritage is that it provides a theoretical grounding for the relation of a historic building, or part of a building, to its context. For example, a narrative understanding insists that the building cannot be understood without its community, whereas an aesthetic-historical approach is perfectly able to view the building, typically conceived of as an art object, in isolation. Hence Simon Jenkins (2000) is able to collect *England's thousand best churches*, an exercise that, while worthwhile in its own right, tells us little about the shifting local cultural landscapes within which each buildings sits.

While attention to context, whether cultural or physical, is not a new idea in conservation theory, practice or legislation, it is nevertheless a relatively recent addition. True to its roots in antiquarianism, conservation initially focused solely on the individual treasured object/feature/building; Lionel Esher (1981: 72) similarly describes a general 'architectural myopia' in the post-war period, noting how the amenity societies retained a focus on the particular. Welcome as the more recent concern with context

undoubtedly is, it is usually restricted to consideration of the physical and visual setting – for example, the Planning Act 1990 conceives of the protection of conservation areas in terms of ‘character or appearance’. As a result, when viewed from outside the conservation professions, it can seem at times that this broadening into context is used simply to adduce further reasons to oppose change, since such broadening rarely looks at the other aspects of context beyond the physical and visual. In Section 4.1.1, cultural embeddedness was noted as one of Olsen’s four distinctive features of tradition. Since the proposed narrative approach is rooted in tradition, it enables the treasured building/object to be placed not only in its physical and visual context, but also in its broader ethical and cultural context.

The current values-based conservation orthodoxy attempts to address this issue of scope by extending the classes of values to be considered, most notably to include communal value. Within the confines of that system, this is very welcome, and a values-based approach has the further benefit that it can be applied at a variety of scales, from an individual feature to a building to a townscape. Yet a values-based process is inherently atomistic, dividing the whole into smaller and smaller ‘units of significance’. Furthermore, the results of a values-based approach will always be open to the charge of relativity since it is an inescapably subjective exercise, always requiring the *attachment* of values to objects by *individuals*, based on the individual’s claimed authority. This makes it possible to ascribe high levels of value to almost anything, often employing the well-worn formulation of ‘a very important early example of...’, a device that threatens to dissolve into self-parody. By contrast, the boundedness of tradition protects a narrative approach from at least some of this relativity, because of its intergenerational structure. A values-based system always requires someone (an expert) to determine in an act of interpretation which value claims are ranked above which other. This implicitly acknowledges the need for a hermeneutic approach without offering any guidance, structure or theoretical foundation for it; meanwhile, the reliance on expert judgement undercuts the claims made for greater public engagement.

What narrative offers, by contrast, is a means of connecting the particular to the cultural whole. In a parallel move, where individuals engage in community, it also allows for the location of what is of worth to those individuals within the *communal* narrative, as, for example, when respondent B2 showed more concern for future generations of the church than for his own preferences (see Section 3.4.1). It goes without saying that there will still be the need for interpretation, but within the proposed approach this is openly acknowledged and is no longer the sole province of the expert. Instead, since narrative works within the bounded fluidity of tradition there is a sense of continuity against which to judge the propriety and credibility of that interpretation. As we saw in

Section 4.3, part of the usefulness of tradition is that it provides an intergenerational framework to recognise what 'good' looks like, whether that be good workmanship, good interpretation or, indeed, good change. For MacIntyre:

Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes through many generations. [...] Once again the narrative phenomenon of embedding is crucial: the history of a practice in our time is generally and characteristically embedded in and made intelligible in terms of the larger and longer history of the tradition through which the practice in its present form was conveyed to us.

(MacIntyre 1985: 222)

This is a critical distinction between the proposed narrative approach and other models that seek to address the deficiencies of the contemporary process using only the resources furnished by modernity and its later variations.

Because of its prominent use in ethics, and its facilitation of the link between part and whole, narrative offers great potential for re-evaluating the ethical and philosophical basis of conservation. In particular it offers conservation deliverance from the ahistoricism it inherited from romanticism, and in its place offers an understanding of history that for the first time would wholeheartedly engage with Historic England's definition of conservation as the *management* of change. One could even dare to hope that, where appropriate, conservation professionals might come to rejoice in change as a sign that a historic building retains the vibrant glory of its balanced heritage, and that its character and significance have been strengthened.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has suggested that a narrative approach to conservation offers great promise as the foundation of an alternative methodology. Reviewing the above assessment of the suitability of the narrative approach to conservation we can identify four principal benefits that address shortcomings in the current values-based approach:

- a narrative approach allows for fuller public participation which does not conceal executive control by the professional, yet without sacrificing everything to the whim of minimal democracy;
- by relating the part to the whole it is hermeneutically literate, allowing us to enter a more meaningful dialogue with previous stages of our cultural tradition;
- in directly addressing issues of the development of character through time it provides a means of accounting for change, particularly in 'living' buildings; crucially this therefore prevents change necessarily being interpreted as harm;

- a narrative approach is thus able to provide the (missing) theoretical justification for much of the recent healthy innovation in conservation approaches, and directly to address the conditions for continuity of character.

Narrative follows the grain of tradition, and offers a natural means of engaging with historic buildings as cultural wholes rather than merely as assemblages of parts. It also offers a defence against the relativism implicit within a values-based approach. The proposed narrative approach therefore is able to overcome the limitations and potential abuses of the current methodology. It offers the potential to present heritage in a more accessible manner, resulting in greater public participation and, crucially, ownership. And it recognises that buildings themselves have agency, transforming them from their customary minimal status as a backdrop to human action to themselves being characters in the dramatic production that is culture. Narrative therefore promises a more successful theoretical framework that could serve conservation better in its next phase of development. Chapter 6 now sketches out what a narrative approach might look like in practice, beginning by considering its impact on a number of topical issues of interest to conservation professionals.

6. 'All is not loss': the application of a narrative approach to conservation

*The spectator's judgement is sure to miss the root of the matter
and to possess no truth.*

William James ([1899] 1983: 133)

At the end of the first chapter the design of this research was described as circular in structure, starting from a practical question encountered in professional life, travelling in an arc through the current methodology and its associated theory, with the promise of returning to the practical application of an alternative body of theory. From its inception, this project has sought to provoke change in three distinct but overlapping areas – firstly, amongst professionals grappling with change to living buildings; secondly, with respect to policy as it affects the conservation community; and thirdly, in the way the communities responsible for these buildings imagine them. Having explored the related theoretical topics of tradition and narrative in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively, this chapter therefore makes that return to practical application by addressing each of those three areas in turn.

The first section of this chapter considers what impact a narrative understanding might have on conservation practice through a variety of issues of professional concern, and with what benefit. The second section, in time-honoured fashion, is a piece of polemic which seeks to apply the ideas of the thesis as a critique and challenge of the status quo, following the illustrious lead of the SPAB *Manifesto*. The third and final section discusses the development of and response to a booklet aimed at a non-professional readership. This booklet, included in Appendix 5, does not seek to challenge the methodological status quo, but instead to encourage the adoption of a narrative approach within the existing structures, specifically mapping the themes of the research onto the way in which a typical project unfolds from the point of view of a church community. Both second and third sections provided a ready means of testing these themes through discussion with interested parties, generating some valuable feedback. Through the creation of separate targeted documents, both also provide a bridge via which the themes from the research can escape the confines of the library shelf and hopefully impact the contemporary conservation discourse. Change, of

course, cannot be expected to happen overnight, but it is hoped that, by advancing the application of these ideas on a number of fronts, some change will be possible.

6.1. THE IMPACT OF NARRATIVE ON PRACTICE

This first section seeks to apply the proposed theoretical approach to nine specific issues of historic or current concern to conservation practice, all featured in the foregoing discussion, which are grouped under three headings. The first group are questions of principle – incommensurability (how competing narratives can be resolved), the relation of the cultural whole to the parts, and continuity of character. The second group relate to issues of everyday relevance to practitioners – significance, the doctrine of reversibility, and its mirror, expendability. The third group comprises ‘meta-professional’ or framing issues – the status of expertise, the status of non-professionals, and the historical question of restoration, which provided the initial spur for the development of modern conservation.

This choice of nine topics is by no means comprehensive, but suggests the breadth of issues that can be rethought through a narrative-based understanding. The aim has not been to treat these in depth – most deserve at least a chapter in their own right – but rather provides a sketch to illustrate how a narrative approach might unfold, and the impact it would have on the activity of conservation professionals.

6.1.1. Questions of principle

Incommensurability

Any narrative approach immediately faces the question of how one is supposed to decide between competing accounts. This is a question of (epistemological) incommensurability – that is, the inability to assess the claims of one theory in terms of another, as, for example, in the incompatibility of Newtonian and Aristotelian physics. In the same way, how could the claims of a narrative proposed by a church community in its statements of significance and needs be assessed against the competing narratives proposed by one or more of the statutory consultees?

This same issue, of course, afflicts the current values-based system – who is to say that your values take precedence over mine, or vice versa? The current system manages this question by sleight of hand, relying on one or more experts playing a largely unacknowledged editorial role and determining which values should prevail. Looked at in terms of public participation, one of the chief benefits claimed for a values-based system, this is highly problematic. Indeed the less than universal uptake of *Conservation principles* (HE 2008) perhaps suggests unease with the implications of ‘democratising’ heritage on the values-based model; the *Waterloo, St John* judgment

noted in Section 2.5.1 provides one example. This fundamentally questions the ability of the current methodology to deliver on its promise of public accountability.

As noted in Section 4.3.1, Alasdair MacIntyre considers this very question of incommensurability. Asking under what conditions one account might prevail over another, he concludes as already noted that ‘that narrative prevails over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it, not only to retell their stories as episodes within its story, but to tell the story of the telling of their stories as such episodes’ (MacIntyre 1990: 81). This suggests three criteria when rival narratives compete. The first, and most obvious, is to judge which narrative is able, with the least contortion, to account for the full range of phenomena – that is, which rival is most *comprehensive*. The second is to step back from the individual case being argued, and to judge across the piece which rival is most *coherent*. The third and most demanding is to judge which rival can best explain the others *in their own terms*.

This aspect of narrative has two significant implications. The first is to reveal how unproductive it can be to advocate a particular course of action from a single issue perspective such as a periodised brief, as do the majority of the amenity societies. Almost by definition, if one starts by privileging a single historic episode one is unlikely to deliver a balanced narrative; instead, conservation responses often argue for the retention of some medieval/Georgian/Victorian etc. feature which, increasingly it seems, is usually judged to be of exceptional importance. Arguably, it is unrealistic, even improper, to expect anything else of the four ‘periodised’ amenity societies. But the implication of the above model is that the societies would much better fulfil their brief if their consultation responses properly addressed at least the first criterion of comprehensiveness and the second of narrative coherence. A narrative approach focuses on why the particular feature is important for the good of the cultural whole, not just for the narrow interests of one or another favoured period.

The second implication is to expose the inability of the current methodology to evaluate the quality of new design. A narrative approach is as much interested in safeguarding the future as the past in an integrated and coherent temporal whole. This, as was suggested in Chapter 4, requires a pre-modern understanding of tradition. It is commonly observed that it is impossible to judge the importance of works of art or architecture created *de novo* until several generations have passed, and for this reason most systems of statutory protection have a minimum age for a building to be considered for listing. However, a narrative approach offers a means of judging creativity within a tradition, most pertinently when considering a new intervention in a historic building. By contrast, since it ignores the workings of tradition, the current

significance methodology places contemporary creativity at a substantial disadvantage, impoverishing the heritage as a whole.

The cultural whole

A narrative understanding is thus resolutely situational, that is, insisting that the part cannot be understood except in the context of the whole, and is all the while concerned with how that whole develops as the parts of the narrative unfold. A hermeneutic attitude, typical of a working tradition, prioritises the cultural *questions* from whence it draws its life, rather than the cultural *answers* furnished by analysing the artefact into pieces. Answers, of course, are safer, more collectible and more biddable, whereas questions are more ‘slippery’ and prone to subversive activity such as the production of new meaning. A narrative approach strives to keep in view the cultural whole, in order to retain part and whole, question and answer, in play.

Any building is a highly complex answer to the series of overlapping questions that formed its brief, however well or badly that might have been articulated. In the case of a multi-generational building such as a parish church, that set of questions has been elaborated through the generations. But if such buildings partake in an ongoing tradition, they additionally bear witness to the larger cultural question addressed in each generation. It is not, as the nineteenth century supposed, that their importance lies in themselves (as resolved answers) at all, but rather in connecting us to the ongoing question(s) they seek to address. It is in this way, by pointing to the question(s), that historic buildings facilitate continuity. It is when their validity is seen to lie in their status as answers that they risk being cut adrift from their tradition and succumbing to veneration as monuments.

Following Gadamer, we should expect any form of historical understanding, and by extension decisions about change, to be dialogic, to have the form of a conversation. The implication of this is that we cannot go into this conversation with a fixed understanding of the outcome; that would not be a conversation, since

the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct.

(Gadamer [1960] 1989: 383)

It is noted from the consideration of the *Duffield* judgment in Chapter 2 that the current process under the ecclesiastical exemption is inherently conversational, bringing together all the stakeholders including the public. This is a conversation in which none of the parties – not the parish, the DAC, Historic England, the CBC, the amenity societies nor the concerned public – has a veto. The process demands that conversation takes place through thorough consultation, with the arguments heard, if

necessary, in court. And ultimately it comes down to the chancellor making a judgment on the basis of balancing harm against public benefit.

Continuity of character

In the context of the preparatory workshop for the Nara Conference in 1994, David Lowenthal (1994: 40–41) used Plutarch's philosophical puzzle of the ship of Theseus (and a modern variation on it) to highlight the tensions between object identity and material authenticity. Truthfulness of character – the conundrum of how people can retain the same character through the changes of life – is the analogue of this within moral philosophy. Character is also a central concern to conservation; for example, Historic England's *Conservation principles* (2008) makes frequent reference to 'character of place'. Conservation areas are designated under of the Planning Act 1990 (s 69(1)) on the basis of a *character appraisal* of the area, and declaring 'the desirability of conservation preserving or enhancing' that character (s 72(1)). Similarly, the Act forbids the demolition or alteration of a listed building 'in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest' (s 7). Interestingly, the NPPF mentions character only in the sense of local or landscape character of settlements or coastlines, not the character of buildings. By contrast, Hunter (2009) has argued that character is fundamental to an understanding of appropriate change to historic church buildings.

Stephen Crites compares narrative to music as 'the other cultural form capable of expressing coherence through time' (1971: 294). It was noted in Section 3.4 that those interviewed in the case study all showed an appreciation for their historic church building, and were determined to preserve its character through the process of change; in articulating this, many showed a more sophisticated understanding of the way church buildings have changed in the past than was evident in the contributions of some of the conservation professionals. Following Ricoeur (Section 5.2.2 above), this suggests two contrasting approaches to continuity: one achieves a *continuity of sameness* through focusing on the fixity of form and material, and the other a *continuity of identity* through a greater degree of (bounded) fluidity. If the second approach is taken, then of primary importance is the question of how those bounds to fluidity are set; again following Gadamer, this boundedness is provided by the horizon of tradition (Section 4.2.6). But, as Appiah (2016) suggests (Section 1.1.3), we must ask the second more disruptive question whether such fluidity is not only typical of, but also a *necessary* condition for, this continuity of character; this would be the narrative view.

For historic buildings that are no longer used, the preservation of character is, rightly, substantially a question of the preservation of fabric. Missing from the orthodox

methodology is a settled view of how character can endure through the processes of change that inevitably attend historic buildings that are still ‘living’. As a result, the methodology remains focused on the fragility of physical fabric and on the minimisation, not only of harm, but also of change. It is no surprise therefore that conservation practice will usually resolve the tension illustrated by the Ship of Theseus in favour of material authenticity. A narrative approach, based in a less backward-looking temporality, offers an alternative theoretical grounding for the management of change, while sustaining identity and enriching character.

6.1.2. Questions of everyday practice

Significance

Given its centrality in the current conservation methodology, despite protestations to the contrary, significance tends to be conceived of as fixed rather than dynamic. It also easily becomes ‘inflationary’ and hyperbolic, with *everything* classed as highly significant. But this is self-defeating, for if everything is important, then nothing is. Related to this is the secular tendency to treat the old as sacred, what could be termed the shift ‘from beautification to beatification’. Each of these undermines the current methodology and, potentially at least, is extremely harmful to heritage. MacIntyre’s insistence that the meaning of the individual act/event/decision can only be understood if related to the narrative whole (Section 5.2.2) has three important consequences that help shape a more robust understanding of significance.

Firstly, a narrative approach underlines the importance of context. This of course is in line with modern conservation practice, but rather than being merely one additional aspect of significance to add to the pile, this ‘narrative context’ has the power to recalibrate everything else. A narrative approach shows that the current understanding of significance as an assemblage of values is an inversion of what should be the priority of the cultural whole. This privileging of the cultural whole is consistent both with Eliot’s understanding of tradition, and Gadamer’s treatment of horizon, discussed in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.2.6 respectively.

Given that a lived narrative is by nature ongoing, a second consequence is that any such assessment of meaning must be provisional. Again, in principle current practice recognises this, but only in the sense of an additive model of significance, which does not readily permit the degree of re-evaluation indicated above. The implication of a narrative approach is that the importance of the Soane/Scott/Comper intervention does not stem from the name (as it would in a ‘Great Man’ understanding of significance) but is always open to reappraisal on the basis of further and as yet unwritten chapters in the narrative. This is no different from the unfolding of a literary

narrative, in which the hero may subsequently be revealed as the villain, or vice versa. This is 'unsettling', but the concern that it lays conservation open to rampant relativism is misplaced; given that a narrative understanding insists on the best possible understanding of the story to date, a significant re-evaluation would be the exception rather than the rule. Further, to be credible, such a change cannot be arbitrary; indeed the validity of such a reappraisal rests on it providing a *better* interpretation of the story to date, as discussed in 6.1.1. But it is an inescapable aspect of a living cultural tradition that such a re-evaluation must always be possible. In this sense, it is indeed the case that 'nothing is sacred' in terms of the way we account for the meaning of things, a conclusion that will be difficult for some professionals to countenance.

A third consequence is that, from a narrative point of view, the most interesting and valuable buildings are not the oldest, nor the least altered, nor those associated with the most interesting names. The most valuable are not even those with the most interesting narrative to date. Rather they are those that combine the richest narrative to date with the most potential for future development of that narrative. If our aim is to create a system that safeguards the long-term health of the building as an intergenerational cultural whole then the current understanding of significance with its inevitable bias towards the past is inadequate and unserviceable.

Reversibility

A narrative approach views reversibility as a denial of temporality. Reversibility is feasible in a literal sense, in that it is often possible, at least to a reasonable degree, to design an intervention in a historic building in such a way that it can be removed leaving little or no trace. It could be argued that reversibility suits a narrative approach, since a future generation can remove our contribution and return the narrative to the same point from which we started. But this makes everything done hereafter provisional, and cannot therefore advance the narrative in the way that a traditional understanding demands.

And what do we gain by putting the current contribution in parenthesis in this way? Is it not precisely the indelible traces of previous change that give a historic building such as a medieval church its interest? Reversibility is predicated on the same radical historical discontinuity espoused by William Morris, but even in Morris's own terms it cannot succeed, since any slavishly reversible intervention is change of a sort that still fails to 'leave history in the gap'. It is, in effect, a means of avoiding commitment, and there are few forms of cultural production in which avoidance of commitment is a virtue.

To return again to a literary example, a coherent novel cannot be written if all options are kept open; the fact that an author might confound the reader's expectations

by subsequently reversing what was felt to be an earlier commitment merely signals the need for such commitments. Perhaps it is truer to suggest that this avoidance of commitment is an indication that many modern interventions address functional needs without any feel for the cultural content of the building, or for the narrative that carries that cultural content. If a merely functional modern intervention floats detached from the building's narrative in this way, then perhaps its reversibility is both justifiable and desirable. But in the context of the cultural whole, such paucity of ambition is indefensible; reversibility is the direct product of modernity's belief in the discontinuity of history, making the absence of history 'left in the gap' an inevitability. In this light reversibility can be viewed as an ahistorical failure to engage with the building and its (ongoing) development.

Clearly some changes should be regarded as provisional, since experimentation is also part of being 'living', in which case reversibility is appropriate. A common example of this is the removal of church furnishings under an archdeacon's licence for temporary minor reordering, a mechanism with no equivalent under secular legislation, which avoids the need for formal consultation but comes with strict criteria, including a 15 month time limit.²¹ In practice, however, most interventions are more permanent in nature and are intended to make some form of contribution to the narrative of the building. In these circumstances reversibility is an expensive and convoluted means of making permanent change more palatable to those permission givers who lack the means of judging 'good' change from 'bad'; in this, there is a fundamental dishonesty.

Expendability

A third question of everyday practice concerns the loss of historic fabric. A narrative approach recognises the need to look forwards as well as backwards, and is as concerned with the creation of heritage future as the management of heritage past. To look forwards means actively to nurture the conditions for contemporary creativity, very much including where appropriate change to existing historic buildings. Creativity is, and always has been, in part destructive, and certainly this was the way in which medieval builders seem to have worked. Because a narrative approach prioritises community and the enhancement of 'social value' – that is, the breadth and depth of social connections with and within a historic building – it should be no surprise when at times it is necessary for the old to make way for the new, to accommodate fresh creativity. As Rodney Harrison argues, heritage, like remembering, 'is an active process of cultivating and pruning', and that 'without closer attention to processes by which

²¹ FJR 2015, rules 8.2 & 8.3; this is another pragmatic indication of the way the ecclesiastical exemption acknowledges the 'living' nature of historic buildings in a way the secular system does not.

heritage might be deaccessioned or actively removed [...] we risk being overwhelmed by memory and, in the process, making all heritage worthless' (2013: 231).

One implication of a 'balanced heritage' of buildings and people is not only that a historic building should be used, but more controversially it is not a disaster if its historic material is *used up*. As Emerick suggests, drawing on Cornelius Holtorf's article 'Can less be more?' (2006),

in using social value we have to accept that it can, and should, outrank evidential value where necessary. [...] Perhaps cultural heritage managers, as both legislators and interpreters, should accept that they are just one of a variety of stakeholders, take a deep breath and say 'this time we are going to record whatever, *and let it go*' and it may be found that the social value – the connections that develop about and around a place – are a more than equal exchange and are the qualities that give a place life, meanings and a future.

(Emerick 2014: 221, emphasis added)

Interestingly, Emerick goes on to place narrative in the relationship between the communal and material: 'quite simply we need to build the link between people, story and place and once that is understood and in place then solutions will be easier to find' (2014: 230). The stronger claim of the narrative thesis is that the evident tension between the claims of material-based and communal-based heritage is *unresolvable* except in the context of narrative.

Emerick's experience is primarily of historic monuments, but his view that some should be left to 'die' gracefully is equally applicable to historic buildings. Expendability can also apply to parts of buildings, for example in the creation of a new doorway in a medieval wall. There is often substantial opposition to alterations of this type, simply on the basis that it involves the loss of medieval fabric. A narrative understanding sees that to preserve at any cost – in this case at the cost of the narrative coherence of the building as a whole – is foolish, not least because England has no great shortage of medieval walling. And such alterations, precisely because they involve some disassembly, can deliver archaeological dividends that enrich the narrative in other ways.

Two examples of such enrichment emerged from the case study churches in Chapter 3. During the groundworks at Holt, the remains of Rebecca Blyford (d. 1734) were discovered, including the gold mourning ring she wore for her father, Sir Christopher Myngs, a sometime pirate and hero of the Second Anglo-Dutch War about whom Samuel Pepys wrote with admiration. Fr Stoker notes the importance of such heritage, that 'it helps to bring the past into the present and bring to life the history of Holt' (Stoker 2013: 13; Appendix 10.C13). At Wymondham Abbey, the controversial reopening of an arch blocked as part of the feud between the parish and the monks

resulted in the discovery in the jamb of the opening of a mason's incised, scaled design for a gable with window tracery (Freeland 2016: 11), enriching our understanding at local and national levels, and making a major contribution to the contemporary interpretation of the building.

6.1.3. Questions of meta-practice

'Who need experts?'

As John Schofield's (2014) edited book of the same name explores, the role of the expert is currently a contested one, and there was much reflection on the same theme in the wake of political developments in 2016 in the UK and the USA. Within conservation, a narrative understanding has substantial implications for the role of the expert, and this will be of profound concern for some professionals. If a professional's role is understood to include the right to determine outcomes, that is, to act as a gatekeeper in the decision-making process, then we should expect a catastrophic loss of authority. The argument from a narrative viewpoint, however, is that this is a welcome corrective.

Ricoeur (1991a: 26) suggested that 'the sense or the significance of a narrative stems from the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader'. In a built heritage context, that means that the meaning of a building comes from the interplay between the 'text' of the building and its 'readers', foremost among them the community which formed it and which it forms. Until recently it was deemed sufficient for the expert to be concerned only with 'the world of the text'; now we find ourselves at a crossroads, thrust into precisely that busy 'intersection'.

A narrative approach does not dispense with the expert's knowledge and experience; arguably they become more central than ever. However, in a narrative model, that knowledge must be placed in a wider context: there is loss in the giving up of absolutes, and gain in increased relatedness, accessibility and application; or in Latourian terms, less purity and more hybridity. For example, many inspecting architects discourage church communities from undertaking minor building work. For many centuries minor work to rural church buildings was carried out by surplus farm labour out of season, but in more recent times, and after the widespread and detrimental application of cement mortar, this is generally discouraged. The narrative view, and my own practice as a church architect, is to encourage church communities to resume this traditional practice; I much prefer churches to talk to me to agree whether they can address an issue themselves, with guidance as appropriate. Not only does this de-professionalise some items of work, it means that the building is better maintained and, crucially, it helps restore to the local community a sense of ownership

through active engagement. SPAB's recent 'Maintenance Cooperatives' project (SPAB 2017b) and the earlier 'Faith in Maintenance' (SPAB 2017a) have been successful in working in exactly this spirit.

This adjustment may make substantial demands of both conservation professional and community alike in reassessing the role of expert knowledge and experience. The expert must be willing to play by the new rules and learn to work through facilitation instead of diktat; but, once again, this is an extension of current best practice. Hence Siân Jones describes the 'collaborative co-production' appropriate for addressing social value:

the attribution of expertise, whilst still important, is de-centred and distributed, with professionals and community participants being recognized for their different kinds of knowledge and skilled practice.

(Jones 2017: 28)

The expert still has authority, but this must be earned (as true authority always is) rather than imposed, and will stem not from rank but from their contribution to cohering, informing and enriching the community's narrative. As well as holding knowledge, the expert becomes an enabler, demanding substantial cultural change for all.

While Schofield's concern is with the role of the expert in heritage, there is an overlapping but non-identical set of issues in the creation of new work. The implication of a narrative approach for architects, as for any designer, will be to move on from concerns of individual authorship to facilitating community. This echoes the concerns of the community architecture movement of the 1980s (Wates 1987), whose impact is still felt in the community planning methodology (Wates 2008, 2014). This has application not only in the present, but because narrative accommodates future change, this will include anticipating, indeed enabling, future change to one's own creations. How readily this is accepted will depend on the architect's self-understanding: if they see their design work as a means of securing their importance in perpetuity, then subsequent change diminishes that legacy and necessarily equates to harm. But if architects can see themselves as facilitating the creation and development of community within a narrative approach, then for a future generation to obstruct well-managed change on the basis of the architect's celebrity or skill would be a travesty of authorial intention.

People power

If conservation is to remain effective in its care of the historic environment, it will need to embrace meaningful public participation. The fear shared by many heritage professionals that public participation entails a descent into relativism is equally applicable under a narrative approach. Here narrative's fundamentally communal nature is a significant asset. Communal narrative is an expression of grass roots democracy,

and therefore lacks the ‘democratic deficit’ that afflicts conventional expert-focused processes. This democratic characteristic extends across temporal divides to give a voice to past iterations of a community; as noted above, G K Chesterton (1908: 82–83) suggested, ‘It is obvious that tradition is only democracy extended through time [...] It is the democracy of the dead.’

This is not democracy understood as individual expressions of opinion aggregated into the choice of the majority; rather, it concerns the constitution of community. This is as much of a challenge for postmodernity as for modernity, since both prioritise the individual over the communal. In building terms, narrative certainly provides a means to articulate ‘my story’, for example *my* attachment to the pews in *my* church because *my* grandmother sat in a particular one each Sunday. Such a form of narrative provides a powerful means of experiencing the past, affording a framework for individual engagement with the historic environment on the basis of personal biography. But of greater interest is the claim of an essentially communal aspect to narrative (Ricoeur 1980, Carr 1986). Beyond our concerns as individuals, a narrative framework provides a structure within which to discover ‘our story’ – that is, the narrative of the community. It is not suggested that this will be easy in an age of individualism, but at least narrative, rightly understood, provides a framework within which such discussions can take place.

Finally, and perhaps most obviously, narrative has the great virtue of being a well-understood genre, so much so that we rarely consider all of the narratives with which we engage in the course of day-to-day living. Whether or not one argues that narrative is fundamental to our humanity, that we are ‘hard-wired’ for it, it is enough for the present purpose to observe that narrative works: as the cliché goes, ‘everyone loves a good story’. My own interest in narrative stems from discovering in the course of architectural practice that talking in narrative terms enables many non-professionals to engage with the historic building they use, and for which they are responsible, in a new way and sometimes for the first time; far more so than if one restricts the discussion to the dissection of a form of significance assembled from discrete values. And this applies across a broader demographic, since a narrative approach is as much concerned with embracing the future as it is with honouring the past. In this way heritage becomes something of greater relevance to younger people, a typically under-represented group in terms of heritage engagement.

Restoration

Opposition to the nineteenth-century restoration of historic churches led William Morris and others to establish the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. A narrative

understanding would also condemn the excesses of restoration, but on different grounds, while allowing a more positive assessment of other work of the period.

A narrative understanding does not take exception to the fact that a historic building is changed. The concern for the narrator is that in being restored, the building is 'restored' – that is, too much of the narrative to date is ignored in favour of a new and potentially unrelated story. In negative restoration, previous chapters are effaced and wilfully overwritten, losing the subtleties of layering, the eccentricities of character. In extremis we are asked not just to suspend our disbelief, but to enter a world of make-believe, as when the full-blooded folk tale is 'Disneyfied' into the sanitised fairy story. The crime associated with restoration is thus not directly to do with change as such, but with a 'dumbing down', a thinning out of character, a dressing up in historical garb and the loss of whole chapters of the story to date. The crime of restoration is not change, but revisionism.

It is interesting at this juncture to compare William Morris with Max Dvořák, in particular the latter's *Conservation catechism*, now 100 years old (Dvořák [1916] 2012). As Miele (2005b: 57) demonstrates, Morris's approach was ideological and utopian; he saw historic buildings as testaments to what unalienated human labour could achieve. Dvořák was equally opposed to restoration, which he described as 'stylistic dogmatism' ([1916] 2012: 393), not because he wished to use historic buildings for ideological ends, but because he saw their complex layering and juxtapositions – such as the Baroque altar in the Gothic church – as essential to their character:

Churches or other buildings, streets and squares which have gradually attained their artistic character and have retained it over the course of time, a character consisting of different stylistic elements – such things can be compared to beings with souls. But they lose all life and attraction and become boring pattern-book examples when the violence of stylistic unification is visited upon them.

(Dvořák [1916] 2012: 395)

While not explicitly concerned with the creation of new work in historic settings, Dvořák's approach is much more compatible with living buildings and a narrative-based concern with future heritage. It should also be noted in passing that this *Conservation catechism* was principally addressed to the educated public, rather than to a professional audience, indicating the suitability of this approach for addressing the culture as a whole.

6.1.4. The compatibility with tradition

As a preliminary stage to the earlier exploration of tradition, Section 4.1.1 considered four distinctions Stein Olsen draws between tradition and the more modern notion of a canon of cultural works. This subsection returns to those distinctions in light of the

discussion of the preceding questions of conservation practice, in order to reflect again on the relation of tradition to a narrative approach to conservation.

An obvious, first observation is that the care of historic buildings constitutes a complex series of practices; in this sense conservation from its outset has been intensely *practical*, something which helps distinguish it from the earlier antiquarianism from which it developed. The first of Olsen's four points is that tradition and practice are closely aligned, a conjunction which, together with narrative, was noted in Section 4.3, from MacIntyre (1985). From this one would expect to find a ready fit between the concerns of conservation and a narrative- and tradition-based approach; the nine examples of conservation issues have demonstrated that compatibility in principle.

Olsen's second point is that 'tradition has continuity'; it was added, in the context of historic buildings, that this continuity is intergenerational, resulting in a richer landscape of reference. The second and third issues in Section 6.1.1 explicitly address questions of continuity, in terms of the continuity of character and the relation of the cultural whole to its parts. This intergenerational continuity is essential for recognising good practice, touching on the second of the four major themes identified in Chapter 1.

The third of Olsen's points is that tradition is often marked by anonymous and collective cultural production, which featured heavily in the third group of 'meta-professional' issues in Section 6.1.3 concerning the status of expertise and the place accorded to non-professionals. The related notion that tradition is developmental is reflected in Section 6.1.2, particularly in the questions of reversibility and expendability.

Olsen's final point relating to the cultural embeddedness of tradition is relevant across the board for the historic environment, and in two senses. Firstly, geographically, a building is necessarily rooted to a specific site and location, something increasingly well understood by heritage professionals. Secondly, in a more general sense, a cultural situatedness runs through the entirety of this section, though the repeated evidence of Chapter 3 is that this is often neglected within the current methodology. The remainder of this chapter addresses this aspect of cultural embeddedness; the next section considers how the culture of conservation might change if it were to take the status of living buildings seriously, while Section 6.3 considers how church communities might find better ways of relating to the existing conservation landscape.

6.2. THE SCARAB MANIFESTO

The second area of application is to propose the formation of the Society for the Continuity and Renewal of Ancient Buildings (SCARAB), complementing the existing amenity societies but with an explicit focus on the *future* of historic buildings. The name 'SCARAB' has been chosen for a number of overlapping reasons. Firstly, for the ancient

Egyptians, the scarab (*Scarabaeus sacer*, or dung beetle) symbolised the solar deity Khepri; scarabs form balls of dung, which they roll along, much as the gods were understood to move the sun through the heavens. Furthermore, scarabs lay their eggs within these balls of dung, from which the young beetle emerges fully formed, thus also representing resurrection and new life. As a result of these symbolic associations, amulets in the form of scarabs were widespread in the ancient world, and a good many survive, making them a commonplace within, and emblematic of, archaeology. These amulets were also used as seals for commercial exchange, providing evidence of a contractual promise. From this ancient association with exchange, the scarab also names a graphical symbol or glyph which represents a general currency symbol from the early days of computing. Because it represents an undefined currency, its meaning is delightfully context dependent, thus making the humble scarab a surprising example of hermeneutic necessity in what aspires to be a context-free form of communication.

6.2.1. Background

The SCARAB Manifesto is intended to complement Morris's SPAB *Manifesto* of 1877. It adopts a comparably polemical approach and the connection between the two is underlined in the adaptation of Morris's prefatory wording. However, as Chris Miele (2005a, 2005b) reminds us, there is a substantial ideology that unifies Morris's work, including the SPAB *Manifesto*. The titling of the SPAB document as a 'manifesto' marks it out as the product of an artistic sensibility, 'the stock-in-trade of the self-styled avant garde' (Miele 2005b: 32). For Morris the revival of craft skills was far more than of utilitarian value to the survival of historic buildings; rather it was central to his utopian cultural vision, and for Morris historic buildings embodied an understanding of the relation between labour, art and society distinct from that of the nineteenth century, thus pointing the way to a better future. Central to this craft understanding is the exercise of artistic judgement, and it is part of the SPAB *Manifesto*'s enduring legacy that, for better or worse, it has helped cement in place a predominantly art historical approach to historic buildings.

While at a surface level there was an implacable opposition between Morris and the Gothic Revival in their understanding of old buildings, Miele nevertheless sees substantial common ground. Both Morris and Pugin understood there to have been a

historical rupture, a shattering of continuity and communal relations that could only be healed by focusing, to the exclusion of all else, on medieval buildings, objects of contemplation, the architectural equivalent of a medieval reliquary or altarpiece. There was a cultish view of antiquity and of historic buildings care. For both the goal of future history was a return to some imagined social order mystically encoded in medieval matter. Stylistic purity, Pugin's quest, and authenticity (Morris's) allowed them to commune with a

utopian dream. Artefacts were a way into the vision, which is why they wrote so passionately and fought so fervently to protect them.

(Miele 2005a: 27–28)

To Morris and Pugin, Miele contrasts George Godwin, editor through the middle of the nineteenth century of the *Builder Magazine* who, as a principled pragmatist, viewed Europe's medieval past 'as the first stage in a continuous, if dialectical, historical narrative with no rupture' (ibid.).

The SPAB *Manifesto* stands as one of Morris's most cogent expressions of his underlying views; whatever its virtues, its continued use without acknowledgement of this broader cultural context is at best naive, and potentially far worse. Miele uses Godwin to make clear that there was a vigorous alternative approach to conservation which subsequently faded from view, but which merits closer examination. However, Miele does not present Godwin and 'this other Conservation Movement' as a 'new totem in place of an old one'; rather, he suggests that the 'real challenge has to be to construct a genealogy for the Movement that embraces these extremes and so encourages a truly progressive conservation culture' (Miele 2005a: 28). The construction of that genealogy is for others; for the current purpose, the SCARAB Manifesto provides a means of cladding this middle ground in equivalent polemical clothing.

The relative invisibility of Miele's 'other Conservation Movement' can perhaps be explained by the lack of a comparable manifesto as a rallying point and touchstone, indeed a credo, for those who followed. Any polemic is by definition an act of aggression, and therefore presents an implicit invitation to resistance; Morris's is no exception.²² Indeed it could be argued that the tragedy of the SPAB *Manifesto* is that it has never been responded to in similar vein. It is precisely because Morris's original is so well written that it has retained its currency and lends itself to this form of engagement. To respond in kind is to take Morris and his ideas seriously, and seems an appropriate means of challenging what, in the light of the theoretical frame provided by Chapters 4 and 5, is the error of Morris's central claim, that tradition is dead.

The new Manifesto is therefore substantially congruent with the aims of SPAB, which remains one of the most valued organisations working for the benefit of the historic environment. While clearly intended as playful, the new Manifesto is not parody but dialogue, playfulness of a serious kind in the best Gadamerian sense. In its complementarity it is both derivative and subversive at one and the same time, and in that sense can itself be seen as an illustration of the working of a tradition in robust good health.

²² The Greek root of 'polemic' is *polemos*, 'war'.

6.2.2. The text of the Manifesto

Preamble

A society coming before the public with such a name must needs explain its purpose. This, then, is the explanation we offer...

- *Once a font of community vitality, the life is being squeezed from our ancient buildings.*
- *Conservation without cultural continuity threatens those buildings with a death called preservation.*
- *Living traditions demand change; conservation ignores this at its peril.*

Ancient buildings exude LIFE

SCARAB sees ancient buildings as alive. Just as it is never appropriate to 'preserve' a still living person, so we should not seek to preserve a living building, but rather to sustain it in good health. Some historic structures should indeed be preserved as is; such works of art are monuments that are no longer living, and are the exception that proves the rule.

Unlike monuments, living buildings have an ongoing usefulness and purpose; the unthinking restriction of that utility is the biggest threat such buildings face.

Most living buildings have been authored by their communities across many generations; most have a purpose that points beyond themselves. With few exceptions, they are terminally incomplete, always as much about process and journey as about product and destination.

Living buildings cannot be reduced solely to art history or archaeology; they are living expressions of heritage that are nurtured by the continuity of past, present and future. A conservation based on cultural discontinuity will suppress their life, and that of the communities that use them.

Buildings of any kind have agency; they are actors in the unfolding drama of human culture. Conservation can help an ancient building to exude life or, through preservation, to exclude life. To exude or exclude: that is the question.

Ancient buildings expect CHANGE

History is the study of change through time, and is narrative in structure. A genuinely historic building is also narrative in structure, and thus as much future facing as past facing.

A building valued only for its past ceases to be historic; removed from the flow of history, its life drains away and it becomes a monument. To remain historic, ancient buildings can, should, and indeed must, be allowed to change.

Of course not all change is good. For conservation to be credible it must address a fatal omission by developing a means of judging good change from bad. Change itself should not be feared as a threat, but welcomed as evidence of life.

Ancient buildings provide a model; many have changed in every generation. Change is in their nature, and has given them their character. It is their lifeblood, a lifeline that binds them to their community. Who would wish to obstruct it?

SCARAB sees ancient buildings as ICONs – Intergenerational, Communal and Ongoing Narratives. Each generation writes a chapter in the communal story; in writing ours, we have a duty to enrich the plot and move it forward, while allowing space for future generations to write their chapters.

A narrative approach opposes the privileging of one particular historic period over any other. Old is not necessarily more important than new. What is essential is to safeguard character, continuity, and the coherence of the whole. We should expect change to be subtractive as well as additive; otherwise, over time, any building will choke and die.

The alternative, to stop the narrative through the sclerosis of preservation, dishonours the past and dispossesses the future; this ahistoricism is the death of conservation, and of culture.

Ancient buildings embody TRADITION

SCARAB views ancient buildings as objects of tradition. A tradition in good health is constantly changing, but its fluidity is bounded. Tradition has little place for individual genius, but great respect for creativity in community.

Continuity of tradition should not be confused with keeping things the same; that is the task of preservation, not conservation. A continuity of sameness fixates on answers; continuity of tradition is concerned with questions, specifically with maintaining and developing the questions that sustain a culture. It is the role of tradition to keep those cultural questions alive. This can only be achieved by a radical tradition of dynamism, and not by modernity's pseudo-tradition of stasis in the service of political conservatism.

A conservation of answers literally 'has no future'. Only a conservation of the question is able to reconcile the claims of past, present and future. This 'balanced heritage' allows for creativity, making space for the uninvited guest, and for the young alongside the old.

It is not possible to deal well with the objects of tradition without a comparable pre-modern understanding of tradition. The new wine of modernity threatens to destroy the old wineskin of a living building because it does not understand the subversive vitality of dynamic tradition.

Ancient buildings form COMMUNITY

Of critical importance to the health of ancient buildings is their relationship with the local communities which created them, and which they continue to co-create. The relationship is reciprocal, the feeling mutual.

Culture starts with the most local forms of community, and works from the bottom up. Culture 'dwells', is always from somewhere. Living buildings make this dwelling manifest; they are owned by their community, and are convivial.

By contrast, high culture is by instinct 'contravivial.' It defines a canon, invests in a collection, and then defends against change through preservation. Dealing in universals, it controls from above, marginalising the local and communal.

The resulting democratic deficit is not resolved by introducing intangible as distinct from tangible forms of heritage, which offer no account for the 'co-dwelling' of people and buildings. Adding the communal to a significance of discrete values cannot resurrect the life of a heritage once it has been embalmed; preservation by any other name would smell as sick.

SCARAB stands for the continuity and renewal of living buildings. It promotes a balanced heritage of past, present and future that integrates the communal with the aesthetic and historical. It favours localism over nationalism, continuity over separation, movement over stasis and celebration over the 'contravivial'.

6.2.3. Comments and reflections

As can be seen, the text of the Manifesto is organised under the four key themes of life, change, tradition and community. These were identified at the close of Chapter 1 as shaping the thesis as a whole; in chronological terms they first emerged from the case study interviews but were only crystallised in the process of drafting the Manifesto. In structuring the text, these headings serve to précis the core argument, and are combined in the circular graphical device, which links again with the sun/dung beetle iconography.

The Manifesto was circulated electronically to a small number of people with experience of conservation policy. Given the targeted nature of this consultation, anonymity was neither offered nor sought; five responses were elicited. To enable wider access, a basic Wordpress-based website was also published under the domain www.scarabsoc.org.uk. The text above was revised in light of the comments received, and was also printed on card in gate fold format (see Appendix 4). Appendix 6 includes a list of respondents referenced by three-digit code (Table 2), some notes on the presentation and possible future role of the website, and the consultation information sheet.

All responses to the Manifesto were broadly positive, with several respondents engaging with the argument and suggesting clarifications or improvements. Henry Russell, Chair of Gloucester DAC (005), found it ‘thought provoking’ but suggested that while ‘I fully accept and support the view that most historic buildings and structures live and, to do that, need to adapt and change’ sought clearer recognition that in some cases – ‘the museum exhibit, the ancient monument, the Rembrandt’ – preservation is appropriate. Becky Payne, currently Development Officer at the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (003), saw it as ‘interesting’ and ‘the way that a lot of people now approach historic buildings’. If so, this would suggest the Manifesto expresses a mainstream rather than a peripheral view; it will be interesting to see in which parts of the sector it is taken up. However, Payne was concerned that it could be seen as an attack on SPAB, suggesting that the disclaimer addressing this in the Background section could be brought into the Welcome section.

By contrast, Andrew Mottram, Worcester Diocese Heritage Buildings & Community Development Officer (001), saw SCARAB’s value in its direct challenge to SPAB.²³ In a comment on the website he quotes the exhortation ‘otherwise to resist all tampering’ (etc.) from the SPAB *Manifesto*’s penultimate paragraph, explaining that this is ‘why I am not a member’, and that ‘this impediment to change [...] needs to be removed from the mindset of the conservation sector’ (Mottram 2017). Elsewhere, Mottram suggests that the SCARAB Manifesto ‘needs to be read, heard, discussed, debated and appreciated (eventually) by all parties in the sector’.

The architectural historian and Ecclesiological Society Council member Christopher Webster (004) found the Manifesto ‘interesting and the ideas engaging’, though questioned how one would determine appropriate from inappropriate forms of development. This indeed is a key challenge for a narrative approach: who is to say that my narrative should prevail over yours, or vice versa? While not part of the circulated material, an answer in principle is given in the discussion of incommensurability in Section 6.1.1. Webster also suggested that examples of appropriate and inappropriate change would be helpful; this is agreed, and would be an obvious next step. Both suggestions underline the importance of developing a supporting infrastructure for what would follow in a more public phase of the argument.

Detailed comments were received from Jennie Page, vice-Chair of the CBC (002), many of which fed through into the current version. She was concerned that there was insufficient acknowledgement that some buildings are indeed best treated as museum objects, for which preservation is the right response, giving the example of Pugin’s

²³ Andrew and I have previously co-authored a book together (Walter and Mottram 2015).

Church of St Giles, Cheadle, with its intricately gilded interior. While other examples could be furnished, St Giles's was also raised as a counter-example by Matthew Saunders in his feedback on the 'Guide' (106; see Section 6.3). Page also questioned the boldness of the claim that ancient buildings 'expect change', suggesting the less assertive 'accept', a concern stemming in part from the potentially unsustainable rate of change to prominent historic buildings – including cathedrals – driven by the substantial funding available through the Heritage Lottery Fund. In developing the fourfold structure of the Manifesto, the verbs attached to each heading required much thought. At one point this heading read 'ancient buildings accommodate change', but I felt it important, in stressing the agency of living buildings, to use active rather than passive verbs. The key issue, it was agreed, is how good change can be identified.

Page also viewed the understanding of community as the creators of parish churches as questionable, suggesting instead that they were often built (and subsequently restored etc.) by 'big egos'. The 'big ego' argument has recently received support from Nigel Saul (2017), but the opposite case can also be put (Kümin 1996, French 2001). My own view is that even in those cases where there was a single individual with the willpower and finances to realise a personal vision, this usually was in the context of a community; indeed, where a community failed to adopt the product of such a vision as their own, one might question whether the result is a parish church in any meaningful sense.

One respondent who did not wish to be named questioned whether the Manifesto would help in a sector that is already confusingly subdivided and made a plea for consolidation and co-operative advocacy. Undoubtedly it would be better for existing bodies to adopt a more explicitly change-literate approach. But who might be the advocate for this? It is unlikely that any of the four amenity societies that have a periodised brief would be capable, within the terms of their respective remits, of broadening their temporal footprint to represent the interests of the future adequately, as SCARAB aspires to do. As discussed, taken at face value the SPAB *Manifesto* opposes such an understanding, though in an earlier exchange Matthew Slocombe, director of SPAB, did express the view that 'whatever Morris and Ruskin felt about the loss of tradition in 1877, the Society has always taken a view of buildings that extends from the past into the present and future' (pers. comm.).

The positive advocacy of considered change might more readily fit the non-periodised societies; for example, the Ancient Monuments Society (AMS) was founded 'for the study and conservation of ancient monuments, historic buildings and fine old craftsmanship', and describes itself as campaigning 'for historic buildings of all ages and all types...' (AMS 2014); however, in that description there is no explicit mention of

the future. The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) aims ‘to give archaeology a voice and safeguard it for future generations’ (CBA 2012); this might fit well with the concerns of the Manifesto, both in its implied understanding of agency and its orientation towards the future, though for some the focus on safeguarding archaeology might prove incompatible with SCARAB’s concern with elective change.

Historic England, through documents such as *Conservation principles*, explicitly allows for the *creation* of ‘the heritage of the future’ (2008: 46, 58); yet experience suggests the priorities articulated by an individual case officer in a site meeting do not always live up to the advertised intention. The Church Buildings Council could potentially perform this role, and indeed in the closing stages of this thesis was engaged in an internal discussion of its purpose and remit, in anticipation of reorganisation in response to Bishop John Inge’s report (2015). Yet the CBC’s remit is, literally, parochial, not even extending to non-Anglican churches, let alone non-church buildings, and while the thesis makes its case primarily through Anglican church buildings, both the argument in general and the Manifesto in particular are intended to have wider application. Thus, while many bodies may, with varying degrees of justification, claim to account for the interests of ‘heritage future’, the case can still be made for another distinctive voice. Certainly the interview material in Chapter 3 testifies to a substantial gap that remains unfilled.

6.3. CHANGE TO HISTORIC CHURCHES: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

While the Manifesto from the previous section stands as a challenge to the current methodology, aiming to provoke change in the culture of conservation, any such change will, at best, be gradual. This present section considers what opportunities exist for the application of a narrative approach to conservation *within* the current methodology. A recurrent theme from Section 3.2 is that the case study communities experienced the permissions process as highly complex. While those churches with completed projects had a generally good understanding of the conservation landscape, for the others their understanding of the system was at times confused and inaccurate. The information is available, but does not seem to be getting through to those at parish level, particularly to those unable to draw on professional experience. The discourse analysis carried out in Chapter 2 suggests that the genre of this existing documentation – typically professional report writing – may be a contributory factor.

In response to this evident need, a separate document was developed with a non-professional audience in mind – those responsible for initiating change to historic buildings, typically church leaders, clergy, churchwardens and PCC – in a form intended for wide circulation. This ‘Guide’ is written to assist and equip communities preparing to

embark on change to a historic building. It aims to address the need identified by Denis Byrne: ‘If a local community is to become an effective, rather than notional, stakeholder in local heritage outcomes then it will need to develop certain skills’ (Byrne 2008: 165), in this case the skills required to champion local communal interests and to own their expertise. The booklet is presented separately from the main text of the thesis, attached in Appendix 5 in printed form.

6.3.1. Genre and structure

Given its different audience, this booklet represents a distinct change of genre, aiming to present some core elements of the argument in an abbreviated and visually engaging way. The ‘Guide’ is deliberately shorn of the academic apparatus of the thesis since, for its intended audience, this would be off-putting and unhelpful. My earlier book *Buildings for Mission* (Walter and Mottram 2015), also aimed at educating church communities, is flagged as the primary reference for those seeking more information. Additional suggestions for further reading are included in the last section, which also provides some indication of the academic provenance for those who might wish to explore this.

The ‘Guide’ is structured into seven sections, each with a distinct focus covering one double-page spread of the 16-page booklet. The topics covered are Community, Identity, Tradition, Narrative (‘Telling your Story’), Stakeholders (‘Talking to Experts’), and ‘Action!’, broadly following the order in which building projects unfold. A concluding ‘Last Words’ section returns to a broader focus of how the Church relates to the culture as a whole. The material is presented in a non-linear manner as a series of text boxes, each of which potentially stands on its own, together with additional quotes and comments. This non-linear approach allows for the reader to browse at will, without being forced to assimilate the information in a set order, or having to read the booklet from cover to cover. This deliberately informal approach is intended to tweak interest and encourage further exploration, while allowing the thrust of each section to be absorbed quickly.

It should also be noted that the ‘Guide’ is written principally with the Church of England in mind, since it is the Church of England that is responsible for the great majority of listed church buildings. For those other denominations which enjoy the ecclesiastical exemption the same principles would apply, but if they were to use this document they would need to adjust the vocabulary of DACs, chancellors etc. However, the fact that these guidelines address a specific client type is also a deliberate feature of the document; alternative versions could readily be developed for other client groups on this model and using much of the same material.

While the document does not claim to offer a coherent theology of buildings, it does aim to be recognisably and coherently theological. In another departure from conventional conservation discourse it makes use of a number of scriptural quotations, as appropriate to its target audience. Again the aim is to set the question of historic buildings in a wider cultural context, and to provide recognisable markers and alternative entry points into what for most will be new territory.

6.3.2. Theoretical context

The document has the subtitle ‘a guide for the perplexed’. At the most basic level this acknowledges that the ‘asymmetrical’ manner in which historic buildings are treated by conservation professionals is often highly perplexing to non-professionals, and that the conservation landscape is not only new territory, but disorienting, foreign and inhospitable. Several respondents, on reading the title, said ‘That’s what we need’ or ‘That’s us!’ When viewed from both the subversive and virtue ethical standpoints outlined in Section 1.1.4, this perplexity is the inevitable (and, for Critical Heritage Studies, deliberate) effect of official heritage discourse, which the ‘Guide’ is seeking to counter.

The subtitle also refers to the influential philosophical treatise of the same name by the Jewish philosopher Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides), who was the leading rabbinic authority of the twelfth century, and arguably of all time (Seeskin 2017). Through his *Guide*, Maimonides sought to ‘reconcile the apparent contradictions between philosophy and religion, which troubled educated believers’ (Kenny 2010: 297); it remains of enduring relevance not least because it bridged between Judaism and the broader culture, with subsequent thinkers such as Aquinas, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Newton all responding to it or offering commentaries upon it. For current purposes, Maimonides therefore stands for the possibility of productive dialogue both between divergent traditions, and between the medieval period and the early modern world. His explicit aim was ‘to explain certain obscure figures which occur in the Prophets [...] Ignorant and superficial readers take them in a literal, not in a figurative sense’ ([1190] 1904: 2), and he therefore also stands for the necessity of a hermeneutic approach. Finally, from its initial publication its orthodoxy – or heresy – was much contested; for some conservation professionals this ‘Guide’, in attempting to build bridges between theology and conservation, may similarly appear heretical in its approach and in its assertions.

E. F. Schumacher is best known for his book *Small is beautiful* (1973) which was highly critical of conventional Western economics and championed ‘appropriate’ technology as a means of empowering individuals and communities; the book had the

subtitle ‘economics as if people mattered’. His last book (Schumacher 1978), published posthumously, was also titled *A guide for the perplexed* and set out the philosophical approach underlying his earlier work. Central to this was a critique of the dominant ‘materialistic scientism’, particularly what he saw as the misapplication of the methodology of the ‘instructive sciences’ to other fields, most notably the social sciences. The opening paragraph of the first chapter, ‘On Philosophical Maps’, reads:

On a visit to Leningrad some years ago I consulted a map to find out where I was, but I could not make it out. I could see several enormous churches, yet there was no trace of them on my map. When finally an interpreter came to help me, he said: ‘We don’t show churches on our maps.’ Contradicting him, I pointed to one that was very clearly marked. ‘This is a museum,’ he said, ‘not what we call a “living church”. It is only the “living churches” we don’t show.’

(Schumacher 1978: 9)

In many ways church congregations find themselves in a similar position of perplexity. Conservation also offers an official ‘map’, secularist in its commitments, which ignores many of the salient features of the cultural landscape – not least that the importance of a historic church lies in its communal aspects of mission, theology and worship. Schumacher goes on to report that ‘my perplexity [...] remained complete until I ceased to suspect the sanity of my perceptions and began, instead, to suspect the soundness of the maps’ (ibid.).²⁴

The aim of the present ‘Guide’ is therefore to supply a better map of the conservation landscape, allowing church communities to situate their historic building in a more recognisable theological/cultural context; it is concerned with an approach to heritage ‘as if people mattered’, to borrow Schumacher’s earlier phrase. This central metaphor in the ‘Guide’ of mapping a landscape, and its associated visual language, had been chosen before rediscovering the above quotation.

6.3.3. The first consultation

A brief questionnaire was enclosed with the booklets circulated for consultation; Appendix 6 provides details of the methodology adopted, and includes a list of respondents referenced by three-digit code (Table 3), and the consultation information sheet and consent and feedback form. The questionnaire sought answers to three questions: whether the booklet was useful, whether it was clear enough, and what could be changed to improve it. Responses in the first consultation broadly fell into two principal categories: those who expressed a very positive view of both the content and the presentation, and those who liked the content but criticised the presentation. Most

²⁴ Poignantly, Schumacher notes that this visit took place in August 1968, during the week of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

responses were brief, but some went further and engaged more fully with particular aspects of the content (responses 102, 103, 106, 117, 121).

The document was in general well received, with the content variously described as ‘wonderful’ (101), ‘brilliant’ (110), ‘excellent’ (112, 119), ‘great’ (114) and ‘really useful [...] in a visually easy to digest form’ (105). Becky Clark (121), Director of Churches and Cathedrals for the Archbishops’ Council, welcomed its accessibility and informality, which made it ‘clearly distinctive from the heavy boots of the regulators’, to its great benefit. A number of responses picked up on the theme of community: for example, Geoffrey Hunter (102), Ely DAC Historic Buildings Consultant, welcomed the emphasis that conservation is not just about the building, and that the role of the local community was foregrounded – ‘the more about the community the better’.

However, Dr Julie Banham (118), Sheffield DAC Secretary noted a difference in response from different audiences: ‘Opinion was divided – those in Diocesan Church House thought it was wonderful, but those in the parishes were frightened.’ Similarly, Becky Payne, Development Officer at the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, feared that ‘for new and inexperienced people embarking on a project for the first time, I think it would be confusing and too much info on every page’ (109). Significantly, only three of the responses (10%) from the first consultation were from the principal target group of parish communities (114, 120, 122), and all of these had some project experience; consequently, the discussion stimulated by the first consultation was with those who already have a stake in, and therefore an understanding of, the system. This led directly to the second round of consultation described in the following sub-section. Jo Tym (120), however, parish-based but with some experience of project work, wished the booklet had been available when she was involved in a major refurbishment project, and requested further copies of the booklet for each of the six churches in her benefice.

The journalist and CCT trustee Simon Jenkins (113) commented that he ‘had not realised the complexity of looking after an old church’. Certainly the landscape is a complex one – this of course is the issue – but it means that any document representing that landscape will similarly tend towards complexity. Another parish response, from Brian and Eileen Thatcher (114), picked up on visual complexity, suggesting that the different colours and the overlapping of elements made the text more difficult to read. John Dentith, Worcester DAC Secretary (108), went further, saying that he found the presentation ‘a bit off-putting because of the density and busyness’, and Mark Bonney (112), chair of Ely DAC, said it gave him a headache! Various solutions were offered, including a larger format to give more space around the individual elements (108, 111), but it was decided to keep the A5, 16 page format for the second printing.

Jennie Page (103), vice-Chair of the Church Buildings Council, gave detailed comments on both appearance and content, many of which have been incorporated in the revision. Raising the question of who is the intended audience, she described the genre as halfway between a help document and a manifesto. Matthew McDade (115), Norwich DAC Secretary, observed that the booklet is not an 'idiot's guide' but for the 'gentleman amateur', going on to explain that he felt it would connect with people who have already done some thinking on the subject, and who would be willing and able to connect with the frequent analogies and metaphors.

Matthew Saunders (106), Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society, provided extensive comments, notably on whether church buildings are works of art, and the varied meaning of community. For him, 'the enemy is much more the unworthy and the second rate – it was never intrinsic dislike of the challenging newcomer'. Indeed, 'A community arguing for intelligent, sensitive, occasionally radical, but always good quality change in a listed building [and that] leaves the realisation to the trained architect or artist is the one that gets my vote.'

David Grech (117), an architect, churchwarden and retired Historic Places Advisor with Historic England, also offered extensive comments, finding the document 'clear and helpful'. His approach is consistent with that of his former employer, in arguing first for an understanding of what is of architectural or historic interest, and then focusing any harm on those elements of least significance. He articulated the narrative themes that most historic buildings have evolved over time, with very few unchanged, and that 'just because something is old doesn't necessarily make it important', both already key themes of both the 'Guide' and the thesis. On the long-term health of historic buildings, he also made the point that

Historic England recognise that the best way for historic buildings to survive into the future and to be properly maintained, is for them to remain in beneficial use. And the best use for a historic building is almost always going to be the use for which it was originally built. Therefore, for churches, that means keeping them in active use as places of worship and not just memorials to a past existence.

Becky Clark's (121) principal concern was that the third section ('Tradition') gave the unhelpful and unjustified impression that the secular authorities are 'out of touch and old fashioned'; this was certainly not the intention, and the text was nuanced accordingly.

While the 'Guide' is intended to work within the existing conservation methodology, in responding to the alternative theoretical framework sketched out in Chapters 4 and 5 it nevertheless seeks to unsettle assumptions and provoke creative thought. Since the intention is to convey that this is a domain not primarily of

information, but of playfulness and creativity, a non-standard form of presentation is not only legitimate but perhaps also necessary; a discussion of the visual grammar adopted is included in Appendix 7. In creating this ‘play space’, the hope is that professionals and non-professionals can meet on a more equal footing; indeed, to achieve that ambition of a more equal engagement, perhaps the booklet’s visual feel *needs* to be unfamiliar. In this context it is perhaps unsurprising if those wanting something more cut and dried – whether professional or non-professional – found the presentation unhelpful. More positively, Karen Hall (116), Diocese of Norwich Synodical and Pastoral Officer, liked the ‘creative’ feel, that ‘you can dip in and out, that you have thoughts that you wouldn’t have had without it’. And while it may be disquieting, this open-endedness is true to the subject. As she summarised it:

The process [of changing a historic church] will never be a straight line journey, and you might have to go round the houses to get to what you want. But that is OK.

The way in which the document is approached may therefore account for much of the contrast in reception. If treated as a step by step set of instructions, then the novice reader may feel they need to read everything. With that expectation, the format is indeed most unhelpful, since pieces of text keep ‘escaping’. But if the intention is to open up a space for exploration and dialogue, then that mobility of content becomes less inappropriate. This goes some way to explain the sharp difference reported above by Julie Banham (118), and led to the inclusion of a prominent note on the cover of the second edition which attempts to reassure the novice user who is, after all, the principal audience. This is perhaps similar to Keith Emerick’s finding that the typical starting point for local communities is one of disempowerment; rather than the professional dictating what happens, Emerick’s preferred model is that of the facilitator, which he notes ‘has taken people by surprise, having never felt that the options for use were in their hands’ (2014: 196). Emerick’s experience is a symptom of the degree of detachment between local communities and their historic buildings. And in this sense, finding that the content in the document has a life of its own is an analogue for our response to buildings that are also in some sense ‘living’.

This open-endedness of the booklet has strong parallels with the idea of ‘deep mapping’, a phrase popularised in *PrairyErth: A Deep Map* (Heat-Moon 1991). The book explores the cultural and historical identities of Chase County, Kansas, interweaving conventional history and geography with digression, recollection and anecdote. As a current Lancaster University study of the English Lake District suggests,

The deep map does not present a fixed view of a location; instead, its inherent instability allows for the ongoing development of a place’s identity, and its capacity to reveal historical and contemporary human experience.

(Gregory 2017)

The booklet, of course, does not describe a specific location, and nor is it assembled from multiple perceptions. But its style of presentation does offer implicit encouragement for the multivocality of a deep mapping approach.

Les Roberts points both to the ‘fundamental *creativity*’ of deep mapping, and its temporality; where the conventional ‘thin map’ allows ‘limited space for *time*’, a deep map is concerned ‘with narrative and spatial storytelling’ (2016: 3, 5, emphasis original). A deep mapping approach also fits well with the concerns of archaeology, with its enduring metaphor of the palimpsest. If it is accepted that the identity of places, particularly those that have been formed by communities over a long historical period, is slippery and mutable, then the description of such places can be expected to involve an overlap of sometimes discordant voices. Simplicity, in this context at least, is an illusion.

It is worth noting that suggestions of a more multimedia approach emerged unprompted from the feedback. Sir Tony Baldry (104), chair of the CBC, commented that while the metaphor of journey worked well, the content would benefit from web links to key resources. Geoffrey Hunter (102) suggested that while the booklet was beautifully visual, it was hard to get through in book form. Rather, for him, it felt like a film, suggesting the creation of an animation with voiceover. In that form the content could then be sent out as a DVD or uploaded to YouTube, which a church community could then view before they embarked on a project or engaged with the DAC. The architectural historian James Bettley (123) combined this with the theme of journey, ‘with Pilgrim making his Progress through all the Perils and Pitfalls of the faculty system – but, we hope, eventually reaching Paradise!’. It may be that an animation, by demanding less of the viewer than the booklet does of the novice reader, would relieve some of the anxiety reported by Julie Banham and others. As a format it also readily – and befittingly – lends itself to the communality of group viewing rather than the solitude of reading. Work on the animation is underway, but its completion falls outside the scope of the thesis.

The purpose of the document is to illustrate the possibility of an alternative approach to church buildings built on the foundation of the foregoing theoretical discussion. It is specifically intended to question how church buildings are approached; instead of viewing them as a burden, to reframe them as full of opportunity. In order for the document to make a contribution to cultural change it is enough for a reader to come away with a single phrase or image, for it is precisely in terms of such framing devices that paradigms shift (see introduction to Chapter 2 above). One example is the image of the building as a dance partner, which appears in the first section of the

booklet and which was quoted by Richard Butler, Norwich Diocesan Secretary, in his address to the diocesan synod in March 2017.

6.3.4. The second consultation

The realisation that the booklet's intended community audience would find it off-putting, even in amended form, suggested that it might have greater impact if recipients could be guided through the material. It was therefore decided to try using the booklet as the principal resource for two training events aimed at church communities which I was asked to develop for the Diocese of Norwich, and which were delivered in September 2017 (Fig. 14, Appendix 8). Both workshops succeeded in drawing a much richer and broader response from attendees. The feedback from the first workshop is presented in transcribed form in Table 4 in Appendix 6. While the second workshop came too late for detailed consideration of the feedback, some brief comments are appended to this section.

Both workshops had their attendance capped at approximately 55, and at the time of writing there was a waiting list of a further 25 who will be offered a third event now planned for November 2017 at the Church of St Remigius, Hethersett. Taken together, at least 76 parishes will be represented at the workshops (some 12% of the parishes in the diocese), though with parishes clustered into benefices the reach is likely to be greater. Furthermore, a total of 25 registrants did not identify which parish they were from, and it is anticipated that the third workshop, which covers a different part of the diocese, will stimulate additional interest.

At the first workshop on Tuesday, 5 September 2017, 56 delegates attended from at least 29 separate churches. 33 response forms were received, with one form being double signed; this represents a 60% participation rate. Of these 33 responses, 31 (94%) explicitly judged the material useful, with no negative assessments. Most respondents (25 of 33) also added comments, and these were overwhelmingly appreciative and warm, describing the material as 'very good' or 'excellent' (209, 211, 212, 233) and 'fascinating' (226). One commented 'Very impressed with the insight put into this work. Really pleased we came' (225), and another described the booklet as an 'accessible, humorous, user friendly guide with refreshing emphasis on Christian mission' (205; emphasis original). As with the first consultation, some disliked the presentation – e.g. 'Visually baffling. Fussy.' (233) – but others said they found it positively helpful (e.g. 230). Two strong themes from the comments were the extent of the content (e.g. 204, 213, 228, 230) and the need for time to absorb it (214, 224, 232), with some suggesting the booklet should be circulated in advance (207, 217).

An appetite for further training is perhaps suggested by comments referring to the material as an 'introduction' (226) or 'starting point' (213), and again underlines the need for experts to perform an active facilitation role in guiding community groups through the process. One particularly thoughtful response (205) described the booklet thus:

It is food for thought and raises the exciting prospect of making creative, responsible decisions about change. Many things to think about – protecting the heritage – and the future.

This comment shows a ready appreciation that change should be creative, but also responsible, and an understanding that the future is an integral part of a balanced approach to heritage. Several respondents (e.g. 209, 230) commented that clarity followed once you started engaging with the material, and the rector of the host church, Revd Susan Bowden-Pickstock (227), engaged with the metaphor of journey, summing it up as 'like a good walk, not instant gratification.'

Positioning the request for feedback on the booklet in the context of a workshop meant that, in some cases, the feedback covered both (e.g. 211). Most responses, however, differentiated between the printed booklet and the presentation, and it is clear from the extent and nature of the responses that framing the former in this broader context enabled non-professional participants to engage with the material in a way that was far less evident in the first consultation. It is worth noting that the initial request for input in these training sessions, and the subsequent deployment of the booklet, were in the context of mission. The diocesan strategy consultation had identified that buildings were one of three types of 'burden' under which some church communities felt they were 'sinking' (DN 2016: 31, 48, 51), exemplifying the widespread feeling of vulnerability. The efficacy of framing the content of the booklet in terms of mission in this way illustrates how for non-professionals the technical issues of conservation are almost invariably located in a wider cultural context. While on its own this booklet cannot hope to bring about the cultural change it stands for, when introduced and framed with other input, as was the case in the training days, it demonstrably contributes to such change.

The second workshop took place on Monday, 25 September 2017; while there was insufficient time to analyse the feedback from this in any detail, the general picture and balance of sentiment closely mirrored the feedback from the first workshop. 34 responses were received from 51 delegates (67%), with all 34 finding the material useful (100%). With respect to the visual presentation, while some found it 'busy' or confusing, the majority found it clear. One summed it up as 'Initially overwhelming but easy to use once I engaged with it', while another specifically commented that 'I am a

visual learner and “mapping” is a very useful tool.’ In another indication of positive engagement with the framing device of a journey through a landscape, one respondent declared ‘I find it an inspiration [*sic*] a footprint to follow.’ And another comment demonstrated the ability of church communities, noted in Chapter 3, to relate the specific (in this case the booklet) back to the broader cultural (missional) context in which the training was framed: ‘As a new churchwarden this guide will be the foundation of looking to forward the mission of the church to the area.’

CONCLUSIONS

The three examples of application presented in this chapter have sought to demonstrate what conservation built on the alternative foundation explored in Chapters 4 and 5 might look like. These examples, each of which plays with a distinct genre, are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, but illustrative and exploratory. They are, nevertheless, integral to the thesis; each example has informed and contributed to the argument of the earlier chapters, with the process of consultation and feedback on the SCARAB Manifesto and the ‘Guide’ being particularly enriching and valuable. In this way, in completing the circular structure of the thesis proposed at the outset, Gadamer’s claim of the centrality of application to understanding, noted at the conclusion of Chapter 1, has been vindicated.

7. Conclusion:

locating a narrative approach in the landscape of conservation

*The ancients, one would say, with their gorgons, sphinxes, satyrs, mantichora, etc.,
could imagine more than existed,
while the moderns cannot imagine so much as exists.*

Henry David Thoreau ([1860] 1906: 154–155)

The central problem examined in this thesis has been the question of change to historic buildings. The project has grown directly from my professional work with medieval church buildings and their core communities, and my unease at the often poor quality of outcomes for those community groups and (by extension) for the historic built heritage. Something important is being missed, suggesting a substantial collective failure of imagination, but as Thoreau's epigraph hints, that issue may not lie with conservation *per se*, but with the much larger project of modernity of which it forms an integral part. By contrast, the pre-modern world seems to have been far more able to combine Donald Insall's activity of 'keeping' (consider the medieval veneration of relics) with the change and innovation of 'making'. For pre-modernity, the bounds of tradition acted as the guarantor of a broader cultural continuity and a means of judging what sort of change is desirable. This exploration of the understanding of living buildings and the rehabilitation of change is the result of bringing these strands together into dialogue.

Bruno Latour, whose critique of modernity was helpful in framing these larger themes in Chapter 1, noted that

As Nietzsche observed long ago, the moderns suffer from the illness of historicism. They want to keep everything, date everything, because they think they have definitively broken with their past. The more they accumulate revolutions, the more they save; the more they capitalise, the more they put on display in museums. Maniacal destruction is counterbalanced by an equally maniacal conservation.

(Latour 1993: 69)

Seen from the perspective of its development from antiquarianism in the wake of the trauma of the French Revolution, modern conservation has indeed at times had something of the maniacal about it, as evident at times in the community views recorded in Chapter 3. This thesis is an exercise in exploring what alternative form conservation might take if the burden of modernity's assumptions regarding history and the material world were lifted from its shoulders.

This concluding chapter is structured into three sections. Firstly, issues of application and how the research fits within its broader context are considered. Secondly, some common themes are identified from a review of the journey undertaken. Thirdly, the chapter suggests some areas of future research, before concluding with a call for conservation to define for itself a new middle way.

7.1. CONTEXT, LIMITATIONS AND APPLICABILITY

7.1.1. A moment of transition

This thesis was researched and written at a time of transition for the Church of England; and it is well recognised that buildings present a major challenge for the Church (Inge 2015, DN 2016). While the decline of congregations may arguably be showing signs of stabilisation *on average*, it is clear that if current trends continue many church communities, both rural and urban, will not survive in the long term. The buildings will, of course, remain, and their upkeep will have to be paid for by somebody if they are not to be lost altogether; some may find new uses, while others will become monuments, surviving as a shell without the beating heart of gathered community. The English Churches and Cathedrals Sustainability Review, due to report in late 2017, demonstrates the recognition of these issues by central Government, and its exclusive focus on Church of England buildings signals their relative prominence. A transitional moment calls for a transformation of process, and this thesis has attempted a creative re-imagination of the process as it relates to churches – complementing the work of others such as the CCBD, for example with the Festival Churches initiative (CCBD 2017a), and the CCT – and of conservation processes more broadly.

For this is also a time of transition for conservation professionals; the old model of universal provision of heritage expertise at local authority level is rapidly eroding, though the need for expertise is still there with approximately constant levels of listed building applications. Conservation thus stands at a crossroads. Unless it regains a sense of legitimacy by rethinking its relation to the culture as a whole it risks becoming increasingly marginalised; being the voice of conscience is of little benefit if that voice is ignored. A second possibility is that conservation will collapse under the weight of the expansion of heritage: it is already judged unaffordable for the State to provide the principal means of protecting heritage, and it is likely that the much vaunted values structure will (ironically) collapse back into the pre-nineteenth-century understanding of value in solely economic terms; some would see *Heritage works* (BPF et al. 2017) as a harbinger of this. Neither of these possibilities is remotely healthy for the historic environment.

A third more optimistic possibility is that conservation will succeed in claiming the cultural centre ground, embracing the positive opportunity to engage anew with local needs and communities. Conservation professionals could position themselves as experts in responsible change, guardians of narrative, and thus the obvious place to turn in order not only to *understand* ‘our story’, but to enable the creative co-production of its next chapter. As seen in Section 2.3.2, Historic England, under pressure to become self-financing, is attempting to reframe itself in a development context in something like these terms, as essential to the development team, and positioning heritage as a creative benefit rather than a constraint. The view, already noted, of this as a cynical reduction of heritage to economics is not the only possible interpretation.

The field of heritage studies more generally faces a time of transition, as it seeks to find appropriate interdisciplinary approaches that do justice to heritage as a social and material whole (Harrison 2013: xiii). Within a values-based methodology, social value is intended to safeguard the interests of the local and communal, but reaches only as far as describing the meaning of the historic environment for *contemporary* communities (Jones 2017); by contrast the proposed narrative approach, because it works with the grain of tradition, allows for an *intergenerational* understanding of community. Siân Jones (2017: 32) acknowledges that ‘there are issues with selectively representing the values of some contemporary communities over others’. A ‘balanced heritage’ (Section 1.2.3), by virtue of its engagement with tradition and dialogical orientation, enables the proposed approach to broaden the temporal definition of community, which is essential for avoiding the ‘democratic relativity’ of social value.

Rodney Harrison also proposes a dialogical model, developed through actor-network and assemblage theory, which he suggests might ‘allow us to emancipate and use heritage in more creative, transformative ways in the future’ (2013: 205). The argument of this thesis shares many of the same criticisms of contemporary heritage structures and practice, and reaches similar conclusions, but does so on the basis of a more fundamental (and non-modern) engagement with tradition (rather than only traditions); this is seen as essential for making heritage dialogical not only in a contemporary, but also in a historical sense. If conservation were fully to embrace the implications of living buildings and move to a ‘morphogenetic’ understanding of the material world as essentially fluid (Ingold 2013), then heritage assets would no longer be ‘irreplaceable’ (DCLG 2012: 30, 31), as the current system claims, and their physical fabric would be characterised more by resilience (cf. Jones and Mean 2010) than fragility.

7.1.2. The relevance of churches

The examples of living community heritage chosen in this thesis are all Anglican church buildings. As set out in Chapter 1 this is partly for the simple pragmatic reason that this is the building type of which I have most experience and a particular concern, partly because they present some of the most challenging cases, and partly because the Church of England's faculty system offers the most developed alternative to secular listed building control. However, as has been suggested from the outset, the thrust of this argument cannot be limited to the special case of church buildings, but potentially applies across the full breadth of conservation. Some might see the use of the distinctive and particular example of parish churches as necessarily limiting the applicability of the argument. However, this self-limitation has provided access to communities with a very strong sense of ownership of their buildings and at times the additional challenge of navigating a dual legislative framework, and this has proved productive in deriving general principles of broader applicability.

Working with churches in the holistic manner advocated here demands an openness to the theological. The lack of engagement with theology of any kind seen in the discourse analysis of conservation guidance and statutory consultee responses (Sections 2.3.3 and 2.4.6 respectively) is suggestive of a failure on the part of modern conservation to read buildings in their appropriate cultural, in this case nonmodern, context. This produces wildly incompatible readings, and accounts for some of the lack of dialogue and alienation between community and experts seen in Chapter 3. Working with church buildings explicitly requires a theological literacy; what, after all, is a church but 'theology in stone' (Kieckhefer 2004)? But the theological also has broader relevance as touched on in the preface, affording access to aspects of tradition discarded by the culture as a whole, and thus having application across the range of built heritage.

It is not difficult to see such diverse building types as a medieval guildhall, a Victorian school that becomes a community hall, or the Queen's House at Greenwich in narrative terms – all are buildings with complex biographies and ongoing work to do. While the explicit sense of community ownership of the parish church serves to throw the issues into sharper relief, erecting any building is a public act, and all buildings therefore have at least some level of communal character. The core of the argument is the priority of the cultural whole – that is, the constant creative interplay of people and buildings which has been termed a 'balanced heritage' – and this is relevant across the full range of building types and eras. This is perhaps the most fundamental gift offered

by the pre-modern perspective, and the most radical challenge to modern conservation.

7.1.3. Applicability beyond the medieval

It is important also to consider how constrained this argument is to the particular age of the buildings considered: all the examples of living community heritage used in this thesis are of medieval origin (aside from All Saint's, Fleet, in Section 5.4.2). Their age means that they are more highly listed and thus regarded as 'of the highest significance' (DCMS 2012: para. 132), and their alteration is thus more likely to be fought over. From her study of Wymondham Abbey and the shared church of Sherborne, Dorset, Kristi Bain presents the late medieval parish church as a contested building

that was and still is shaped by conflict. It is an ideological space that has the potential to link today's parishioners, who are striving to maintain their beloved parish churches, with their medieval counterparts, who fought to build them.

(Bain 2014: 20)

It is also important to consider the particular contribution that the pre-Reformation can make to conservation; or in other words to ask, 'What did the medievals ever do for us?' The argument of this thesis is that, interesting as they are in their own right, the medievals also offer conservation a lifeline and an escape from the inherent contradictions of a process unable to question the modernity of its inherited assumptions. In Section 4.2.4, the treatment of historic buildings as the retained relics of the past illustrated the operation – as much for Morris as for Le Corbusier – of what Gadamer terms a romantic hermeneutic. While the Victorians, the Georgians, etc. could describe themselves in terms of the respective labels they now wear, the medievals could not have known that modernity would (pejoratively) label their time the 'Middle Ages'. As far as the medievals were concerned they were simply living in continuity with antiquity, in Gadamer's terms with a classical hermeneutic, and by definition were the last era to do so in a wholeheartedly pre-modern way.

The medievals also lacked the distinctly modern and, in the context of historic buildings, problematic category of aesthetics, instead understanding what we call 'fine art' primarily for its performative role. Chapter 1 touched on Alfred Gell's iteration of this argument; or as Martin Heidegger ([1950] 2001: 43) put it, 'to be a work [of art] means to set up a world'. Aesthetics facilitates the disengagement of the artwork from its performative context. Standing at the end of a long line of continuity the medievals are of particular interest to a hermeneutic approach which privileges the performative over the merely aesthetic and which, it has been argued, is essential for the ongoing well-being of historic buildings.

While there is much to like in pre-modernity, this is not a call for a simple return to an idealised medieval past (as offered by Pugin), nor future (as offered by Morris). Following Latour's sketch we must take all the help we can get, utilising also some of the resources of modernity and even postmodernity, acknowledging that there remains a fundamental underlying continuity. To do otherwise would be to follow modernity in proposing yet another revolutionary break with the past. Latour favoured what he terms the 'nonmodern', and in his last chapter is prescriptive of what from the moderns, pre-moderns and postmoderns should respectively be retained and what rejected. While we might question some inclusions and exclusions from this cultural map, Latour's approach has nevertheless proved highly productive for this investigation to date, and should continue to do so in its possible future elaboration.

At the outset of Latour's investigation and at the centre of his map stand the awkward/heretical shapeshifting hybrids. Similarly the architectural hybrid that is the medieval church building welcomed us into our investigation and has served as our companion throughout. She now stands at its centre, not on a pedestal in historicised isolation as the modernities of Morris or Le Corbusier would place her, but as the life and soul of the cultural party. As a hybrid *par excellence*, discontinuity has never been her nature and so, following Latour, she can justifiably claim never to have been modern.

7.2. REPRISING THE JOURNEY

7.2.1. The itinerary mapped

This thesis is a response to Morris's challenge, laid down at the foundation of SPAB but subsequently neglected, to explore what 'leaving history in the gap' might mean in an age that has lost its understanding of tradition. The journey undertaken falls into two approximately equal halves. The first half surveyed the existing landscape, and developed a central research question which explored how change to historic buildings has thus far been dealt with. It then defined the problem in Chapters 2 and 3 by looking at conservation from 'above' and 'below', through a consideration of how the system currently operates, and the experience of that system by a sample of church communities. The second half (Chapters 4–6) was more expeditionary in nature. It considered an alternative theoretical basis for conservation, firstly in the question of continuity through tradition, and secondly in the role of narrative, before demonstrating the application of this theoretical groundwork in three contrasting genres for three different non-academic audiences.

From its origins in the antiquarian movement, conservation has predominantly approached old buildings as aesthetic and/or historic objects, strongly influenced by

romanticism's nostalgia for the past (reacting to the modernity of the Enlightenment) and the birth of aesthetics. The categories of architectural and historic interest remain the sole criteria for the listing of historic buildings in England, and central to their statutory protection thereafter. They are helpful criteria for the 'keeping' side of Donald Insalls' duality, but make the 'making' side, argued here to be essential both to their nature and future, fraught with difficulty. The apparatus of conservation in England includes no justification for this very explicit and constraining commitment; rather, it signals the uncritical adoption of a nineteenth century orthodoxy without the necessary hermeneutic work involved in a genuinely historical dialogue.

This thesis seeks to show that this aesthetic-historical approach cannot adequately describe the complexity of historic buildings. The SPAB *Manifesto* (Section 2.1) drew attention to the excesses of an instrumentalised and industrialised approach to historic buildings. Morris's innovation was to articulate this in polemical form of enduring power, such that the aesthetic-historical approach remains a touchstone for contemporary practice. The mapping in Section 1.1.4 of a tripartite Wellsian ethical structure onto conservation led to the framing of this aesthetic-historical understanding as 'universal'.

Historic England's *Conservation principles* (HE 2008), considered in Section 2.2, attempts to rebalance the system to acknowledge the interests of community groups in their heritage, and public benefits more widely, by focusing on significance derived from a set of discrete values. It has been argued that, while welcome, the innovations of *Conservation principles*, and for churches the supporting *New work* (HE 2012), have yet to achieve that aim, as seen both from the communities' 'bottom up' view and in the amenity societies' 'top down' view in Chapter 3. Furthermore, to date, *Conservation principles* remains isolated without the anticipated, attendant overhaul of legislation; while the subsequent NPPF (DCLG 2012) generally adopts the same language, in the crucial respect of its definition of significance it omits communal/social interest entirely.

An extended treatment of the influential *Duffield* judgment in Section 2.4 revealed the Church of England's Faculty Jurisdiction system as a model of sorts; it gives a voice to the core community, while bringing the wide range of competing interests, immortalised as Thomas Hardy's 'incompatibles', into dialogue and some form of balance. It was noted how little impact the values-based methodology of *Conservation principles* had on the *Duffield* case, a further indication of the limitations of its influence, and that the judgment took us to the threshold of the questions of composite significance and composite harm, but then drew back. The synthetic approach of this thesis has been to cross that threshold and engage wholeheartedly with those composite questions, without which conservation is consigned to repetitive

argumentation over retaining individual facets of a building for lack of any means of grasping the importance of the whole. However, while the Faculty Jurisdiction allows church communities to articulate their needs and priorities, the formality of its legal structure requires courage and confidence on the part of those communities if they are to engage with it at all. The sample of churches represented by the case study in Chapter 3 strongly suggests that it is only those communities with articulate clergy and professional laity that are capable of navigating the system; this was subsequently borne out by the many comments on the complexity of the system noted in the consultation on the 'Guide for the perplexed' in Section 6.3.

Looking at conservation – at least in this context of church heritage – from both the top down and the bottom up reveals glaring disparities of perception. This is a problem for all concerned – for the communities struggling to live with historic buildings, for the buildings themselves, and for the conservation sector which risks consigning itself to a position of cultural irrelevance. The case is made that this is partly due to an inability or unwillingness to engage with the theoretical foundation on which the structure of contemporary conservation rests – which can be characterised as simultaneously too strong and too weak – and that a new foundation is required. Chapter 1 identified the key criteria for a viable alternative theoretical foundation, centred on a positive account of the nature of living buildings, a credible model of historical continuity, the ability to differentiate good change from bad, and the placing of the core community centrally within the process.

During the second half of the thesis, Chapters 4 and 5 attempted to construct, or perhaps to excavate, this theoretical foundation, with the aim of resolving at least some of the contradictions and shortcomings of the existing system. The critical theoretical move is towards continuity – following Wijesuriya (2015) and Poullos (2014) – but with a particular focus on the operation of tradition. It was argued that historic buildings are the creative products of tradition(s), and tradition in turn provides an appropriate boundedness to the creativity that is essential if our historic environment is to survive and thrive. A Gadamerian hermeneutic approach was employed, based on a fundamental continuity of tradition, such that dialogue remains possible with the past.

A hermeneutic understanding is ever mindful of context and situation; one such context essential to conservation is the local community, understood not as monolithic but as differentiated and contextualised. Alasdair MacIntyre's development of a virtue ethics characterised by the interrelation of practices, narrative and tradition proved highly productive in providing a basis from which to address some of the key deficiencies of the current system, which had emerged from the earlier chapters. In Chapter 5, through the work of Paul Ricoeur and others, the role of narrative in

safeguarding identity and the continuity of character through change was explored. In turn this led to the central metaphor, proposed in Section 5.4, of living buildings as 'ICONS' – intergenerational, communal, ongoing narratives. Four key benefits of a narrative understanding of historic buildings were then identified: that narrative works with the grain of tradition, that it understands buildings as developing personalities, that it provides an account of change that is distinct from harm, and that it relates buildings to their spatial, temporal and social contexts.

In line with Gadamer's approach, Chapter 6 demonstrated how the alternative theoretical foundation explored in Chapters 4 and 5 might impact on three distinct non-academic audiences, not as an optional exercise appended to the substance of the thesis, but as integral to the whole. For example, in considering the impact on practice, the thrust of the research is condensed into a redefinition of significance as combining the richness of the narrative to date with the potential for future development of that narrative (Section 6.1.2). Similarly, the consultation on both the SCARAB Manifesto and the 'Guide for the perplexed' helped clarify the key themes from the earlier chapters of the thesis. Within what was a mixed bag of feedback in the first consultation on the 'Guide', there were some very strongly appreciative comments, particularly with respect to the core content, which demonstrated a strong resonance and need; the warm reception from parish representatives in the second consultation confirmed the appetite for, and efficacy of, this approach.

In summary, therefore, this project has taken primary research into the way the current system is experienced by a sample of church communities and from that solid foundation has proposed a new theoretical framework to enable conservation to negotiate creative change and cultural continuity. This aligns with and extends current good practice and addresses some of the significant constraints of the current system as it impacts on these sorts of communities.

Beyond that specific context, however, the project has significant implications for conservation and heritage studies more widely. In the modern manner of specialisms, the two fields largely operate independently, the first focusing on practice and the second on theory. By contrast, this thesis has shown throughout how closely and (for the health of the historic environment) *necessarily* interrelated they are, and how impoverishing to conservation is its lack of meaningful engagement with philosophy. Irrespective of whether the argument for a narrative approach is accepted, the thesis repositions conservation in two important respects: firstly, it has been demonstrated how readily conservation thinking can be advanced through a critical engagement with theory equivalent to that in heritage studies; but secondly, due to its distinctive

approach rooted in practice, conservation has been shown capable not just of following but of *leading* the theoretical debate.

7.2.2. Reflections on the methodology

The alternative approach proposed in this thesis did not spring into being fully formed; rather, this project has adopted the existing insights of others (such as Gadamer, MacIntyre, Wells, Ricoeur etc.), extended their existing interrelations and applied them to the identified problem of change to living buildings. In terms of theory, the originality, such as it is, lies in a reading of the landscape and an extension of existing resources to address that problem; but the thesis has then sought to demonstrate the application of that body of theory to concrete practical questions. Of itself, it can therefore be seen to model a traditional understanding; it is neither revolutionary nor reactionary, but, following Latour, represents a creative continuity.

Aspects of the chosen methodology require comment. The use of a case study of five church communities in Chapter 3 was important in demonstrating the disparities in the way the current process is viewed from 'below' and 'above'. One clear advantage of the qualitative interviews with church representatives was the ability to draw out more nuanced themes than would have been possible using quantitative methods across a wider sample, and the early decision to do this outside my geographic area of current professional activity in order to avoid potential conflicts-of-interest was helpful. The qualitative interviews produced a snapshot of each respondent's experiences, in most cases seasoned with post-project hindsight. This therefore helpfully included respondents' reflections on the process, but lacked the immediacy of the experience of the projects themselves, which could have furnished additional compelling detail. However, given that projects such as these can last a decade or more, to cover even one project in its entirety would have been beyond the scope of this research, and in any case would have been unlikely to provide as full a picture of the settled outcome and its implications.

The consultation exercise on the 'Guide for the perplexed' in Section 6.3 largely failed in the first round to draw responses from parish community representatives. While the second round of consultation in the context of the first of two (now three) workshops compensated for this in terms of data collected, the initial lack of engagement remains an interesting finding. It is certainly the case that the overwhelming thrust of all of the responses received corroborated the belief at the outset of this thesis, that there is a substantial disconnect between official conservation and the approach of local communities to their historic buildings, and that there is a demonstrable need for a substantially different approach. It was particularly

encouraging to see the enthusiastic response to the central metaphor of the church building as an intergenerational narrative, which bore out my previous anecdotal experience.

I consider the consultation on the SCARAB Manifesto incomplete, reflecting the limited time available. Given the necessary choice, I felt that more was to be gained from focusing resources on the parallel consultation on the 'Guide' and the development from it of training for local church communities. In this respect it is worth reiterating that, for me, this research project is set within a wider academic-professional context. The project was born of practice, and to practice it will return. The natural place to pursue the SCARAB Manifesto is the professional networks such as the EASA and ASCHB to which I already belong, but with which I have had little recent involvement due to time constraints during the course of this research. Just as the creation of an animation from the 'Guide' is a stated priority once the thesis is completed, so wider consultation on the SCARAB Manifesto will also be pursued. In time I would hope this later consultation might be the subject of further academic publication.

The study has been ambitious in scope and interdisciplinary in nature, and there are attendant methodological dangers in the speed with which some ground has been covered; at every turn there is so much more that could have been said. Further, the necessarily entrepreneurial nature of the project identified in the preface makes the argument necessarily disruptive in nature. Nevertheless, I judged these risks to be worth taking since the exercise itself is illustrative of the creative conflict of a tradition in good health, which forms a core theme of the project as a whole.

7.2.3. History in the gap

The SPAB *Manifesto*, which has been used at a number of points through the thesis, stands for the reification of the past, that in the modern age the historical is treated as a static and disconnected representation rather than part of a dynamic process in which we continue to participate. In terms of G. M. Trevelyan's threefold framework (Section 5.1.1), this is to focus on the first ('scientific') part at the expense of the others, reflecting modernity's pursuit of certainty and the abhorrence of paradox from Descartes onwards. As Lorraine Daston suggests in discussing the eloquence of things, it is 'when the paradox becomes prosaic [that] things that talk subside into speechlessness' (2004: 24). The ability to entertain paradox stands out as a particular contribution of the pre-modern approach, in contrast to the contemporary tendency to reduce the richer categories of traditional meaning to the tradable certainties of 'significance'.

It was also noted in Section 5.1.1 how Hilary Mantel (2017: 4) playfully uses metaphors of dance, birth, performance and journey to evoke the past not as something inert, but living and active, as pre-modernity allows. This sense of playfulness is far closer to the understanding of history that a conservation of living buildings requires and, coming from the pen of a novelist, indicates the relevance of narrative to this understanding. When describing historic buildings for non-professional audiences, I have often found such metaphors, particularly those of dance and journey, compellingly useful, and both were part of the ‘Guide for the perplexed’ prior to Mantel’s lectures. In a different context, Ingold draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987: 409) insistence that ‘matter-flow can only *be followed*’ (emphasis original), noting that ‘practitioners who follow the flow are, in effect, itinerants, wayfarers’ (Ingold 2013: 25). What neither Mantel nor Ingold touch on is that through tradition the past remains accessible in dialogue; the dance continues, in our case the dance between the living building and the core community that ‘owns’ and cares for it.

This acknowledgement of continuity, of dialogue across history, characterises the hermeneutic, as opposed to the aesthetic-historical, position. L. P. Hartley’s resonant phrase ‘The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there’, the opening lines of his novel *The go-between* (Hartley 1953), was adopted by David Lowenthal for his seminal 1985 book of the same name, which marked the birth of heritage studies as a discipline (Smith 2012: 535). The phrase can thus be seen as applying as much to the late-modern approach to the historical past as to the modern, exemplified by Morris; for both, the past is discontinuous with the present, resulting from what Gadamer terms a romantic as opposed to a classical hermeneutic (Section 4.2.4). From this difference of hermeneutics flow many of the difficulties faced by modern conservation, such as the marginalising of communal interests, the conflation of change with harm, and the sacralising of the past. A nonmodern rejoinder to Lowenthal (and Morris) might therefore be: ‘The past is familial: we discuss our differences.’

In the case of change to Anglican church buildings, those differences are negotiated through the Church of England faculty system. As noted, the consequent dominance of this system by the legal profession is often seen to distance the process, and therefore the buildings themselves, from parish communities and, in the terms of this thesis, therefore to occlude a ‘balanced heritage’. On the other hand, a legal system such as exists in England is very much an example of hermeneutics in action, and Gadamer ([1960] 1989: 324–330) explicitly identifies legal hermeneutics as an area of application of hermeneutic understanding. Clearly, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, not all diocesan chancellors understand this as Gadamer did, but since the law remains in

active dialogue with precedent stretching back many centuries, at root it is compatible with the proposed hermeneutic approach.

This thesis has established explicit links between conservation practice, conservation theory and broader philosophical and theological concerns, some for the first time. Not all would choose the sources used or agree with the way they are applied; some may disagree with the provisional conclusions of these arguments, for example in the nine issues considered in Section 6.1. And yet I propose that those conclusions can be shown to be a natural outworking of the theoretical choices made, which in turn have been shown to be better fitted to the living nature of historic buildings. Let the argument as a whole be judged, therefore, by the same three criteria identified in Section 6.1.1 of comprehensiveness, coherence and explanatory power.

Returning to the Wellsian tripartite ethical structure outlined in Section 1.1.4, this argument seeks for the first time to fill the place of a virtue ethics approach to conservation; it therefore should not only be judged on its own merits, but also against its rival ethical approaches. Of these, the ‘universal’ covers the official development of modern conservation from its inception until the later twentieth century; under the label of a ‘subversive’ conservation ethics we can gather Critical Heritage Studies and, in diluted form, *Conservation principles*, which promote communal/social value but which have yet to deliver on their promise. Where a universal approach is at least honestly prescriptive – ‘let the expert decide’ – none of the subversive approaches adequately addresses the question of which values should prevail; for if change is to be managed, *someone* needs to decide. As suggested in Chapter 1, the conservation ethics that should ultimately prevail is that which best addresses the issues of continuity of character and the discernment of good change from bad, and which offers the most compelling account of living buildings. However much a late-modern, subversive heritage might critique the modern, universal variety, in many respects they retain much in common; the argument of this thesis is that the difficulties outlined remain irreconcilable without looking beyond the confines of modernity (broadly defined) and employing a classical hermeneutic to renew our dialogue with the past.

The still-active legacy of modernity’s taste for preservation is the fallacy that a historic building can be understood or cared for separately from its restless, change-inducing core community. The term ‘living building’ acknowledges the symbiotic relationship of matter and people which constitutes ‘balanced heritage’, not least since in practice the cause of a building ‘dying’ is usually the decline of its community. It follows that an inability to distinguish living buildings from monuments, and an overly restrictive process, damage both community *and* building. Where church buildings do die, disengaged church communities must of course bear some responsibility, and

there is a separate theological debate to be had beyond the scope of this thesis. But responsibility must also be borne by a conservation process that, for lack of interest in its theoretical commitments, is a primary cause of that disengagement; balanced heritage requires a dialogical and symmetrical (Shanks 2007, Schofield 2014) engagement. The key question, always, is whether a given building and its community is *viable* – that is, capable of life – or *moribund* – that is, in terminal decline. It is only viable communities freed to produce work of good quality that are capable of ‘leaving history in the gap’. This thesis therefore calls for conservation to be redesigned with the notion of ‘balanced heritage’ at its heart – for the ongoing viability of both buildings and communities.

7.3. THE ONWARD JOURNEY

This study has demonstrated that the resources of pre-modernity are able to inform the contemporary challenges facing conservation, and therefore that this argument has relevance beyond the narrow focus of medieval churches, with potential application to buildings of all eras and types. The study has been inevitably exploratory in nature, and its relevance will depend on its ability to address and inform issues of genuine concern, whether for practitioners, non-professionals, legislators or others. However it is judged, it can legitimately be labelled ‘groundbreaking’, in the sense that it builds from primary research amongst local communities to propose an alternative theoretical framework with potential implications across the breadth of the historic environment, and demonstrates its application in practical terms. In such a situation there is no shortage of areas for further research, which in turn will help determine the relevance, or otherwise, of the argument; this section touches on some of these.

7.3.1. Extending the map

A first area concerns a review of conservation itself. The restoration of church buildings, described in Section 4.1 as the first of English conservation’s two founding traumas, was a powerful spur to its early development, not least in the SPAB *Manifesto* with which this thesis has repeatedly engaged. Since restoration was so central to the early self-definition of conservation, a thorough reappraisal of this founding myth is long overdue, building on the start made by Brandwood (1984), Smith (2014) and others. Should it be confirmed, as seems likely, that restoration was at least at times more archaeologically literate than hitherto presented, then the contours of an alternative conservation freed of that founding misrepresentation should be explored. Mindful that the SPAB *Manifesto* came early in Morris’s campaigning writing, it would also be instructive to see whether a similar argument for a ‘balanced heritage’ could be built from his subsequent output.

As already alluded to in Section 7.2, this new framework should be applied to buildings of different eras and sectors, to determine whether the argument is constrained or, as suggested, more broadly applicable. There is also the question, given that the entirety of the theoretical work draws on Western sources, as to how readily the thesis is applicable across cultures; in this respect the work of Gamini Wijesuriya (e.g. 2010, 2015) and others is indicative of its broader reach, particularly in the foregrounding of continuity and the role of the core community.

While Chapter 6 attempted to demonstrate the practical application of the framework, this was done by way of example, and as a means of testing the theoretical ideas. If the thrust of this argument is accepted, then a more thorough review is called for to uncover areas of incompatibility between existing conservation processes and the proposed 'balanced heritage'. A longitudinal study focusing on the 'communal health' of buildings would also be valuable, potentially revealing in greater detail and across a longer time span the impact on the core community of change achieved and change frustrated.

At a policy level a review of existing documents in light of the alternative theoretical foundation set out here would be another priority. Given the broadly similar aims of *Conservation principles*, it would be instructive to remove the language of value attachment from its text, replacing it with the language of intergenerational narrative, and judge to what extent this maintains, or perhaps even enhances, its coherence. Given that such guidance cannot readily be played with without undermining its authority, this is perhaps best done by an individual or small group outside of Historic England, and then debated as widely as possible.

In terms of historical research, two aspects of the rootedness of medieval buildings in their wider culture stand out as meriting further investigation. The first is to build a more complete picture of the medieval understanding of the labile nature of material culture, and how that informed building design and construction, specifically the balance between the planning of the works in advance and the perceived scope for improvisation in the face of challenges encountered during construction. The building of Chartres cathedral has been analysed in this way (Ingold 2013: 56–59), and Jan van der Meulen and Andreas Speer (1988), medieval art historian and philosopher respectively, collaborated to examine the building of the choir of the abbey of Saint-Denis, which marks the transition to Gothic architecture; a better understanding of the original construction and subsequent alteration of more modest medieval church buildings would enrich the field. Closely related to this is the question of how creativity was understood, and the role of named craftsmen in the commissioning of new work,

as is known to have occurred in the construction of some Norwich churches (Ayers et al. 2014).

A second aspect is to explore the impact (if any) of medieval philosophy and theology on contemporaneous material culture, though it would be naive (and anachronistically modern) to expect a medieval building to represent an explicit philosophical programme. While of interest in their own right, both areas have potential application far beyond the concerns of medieval architecture. Given the centrality of Latour's themes of purity and hybridity, a theological mapping of the history of holiness onto church architecture – visible, for example, in the nineteenth-century separation of church from community uses – would also have wide application both within the church sector and further afield.

Finally, the transitional moment described in Section 7.1.1 has also unsettled assumptions concerning the role of the expert and our understanding of professionalism itself. There are, of course, excellent examples of professionalism in conservation that achieve benefits across the full gamut of a 'balanced heritage'; the case made here is that this good practice lacks the support of an adequate theoretical foundation to significant effect. Common to both Gadamer's understanding of application as integral to understanding and MacIntyre's virtue ethics with which we have sought to frame conservation is the Aristotelian notion, from Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, of *phronesis* (practical wisdom, in Latin *prudentia*). Kinsella and Pitman (2012) consider *phronesis* as a means of exploring a non-instrumentalised form of professional knowledge in education and related fields; a parallel investigation, combining the respective expertise of professionals, craftsmen and core communities to create a professionalism of practical experience, could be transformative for conservation.

7.3.2. Hybridity and the *via media*

Following Latour, this thesis calls for a recalibration away from a particularly modern concern with the purities of authorship, style or period to a valuing of the heterodox, the hybrid and the composite. In the past those purities have combined with an aesthetic-historical understanding to toxic effect, blighting the life of old buildings and stifling contemporary creativity since, as Thoreau observes in his epigraph, 'the moderns cannot imagine so much as exists'. One manifestation of this peculiarly modern rigidity, the preservation sensibility, remains active and is clearly visible in some consultee representations, as evidenced, for example, in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.4.3. Rigid systems, whether physical or theoretical, are also fragile and risk sudden failure, at great cost to the built heritage. As has been argued throughout, this rigidity results in part from

conservation's lack of engagement with its theoretical foundation; more positively, one of the principal contributions of this research is to demonstrate how transformative such an engagement would be.

The current process does, of course, allow for a degree of change, but the privileging of authorship, style and period over the holism of a 'balanced heritage' serves to marginalise the community, confining it to 'the play corner' while the grown ups get on with their important aesthetic-historical business. The new approach proposed here goes beyond the understanding that change (suitably circumscribed) can be good; rather, change is *essential* to the flourishing – indeed the very survival – of the historic buildings in our care. Change is wholly distinct from harm, and more change may well be better for the cultural whole and therefore for the 'historic environment' than less. And so we return to Newman's epigraph with which the thesis started: 'to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.' Where Newman places no bounds on change, Bynum's understanding of pre-modern materiality and metamorphosis explicitly uses narrative to frame a more nuanced view: 'Without [real change] there is no story; nothing happens. [...] And yet there is no story if there is only change' (Bynum 2001: 177). It is this fundamentally pre-modern understanding of a middle way between the positions of 'no change' and 'all change' which underpins the thesis as a whole.

This thesis represents an appeal to overcome the false dichotomies of past and future, of living and dead, through a renewal of the nonmodern understanding of continuity. This is not another postmodern turn; within the adopted pre-modern frame, postmodernity is merely a late variation of modernity, preserving the same fragmented and discontinuous view of culture, and the same privileging of the individual over the communal. Some of its particular characteristics are to be welcomed, not least its playfulness, but others rejected, such as its inherent relativism. In its place this thesis offers a mediatory approach. I hope to have demonstrated that such an approach is highly productive in offering means of addressing the contradictions inherent in modern conservation. As Thoreau's epigraph implies, to challenge the impoverished scope of what modernity can imagine we do not need to embrace the full extent of pre-modern credulity. There is a middle way, and within the realm of conservation practice that middle way is at times discernible in some of the best historically literate change to old buildings. What is lacking is the coherent body of theory to support that good practice; it is the ambition of this thesis to initiate the debate that will produce that theoretical infrastructure.

In the context of Aristotelian ethics, the term *via media* refers to the middle way of moderation between extremes. In the Reformation, Erasmus sought a *via media*

between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformers, directly influencing the 1538/9 'Elizabethan religious settlement' which reasserted the Church of England's independence from Rome (Dodds 2009: 310, n. 163). The use of the phrase to describe the self-understanding of the Anglican Church as uniquely placed to reconcile the Catholic and Reformed wings of Western Christendom stems from the Oxford Movement; *Tract 38*, for example, is titled *Via Media No I* (Newman [1834] 2002). In the event, for Newman that middle way was not sustainable, as he and many other Tractarians converted to Catholicism, but the phrase has endured, describing the Church of England's unique position and its ambition to reconcile division (Wells 2011).

The *via media* is not a question of compromise as often understood – a grudging settlement at the lowest common denominator. This, rather, is dialogue, and one from which all parties come away enriched. The *via media* is a stage on which our drama can unfold, a 'broad church' on the Anglican model, Kenneth Frampton's architectural '*arriere-gardism*', Thomas Sharp's middle way, the hermeneutic place for Gadamer's genuine conversation and the resulting fusion of horizons in which we discover who and what we are. That is what is at stake in heritage in general, and community-owned historic buildings such as parish churches in particular.

For that mediative role between the excesses of 'no change' and 'all change', the word 'compromise' is wholly inadequate. Perhaps we should use the alternative word 'conservation'; but conservation can only fulfil that role if it furnishes itself with a theoretical foundation radically different from the aesthetic-historical one under which it has laboured to date. A conservation embracing the pre-modern understanding of materiality and hybridity from which medieval buildings were formed would transform the care of buildings of all ages and types, celebrating change as a sign of their vitality – conservation, that is, reimagined as the preservation and enhancement of the questions that make us collectively what we are.

Appendix 1

Chapter 3 interview methodology

This appendix provides further details of the methodology used in the case study projects in Chapter 3.

Qualitative interviews

A total of 11 interviews were carried out over a five week period from late June to late July 2015 with representatives of five churches in the Diocese of Norwich which have attempted to change their medieval buildings; Section 1.4.2 notes the factors that informed the choice of churches, including that this was an area in which I personally had not worked and where therefore I would be unknown to interviewees. The aim in each case was to interview the incumbent (vicar or rector), at least one other member of the church who was involved with the project and, where possible, the architect. There was in general a warm enthusiasm to be interviewed and to share experiences; amongst the architects, however, two of those approached declined to participate. A final interview was conducted with Matthew McDade, DAC Secretary for the Dioceses of Norwich, on 20 October 2015, with the aim of discussing some of the broader themes that were emerging.

Each of the five buildings was visited, and the interviews were all carried out face to face (and generally in the church building), with the exception of the interview with the architect Jeremy Bell, which was conducted by telephone. In most cases, interviews were with a single interviewee, though two were group interviews and a total of 15 people participated. All individuals were given codes to ensure anonymity, and then identities disclosed where permission had been given and where this was relevant to the discussion. No attempt was made to conceal the identity of the churches themselves; not only are the specifics of each scheme relevant in understanding the impact of the proposals, but their very specificity would make deduction of the location relatively straightforward.

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing the freedom to follow themes of interest as each conversation developed. Nevertheless a common structure was used to ensure some basic ground was covered in every case. For parish respondents this comprised:

- A. The context of the interviewee's involvement with the church, and an outline of the project;

- B. The understanding of the building, and what makes it important;
- C. An account of the unfolding of the permissions process, and the interviewee's thoughts on the helpfulness of the contributions of other players;
- D. Their reflections on their experience, the impact of the project on the church and wider communities, and what they might do differently a second time;
- E. And finally, any more general suggestions they might have to improve the process of changing historic churches.

Interviews with the two architects followed those with the churches with which they were involved; the structure of these conversations was similar, but weighted more towards their understanding of the functioning of the process. The interview with Matthew McDade, DAC Secretary, was conducted in October 2015, and provided an opportunity to review some preliminary conclusions from the church and architect interviews. The information sheet, consent form and the structures for the church, architect and McDade interviews are reproduced below at the end of this appendix.

All interviews were recorded and then subsequently transcribed; the transcripts can be found in Appendix 11. The list of interviews conducted is as follows, together with the file name for each transcript:

Table 1: Case study interviews

Ref	Church	Participant(s)	Date	Dur'n (m)	Transcript
A1	Blofield	Sue Shillam	25/06/2015	50	A1-150625
A2	Blofield	Revd Paul Cubitt	10/07/2015	88	A2-150710
A3	Blofield	Jeremy Bell	22/07/2015	58	A3-150722
B1/B2	Brundall	B1, David Cozens	10/07/2015	66	B1-B2-150710
B3	Brundall	B3	10/07/2015	41	B3-150710
C1	Holt	Fr Howard Stoker	23/06/2015	49	C1-150623
C2	Holt	Glyn Purland	02/07/2015	72	C2-150702
D1/D2/D3	Taverham	Rachel Seabrook, D2, D3	02/07/2015	62	D1-D2-D3-150702
E1	Wymondham	Fr Christopher Davies	30/06/2015	50	E1-150630
E2	Wymondham	Mike Halls	02/07/2015	31	E2-150702
E3	Wymondham	Henry Freeland	07/07/2015	42	E3-150707
N1	DAC	Matthew McDade	20/10/2015	51	N1-151020

The interviews are coded, as shown, with each church in alphabetical order assigned a letter from A–E. Each contributor was then assigned a number, following the order in which the interviews for that church were carried out; for example, the codes A1 and A3 refer to different individuals related to the same church, in this case Blofield. These codes were then applied to each of the transcripts, including any mentions of other people within the church who had requested anonymity. Finally, within the transcripts each turn in the conversation was numbered, allowing the referencing of specific comments; this is done in the form ‘B2: 31’, which thus references turn 31 in the conversation with the second contributor at Brundall church. Two of the interviews had more than one contributor, at Brundall and at Taverham, and so more than one reference appears in these transcripts.

Through the process of initial transcription, where words or phrases stood out, particularly as potential framing devices, these were highlighted, including:

- A. examples of strong language such as ‘stranglehold’,
- B. more predictable words or phrases that carried a metaphorical weight such as ‘jump through the hoops’,
- C. similar formulations that emerged unprompted in discussion of church buildings, such as allusion to narrative or a view of churches as community hubs.

The recordings were then reviewed to check the transcription, and the highlighting was adjusted. Since this highlighting was done from the original audio recordings in the process of transcription, the methodology was able better to reflect the importance of a phrase or theme in the original context of the conversation in which it arose. These highlighted quotations were then extracted and grouped together in a process of multiple iteration; during this stage some were discarded in favour of better examples on the same theme. Four principal themes gradually emerged from this disparate material for later refinement. These four themes are summarised at the end of Chapter 1 and provide a unity to the thesis as a whole.

Although widespread, the use of qualitative interviews is of course not uncontroversial, and it is important to reflect on the appropriateness of this interview method. David Silverman laments what he sees as a lazy over reliance within the social sciences on the use of the qualitative interview method, with its focus on the individual’s experience and feelings, a view which he terms ‘romantic’ (Silverman 2013: 39–40). While traditional approaches to interviewing conceive subjects as ‘passive vessels of answers for experiential questions put to respondents by interviewers’ (Holstein & Gubrium 1997: 116), for James Holstein & Jaber Gubrium it is impossible for the

interviewer not to be an active participant in the interview – hence their use of the term ‘active interviewing’. Rather, they see the respondent’s view as constructed in the course of the interview, and its presentation as being constantly adjusted. But while interviewing is in this sense dialogical, with meaning ‘constructed’ in the process, it remains incumbent on the interviewer to do their utmost not to lead the interviewee to a pre-determined conclusion; the risk in such circumstances is that the ‘data’ from the interview process would be little more than a mirroring of the researcher’s preliminary conclusions.

These interviews undeniably aimed to get the respondents to reflect on their experience of the process through which they went, and to understand each respondent’s account of how the various projects unfolded, and their reflections on that unfolding. However, what was of most interest was the individual’s (or in some case group’s) reflection on the *communal* experience. And it was clear at various points that the interview itself was allowing the respondent to reflect and draw conclusions from their experience, and that those reflections developed from the conversational nature of the interviews.

While perhaps no interview can be wholly balanced between equals, those carried out as part of this research are considerably more equal in nature than the asymmetrical encounters often documented by researchers in the social sciences, such as police interviews, or doctor patient consultations; further, those sorts of interview do not generally include the researcher as a participant. Since the relation between interviewer and respondent is not a focus of the research, where phrases have been repeated with no discernible addition to the meaning, intended or otherwise, then these have been omitted for the sake of readability. Verbal tics such as ‘you know’ and ‘I mean’ have also been omitted, again unless they add to the meaning; of course some respondents (and the interviewer) are more susceptible to this than others. Context, however, remains essential to the correct interpretation of interview material. For the sake of readability, isolated phrases or sentences are quoted more frequently than substantial excerpts of dialogue, but in each case reference is made to the specific numbered ‘turn’ within each interview, to allow these comments to be placed in their appropriate context.

Interview information sheet

YkD-information

Change to Historic Church Buildings - Information Sheet

Why do some parishes sometimes find the process of change to their historic building less than straightforward? This is the focus of some research I am conducting, and I would like to invite you to take part in this project by telling me about your experience of attempting to change your church building.

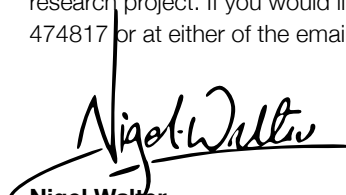
The project will look at five recent or current projects within the Diocese of Norwich, all concerned with change to grade 1 or grade 2* listed medieval churches, of which yours is one. In each case I am hoping to interview the incumbent, churchwarden(s) and others involved with the project, and subsequently to talk to the architect. Regardless of the outcome of your project, I am keen to hear your thoughts on how the process unfolded, and your reflections on where there may be room for improvement. I am keen to capture a range of opinions, both positive and negative.

My Background: I am a specialist conservation architect, and run Archangel Architects, a practice based near Cambridge that specialises in working with church communities (of various denominations) to better shape their buildings to match their mission. I have written two Grove booklets on the theology of church buildings, and am co-author of the forthcoming *Buildings for Mission Handbook*, to be published by Canterbury Press in the autumn. I am also an active member of my local parish church.

The Project: This research project is part of my on-going PhD in Conservation (Historic Buildings) at the University of York; the project has the working title: *'All is Not Loss' - Change, Narrative and the Community Ownership of Historic Buildings*. The interview would be at a time and venue of your choice, would last no more than an hour, and would follow a loose structure which I will send you in advance of our meeting. I hope to conduct these interviews between now and mid-July 2015, though a date a little later may work if necessary. Interviews will be recorded, and subsequently transcribed.

Permissions: I attach a consent form, which would need to be signed by the time of the interview; for the moment all I need is a verbal or email response to confirm whether you wish to take part in this research. Before any interview material is published I can forward it for your approval; your preferences can be indicated on the attached consent form. Please also note that you are able to withdraw from the interview process at any time. In terms of outcome, aside from the PhD thesis itself, I am hoping subsequently to publish the results of this research in journal article and/or book form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I do hope you will feel able to contribute to this research project. If you would like more information please feel free to contact me on 01223 474817 or at either of the email addresses below.



Nigel Walter
nhw502@york.ac.uk
nw@archangelic.com

Interview consent form

YkD-consent form

Consent Form

'All is Not Loss' - Change, Narrative and the Community Ownership of Historic Buildings

I agree to participate, by being interviewed, in the *'All is not Loss'* research project. I have read the participant information sheet for the project.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any point up until 30 June 2017, shortly before submission of the research.

I give consent for the transcribed text of the interview to be used in research and publications arising from the project by the named researcher (Nigel Walter), under the following conditions (please tick as appropriate):

EITHER: I am happy to be identified, by name and title of post, when material from the interview is quoted or published;

OR: I am happy for material from the interview to be quoted or published, under condition of anonymity.

Tick this box if you wish to be consulted further before material is quoted or published.

SIGNED:

NAME:

DATE:

INTERVIEWER:

Nigel Walter

1/1

07/07/2015

Interview structure – churches

YkD-structure

Change to Historic Church Buildings - Interview Structure

I would like you to tell me about your experience of how your building project unfolded, and your reflections on the process, both positive and negative. The following questions provide an outline structure for our conversation – we will not follow this structure slavishly, but I hope it is helpful in mapping out the ground we will aim to cover. The interview should last no more than an hour.

The context

- How long have you been connected with this church?
- Tell me something of the role the building plays for the congregation, and for the wider community.
- Can you outline for me the context of the project, and what you were hoping it would achieve?

The building

- How would you describe the character of the building?
- If this church had to close, how would that change the identity of this place?
- To you personally, what is the most important thing about the church building?

The process

- How would you describe the process you have been through?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how helpful did you find the following ‘stakeholders’:
 - the Diocese
 - Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)
 - Historic England (previously English Heritage)
 - amenity societies (e.g. SPAB, Victorian Society etc)
 - Church Buildings Council (CBC)
 - Local Authority (planners, conservation officer)
- What do you think was most important about the building for these external stakeholders?

Your reflections

- What did you learn? Did you change your ideas as a result of the process?
- What impact has the project had on the church and on the wider community? Was it worth it?
- How would you approach things differently second time around?

And finally...

- What one thing might improve the process of changing historic churches?

Nigel Walter

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Interview structure – architects

YkD-structure-a

Change to Historic Church Buildings - Interview Structure

As you know I have spoken to client representatives, and have a broad understanding of the project. The focus of this interview will be your experience of how the project unfolded, and your reflections on the conservation process, both positive and negative. The following questions provide an outline structure for our conversation – we will not follow this structure slavishly, but I hope it is helpful in mapping out the ground we will aim to cover. The interview should last no more than an hour.

The context

- Can you outline for me how you came to be involved in the project?
- What did the project set out to achieve? Has it succeeded?

The building

- How would you describe the character of the building?
- More generally, what makes historic buildings important?
- How do you think the church understood the importance of their building, and did that change through the life of the project?

The process

- How supportive did you find the other ‘stakeholders’: DAC, Historic England, the amenity societies, Church Buildings Council, Local Authority (planners, conservation officer)
- What do you think was most important about the building for these external stakeholders?

Your reflections

- Can the current process be relied upon to produce good results?
- What specific skills does the client need?
- What to you are the ingredients of successful change?

And finally...

- What one thing might improve the process of changing historic churches?

Nigel Walter

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Interview structure – DAC secretary

YkD-structure-d

Change to Historic Church Buildings - Interview Structure

As you know I have spoken to at least two representatives of each of the churches at Blofield, Brundall, Holt, Taverham and Wymondham, together with architects Henry Freeland and Jeremy Bell. The purpose of this interview is to discuss some of the preliminary findings from the interviews, and to consider how the process which these projects follow might change to encourage better outcomes. The following questions provide an outline structure for our conversation – we will not follow this structure slavishly, but I hope it is helpful in mapping out the ground we will aim to cover. The interview should last no more than an hour.

The context

- Can you outline for me your interest in historic church buildings, and how you come to be in your current role?
- What do you see as your role, and what do you hope to achieve?

Preliminary conclusions from the interviews...

- Process - it shouldn't be this difficult! Faculty simplification doesn't look as though it will make things much better.
- People - skills capacity, and criterion for evaluation of project success.
- Time - narrow and broad understandings of history (care for the product v engagement with the process); churches regard themselves as in an active dialogue with history.
- Language - Importance of clarity of vision and a good Statement of Needs is understood; building usually placed in wider cultural/theological context.

Your reflections

- What specific skills does the client need? How can these be developed?
- Can the current process be relied upon to produce good results? How is input from statutory consultees best managed?
- What should/could be the role of the DAC (and the CBC)? Do DACs in general have sufficient capacity, and if not what needs strengthening?
- Is 'communal/spiritual value' adequately represented in the process; for example, should it be included in Statements of Significance?

And finally...

- What one thing might improve the process of changing historic churches?

Nigel Walter

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Appendix 2

List entry descriptions

The following list entry descriptions are excerpted from the The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) [<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>] [accessed 11/08/2017].

Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield

List entry summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: CHURCH OF ST ANDREW AND ST PETER

List entry Number: 1304595

County: Norfolk

District: Broadland

Grade: I

Date first listed: 25-Sep-1962

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Details

TG 30 NW BLOFIELD CHURCH ROAD (south side) 7/5 25/9/69 Church of St. Andrew and St. Peter.

G.V. I

Parish Church, C14 and later, of flint with stone dressings and with lead and slate roofs. West tower, north aisle, north porch, south aisle, nave, chancel, north boiler house and south vestry. C15, 4 stage west tower with polygonal stair turret and diagonal buttresses. Flushwork on basecourse, buttress ends and on parapet. Perpendicular west doorway with attached shafts and spandrels emblazoned with the symbols of the patron saints. 4-light Perpendicular west window with traceried heads. Reticulated sound holes in rectangular openings. 3-light Perpendicular belfry openings with traceried heads. Battlemented parapet with hexagonal battlemented finials surmounted by Sculpture. 5 bay north aisle with 3-light Perpendicular windows with tracery between buttresses. North porch, with wave moulded north doorway having attached shafts and

hood mould with head label stops. Ogee cusped niche above entrance flanked by rectangular niches. To east and west, 2-light windows at ground floor and 1-light at former first floor level, with rectangular heads. Niche for stoup inside on east wall. Wave moulded north doorway to nave. Parapet gable. 5 bay south aisle with 3-light Perpendicular windows with traceried heads between buttresses. Gabled buttress at east end supporting south aisle and clerestorey. South doorway at west end. 5 bay clerestorey with 2-light Reticulated windows. 2 bay chancel, with blocked north and south windows. North-west window re-opened in C20 with Perpendicular style window. C19 5-light east window. C19 lean-to boiler house to north, and knapped flint south vestry. Parapet gables, with grotesques on kneelers and crosses on the apex. Tower arch with attached shafts. Late C14, 5 bay arcade with quatrefoil piers and polygonal bases and capitals. C15 north aisle roof. Rood stairs doorways in north aisle and chancel. Late C14 chancel arch with ½ shafts, bases and capitals. Perpendicular angle piscina with cusped ogee arch in west face and blind tracery on north side. Medieval rood screen base, with 12 painted saints in the panels. Medieval bench ends with poppy-heads, some with seated or kneeling figures. C19 tiered box pews. C15 octagonal font with scenes from the life of Christ. Octagonal base with cusped blank panels. Monument to Edward Paston, died 1630, shown in alabaster, arched recess, flanked by Tuscan columns, with his sons and daughters. Brick floors containing brass matrices. Brasses to Paston family in chancel floor.

Listing NGR: TG3353709196

Selected sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TG 33537 09196

B.Church of St Laurence, Brundall**List entry summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: CHURCH OF ST LAWRENCE

List entry Number: 1051519

County: Norfolk

District: Broadland

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 25-Sep-1962

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Details

TG 30 NW BRUNDALL CHURCH LANE

7/14 Church of St. Lawrence. 25/9/62 II*

Parish Church. C13, extended and restored circa C1900, and to the west in later C20. Flint with stone dressings and slate roofs. West nave extension, north aisle of double depth plan with nave, south porch, north vestry and chancel. West extension has re-set 2-light west window with 'Y' tracery and 2-light south window. North aisle c.1900, 3 bays with 2-light window, buttresses and parapets. C19 south porch in Early English style. C13 2 bay nave with western south door, and single light C19 window. Diagonal buttress at west end to south, and double arched bellcote on west parapet gable. South wall raised in brick and supported by buttress adjacent to porch. C19 lean- to vestry of 2 bays. Single bay chancel with C19 windows and diagonal buttresses. One light south window and 3 light Perpendicular style east window. Parapet gables. Interior mainly C19. C13 lead font bowl decorated with the Crucifixus and a knot of fleur-de-lis alternating round circular bowl. Included II* for font. West wing not of special interest.

Listing NGR: TG3216108452

Selected sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TG 32161 08452

C.Church of St Andrew, Holt**List entry summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREW

List entry Number: 1306557

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 04-Oct-1960

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Details

1. HOLT CHURCH STREET 5320 (north side) Parish Church of St Andrew TG03NE
2/30 4/10/60

II*

2. C14 and later, much restored by William Butterfield in 1864. West tower, Nave, S. porch N. & S. aisles and chancel. Flint and limestone with lead covered roofs to Nave and aisles. Steeply pitched plain-tiled roof to chancel. Flintwork partly plastered over on S. side. Perpendicular windows in aisles, clerestory and E. wall of chancel. Square West tower with diagonal buttresses. Flint flushwork panels in lower stage of tower. West doorway surmounted by 2-light window with geometric tracery. Four sound-openings with cusped Y-tracery. Staircase turret on N. side of tower. Sanctus bell turret at E. end of Nave. Modern boiler house to S. of S. porch. Interior: C14 arcades with octagonal piers. C14 piscina in S. aisle with painted cross. C13 circular font with fleur-de-lis decoration. Early C14 sedilia and piscina in chancel, S. side. Some C19 glass by Bryans. Royal Arms.

Listing NGR: TG0811938796

Selected sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TG 08119 38796

D.Church of St Edmund, Taverham**List entry summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: PARISH CHURCH OF ST EDMUND

List entry Number: 1372667

County: Norfolk

District: Broadland

Grade: I

Date first listed: 10-May-1961

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Details

TG 11 SE TAVERHAM COSTESSEY ROAD

7/42 Parish Church of St. Edmund.

10.5.61. - I

Parish Church, medieval and later. Flint with stone dressings and roofs of pantile, slate and thatch. West tower, nave, south aisle, south porch and chancel. 2 stage CII round tower. Semi-circular headed lancet window to west and single light opening to south. C15 octagonal second stage, with 2-light Perpendicular bell openings. Gargoyles and grotesques at angles level with string course. Battlemented flushwork parapet with cross finials. North nave wall has western doorway possibly CII, with semi-circular head and impost blocks. To its east a 3 light Perpendicular window and a C14 2-light window with 'Y' tracery. South aisle c.1863, of 4 bays with south door and 2-light Geometric style windows, stepped buttresses and Ballflower and Dogtooth ornament on eaves cornice. C19 south porch with diagonal buttresses, stone kneelers and parapet gable. 2 bay chancel with restored 2 light Decorated windows to south with C14 priest's door with ovolo and hollow chamfered reveals. Two 2-light Decorated windows to north. Decorated 3 light east window with petal tracery. Parapet gables with cross finials. Interior contains much of the C19. Possible CII opening in east tower wall to west gallery. Medieval single framed scissor truss roof, probably C14. C19, 3 bay south arcade. Decorated chancel arch. Fragment of dropped-sill sedilia with cusped ogees in spandrels and Piscina and Aumbry with cusped head in south chancel wall. Blocked door opening in north chancel wall. Stained glass, c.1450 of Crucifixion

and attendant effigies in north west nave window. 6 bay medieval timber screen with ogee Perpendicular tracery. Altar rails constructed with C14 Reticulated tracery, probably salvaged from upper part of a Rood Screen. Medieval choir stalls with traceried frontals. Poppyheads and animals on the arms. Bench with poppyheads in choir loft. Chalice brass to John Thorp, rector, died 1515, in chancel floor.

Listing NGR: TG1608413816

Selected sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TG 16084 13816

E.Wymondham Abbey

List entry summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: ABBEY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

List entry Number: 1297494

County: Norfolk

District: South Norfolk

Grade: I

Date first listed: 29-Dec-1950

Date of most recent amendment: 14-Sep-1992

Details

WYMONDHAM

TF1001 CHURCH STREET 655-1/10/39 (South West side) 29/12/50 Abbey Church of St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury (Formerly Listed as: CHURCH STREET (North side) Church of St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury)

GV I

Benedictine Abbey Church. Founded 1107 by William de Albin as a Priory, and C14-C16. Flint with limestone dressings. Lead roofs. Nave, nave aisles and an east and west tower remain of former full, apsidal, Benedictine plan. East tower is former crossing tower. 5 stage west tower commenced 1447, completed 1498. Polygonal corner buttresses. Arched west door flanked by niches. 5-light west window with renewed Perpendicular tracery and a blocked central light. 2-light ringing chamber windows and paired belfry windows. 7-bay south aisle rebuilt 1544-60: stepped buttresses between Y-tracery windows, diagonal buttresses to east and west. 9 clerestory windows of 3 and 2-lights with lozenge or Flowing tracery of C19 interpretation, each separated by thin buttress strips. West bay with a screen marking location of conventual buildings formerly abutting to south. At east end of aisle 2 bays of Norman gallery are evident. North aisle enlarged 1432-45 in 8 window bays plus porch at west end. Windows are 3-light Perpendicular under segmental arches. 2-storey porch with diagonal buttresses entered through a moulded arched entrance under a frieze of shields. Paired parvise window to north. Crenellated parapet over punched quatrefoil frieze. Stair tower to south-west. Clerestory with flushwork and 9 3-light Perpendicular windows.

Buttresses between them have niches. At east end are various fragments of evidence testifying to existence of former crossing tower and other Benedictine planning features, here not discussed. 4-stage crossing tower 1390 -1409. Very tall east arch, small doorways north and south. One 3-light Perpendicular window north and south at second stage. Upper 2 stages octagonal, with diagonal buttresses, each alternate facet of both lit through 2-light windows. INTERIOR. 9-bay nave arcade, only the first bay retaining the engaged columns and cushion capitals to the drum piers. Zig-zag and dog-tooth decoration in round arches, those to south with cable and meander. Triforium with 2 pairs of engaged columns and double-rolled round arches to each bay. Clerestory with moulded rere-arches. Late C15 hammerbeam roof. Hammerbeams carry winged angels bearing shields and musical instruments and drop on arched braces to wall posts with corbels. Heavy crenellated ashlar. Arched hammer posts with pierced tracery rise to moulded principals. One tier moulded butt purlins and ridge piece, with star bosses at junctions. Similar hammer beam roof to north aisle. Reredos by Sir Ninian Comper 1935. Late C14 octagonal font with 4 wild men and 4 lions against stem. Bowl with symbols of 4 Evangelists alternating with 4 angels. Tall canopy is 1962. Ferrers monument (which does not commemorate Abbot Ferrers (1532-48)) c1525. Terracotta, in 2 stages. Lower stage with 3 deep niches, upper with 3 projecting bows, all surfaces carved with Renaissance decoration.

Listing NGR: TG1068601497

Selected sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TG 10686 01497

Appendix 3

Case study architectural drawings

All drawings are sourced from local planning authority records, except in the case of the Church of St Edmund, Taverham, where drawings are from diocesan records. Copyright of all drawings is acknowledged.

A.Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield

Drawing A1. Proposed Ground Floor Plan <i>(JBKS Architects drawing BLO 010-03)</i>	251
Drawing A2. Proposed First Floor Plan <i>(JBKS Architects drawing BLO 011-02)</i>	252
Drawing A3. Proposed Section BB <i>(JBKS Architects drawing BLO 014-01)</i>	253

B.Church of St Laurence, Brundall

Drawing B4. Proposed Main Plan <i>(Reynolds Jury Architecture Ltd drawing 7016 020H)</i>	254
Drawing B5. As Proposed: East Elevation of Worship Space and Section Z-Z <i>(Reynolds Jury Architecture Ltd drawing 7016 016H)</i>	255

C.Church of St Andrew, Holt

Drawing C6. Site Plan, Floor Plan and Location Plan <i>(WCK Design and Conservation drawing WCK 031/04 with excerpt from WCK 031/01)</i>	256
Drawing C7. Planning Application 3D Views <i>(Fisher-Bullen drawing PF_11_0310-Artists_impressions-114041, page 2 of 5)</i>	257

D.Church of St Edmund, Taverham

Drawing D8. First Floor Plan – as Proposed <i>(Birdsall, Swash and Blackman Ltd feasibility drawing)</i>	258
Drawing D9. North and South Elevations – as Proposed <i>(Birdsall, Swash and Blackman Ltd feasibility drawing)</i>	259

E.Wymondham Abbey

Drawing E10. Abbey Ground Floor Plan <i>(Freeland Rees Roberts drawing 08075-SP-102B)</i>	260
Drawing E11. Proposed South, East and North Elevations <i>(Freeland Rees Roberts drawing 08075-SE-300B)</i>	261
Drawing E12. 3D Views <i>(Freeland Rees Roberts drawing 08075-SZ500)</i>	262

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A.CHURCH OF ST ANDREW AND ST PETER, BLOFIELD

Drawing A1. Proposed Ground Floor Plan

(JBKS Architects drawing BLO 010-03)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Drawing A2. Proposed First Floor Plan

(JBKS Architects drawing BLO 011-02)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Drawing A3. Proposed Section BB

(JBKS Architects drawing BLO 014-01)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

B.CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE, BRUNDALL

Drawing B4. Proposed Main Plan

(Reynolds Jury Architecture Ltd drawing 7016 020H)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

**Drawing B5. As Proposed: East Elevation of Worship Space and Section
Z-Z**

(Reynolds Jury Architecture Ltd drawing 7016 016H)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

C.CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, HOLT

Drawing C6. Site Plan, Floor Plan and Location Plan

(WCK Design and Conservation drawing WCK 031/04 with excerpt from WCK 031/01)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Drawing C7. Planning Application 3D Views

(Fisher-Bullen drawing PF_11_0310-Artists_impressions-114041, page 2 of 5)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

D.CHURCH OF ST EDMUND, TAVERHAM

Drawing D8. First Floor Plan – as Proposed

(Birdsall, Swash and Blackman Ltd feasibility drawing)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Drawing D9. North and South Elevations – as Proposed

(Birdsall, Swash and Blackman Ltd feasibility drawing)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

E.WYMONDHAM ABBEY

Drawing E10. Abbey Ground Floor Plan

(Freeland Rees Roberts drawing 08075-SP-102B)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Drawing E11. Proposed South, East and North Elevations

(Freeland Rees Roberts drawing 08075-SE-300B)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Drawing E12. 3D Views

(Freeland Rees Roberts drawing 08075-SZ500)

Drawing not available as may contain
commercially sensitive information

Appendix 4

SCARAB Manifesto

Printed material
uploaded separately

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Appendix 5

'Guide for the perplexed'

Printed material
uploaded separately

Appendix 6

Chapter 6 consultations

SCARAB Manifesto consultation process

The document was circulated to a small group of people with involvement in the heritage sector. Respondents are shown in Table 2 and referred to in the text by means of their three digit code.

Table 2: SCARAB Manifesto consultation quoted responses

Ref	Name	Position	Type
001	Andrew Mottram	Worcester Diocese Heritage Buildings & Community Development Officer	E/W
002	Jennie Page	Vice-Chair of the Church Buildings Council	T
003	Becky Payne	Development Officer, Historic Religious Buildings Alliance	E
004	Christopher Webster	Architectural historian and Ecclesiological Society Council member	E
005	Henry Russell	DAC Chair, Diocese of Gloucester	E

Key to Type: E: Email; T: Telephone conversation; W: Website comment.

SCARAB Manifesto website

Since all 'scarab' names were already taken, the principal identifier 'scarabsoc' was chosen for the website as succinct but descriptive and, hopefully, memorable. The domain suffix '.org.uk' signals both the non-commercial nature of the entity, and its UK focus; this is also the suffix used by five of the six national amenity societies, the exception being the CBA's somewhat convoluted 'new.archaeologyuk.org'. In the four months from May to September 2017 the site received 51 visits from 40 individuals. For the purpose of the thesis, following the amenity society model is a means of lending credibility to the argument and is a natural extension of the playfulness inherent in the document itself. This has created a container, and while at present there is no intention to build an organisation on the foundation of the Manifesto, this, in theory at least, remains a possibility.

SCARAB Manifesto information sheet

YkD-SCARAB Manifesto – information

Change to Historic Church Buildings - SCARAB Manifesto Information Sheet

Why do some parishes sometimes find the process of change to their historic building less than straightforward? This is the focus of some research I am conducting, and I would like to invite you to take part in this project by providing feedback on a document that I have written, the **SCARAB Manifesto**.

As will be obvious when you see it, this document is heavily modelled on the SPAB Manifesto written by William Morris in 1877. The new manifesto, for a putative organisation 'The Society for the Continuity and Renewal of Ancient Buildings' retains 85% of Morris's original; its purpose is, however, quite different, championing continuity and renewal (of both building and community) rather than material preservation.

I am keen to gather a broad range of responses to this document from those with a professional interest in historic church buildings. Specifically it would be good to know whether in your view:

- the document is useful?
- the document is dangerous?
- if SCARAB were an organisation, would membership appeal?

My Background: I am a specialist conservation architect, and run Archangel Architects, a practice based near Cambridge that specialises in working with church communities (of various denominations) to better shape their buildings to match their mission. I have written two Grove booklets on the theology of church buildings, and am co-author of *Buildings for Mission* (Canterbury Press, 2015). I am a member of the Church Buildings Council, and am an active member of my local parish church.

The Project: This research project is part of my on-going PhD in Conservation (Historic Buildings) at the University of York; the project has the working title: '*All is Not Lost*' - *Change, Narrative and the Community Ownership of Historic Buildings*. Responses can be in the form of an email, or we could speak by phone at a time to suit you, or we could meet if you prefer.

Permissions: In terms of consent all that I require is an email response saying that you are willing to take part in this research and are happy with the proposed arrangement. Anything that you expressed in response to the document would not be attributable to you, except with your explicit consent on a quote by quote basis. In terms of outcome, aside from the PhD thesis itself, I am hoping subsequently to publish the results of this research in journal article and/or book form, and to present the results in lectures and seminars.

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I do hope you will feel able to contribute to this research project. If you would like more information please feel free to contact me on 01223 474817 or at either of the email addresses below.

Nigel Walter

nhw502@york.ac.uk

nw@archangelic.com

‘Guide for the perplexed’ consultation process

During an initial development phase early versions of the document were home printed and shared with a handful of contacts, and the design amended in response to feedback received. A first print run of 125 was then ordered for the initial consultation phase. Of these, 29 copies were circulated to attendees at the Church Buildings Council meeting held on Wednesday, 1 March 2017, and 70 provided for inclusion in delegate packs for the ‘Mission & Your Parish Church’ training day organised by Norwich Cathedral at which I had already been asked to speak. The remaining copies were sent or given to contacts in churches and elsewhere.

Early conversations quickly presented further opportunities for circulating the booklet. Copies were provided for each member of the Ely DAC at their meeting on Tuesday 21 March 2017. In a separate initiative, I was approached to create and deliver training for church communities, in response to the Diocese of Norwich mission strategy 2021 (DN 2016) which had identified buildings as an area in which parishes needed support. In developing the brief for this training the DAC Secretary requested a substantial number of further copies for use at a variety of events, including the diocesan synod, a series of DAC roadshows, and a training event for ‘ambassadors’, resulting in a second print run of 125 of this first edition.

Enclosed with each copy of the booklet was a simple form comprising a very brief questionnaire with space to provide written feedback and an invitation to send comments back by email if preferred, and asking whether the ‘Guide’ was useful, whether it was clear, and how it could be improved. The information sheet and feedback form are included at the end of this appendix. Some 30 responses were received from this first consultation exercise, and quoted respondents are listed in Table 3. The booklet was then revised during July 2017 and 2000 copies of the second edition were printed. These are in the process of being sent out to each diocese in the Church of England, including directly to many of the 140 archdeacons in England and Wales. Given the relatively low number of responses from the first consultation, further feedback was sought from attendees at the two September workshops on the basis of the second edition of the booklet, and the feedback from the first of these events is discussed in Section 6.3.5.

Tables 3 & 4 list the responses for the two rounds of consultation, which are referred to in the text by means of the three digit code, shown in the table under ‘Ref’; those starting with ‘1’ relate to the first consultation, and those starting ‘2’ relate to the second.

Table 3: 'Guide for the perplexed' first consultation quoted responses

Ref	Name	Position	Type
101	Dr Kristi Bain	Senior Research Associate, UEA and Parish Outreach Officer, Norwich Cathedral Library	E
102	Geoffrey Hunter	Historic Buildings Consultant, Diocese of Ely	M
103	Jennie Page	Vice-Chair of the Church Buildings Council	T
104	Sir Tony Baldry	Chair of the Church Buildings Council	F
105	Trudi Hughes	Heritage At Risk Surveyor, Historic England	E
106	Matthew Saunders	Secretary, Ancient Monuments Society	E
107	Tessa Hilder	Support Officer, Architectural Heritage Fund	E
108	John Dentith	DAC Secretary, Diocese of Worcester	F
109	Becky Payne	Development Officer, Historic Religious Buildings Alliance	E
110	Henry Russell	DAC Chair, Diocese of Gloucester	E
111	Patricia Duff	Project Director, ArchaeoLink	E
112	Very Revd Mark Bonney	DAC Chair, Diocese of Ely	F
113	Simon Jenkins	Journalist and Trustee of the Churches Conservation Trust	E
114	Brian Thatcher	Parish Administrator, All Saints' Church, Newmarket	E
115	Matthew McDade	DAC Secretary, Diocese of Norwich	P
116	Karen Hall	Diocesan Secretary – Synodical and Pastoral Officer, Diocese of Ely	P
117	David Grech	Churchwarden, St Mary's Church Whaddon and retired Historic Places Advisor with Historic England	E
118	Dr Julie Banham	DAC Secretary, Diocese of Sheffield	P
119	Liz Kitch	Senior Church Buildings Officer, Diocese of Oxford	E
120	Jo Tym	St Mary's Church, Reepham	E
121	Becky Clark	Director of Churches and Cathedrals for the Archbishops' Council	E
122	Adam Simmonds	Head of Building Development, St John the Baptist Church, Leicester	F/L
123	James Bettley	Member, Church Buildings Council and former DAC Chair, Diocese of Chelmsford	E

Key to Type: E: Email; F: Form; L: Letter; M: Meeting; P: Personal communication; T: Telephone conversation.

Table 4: 'Guide for the perplexed' second consultation quoted responses

Ref	Q1 Useful	Q2 Clear	Comments
201	Y	N	F: 'Clearly you are a visual person – I found it visually appealing but slightly confusing. I found the cross references to the book rather irritating as I don't have the book! And even if I did, the to-ing and fro-ing from one to another cross-referencing is not so easy.'
202	Y	Y	3: 'Recognise the expertise of others (re heating, sound, lighting etc.) as well as architects.'
203	Y	Y	1: 'Knowledge of what to do and the priorities.' 2: 'Knowledge of how to approach any change required and the entities involved.' 3: 'Case study/s.'
204	Y	Y	F: 'The pages are very busy; I like the concepts but initially it can appear overwhelming.' 1: 'Loads of information. All the nuts and bolts which I have found my way through.' 2: 'In a really accessible way. I had a migraine it was all dancing on the pages! Lots of black and red; maybe introduce another colour.' 3: 'You summed up really well a scenario: all attention transferred to the village hall, church on the edge – where <u>do</u> we go from here!
205			R: 'Thinking of changing anything in the church is so daunting – the hurdles you have to jump over and people changing goalposts. This course has been so refreshing in emphasising balance between art/history and community needs/mission for today. Importantly that churches have been changing since the first stone was laid and mistakes have been made and usage of the building has changed and we need to keep changing to serve our community and worship appropriately for where we are now. Accessible, <u>humorous</u> , user friendly guide with refreshing emphasis on Christian mission.'
206	Y	Y	F: 'Illustration of a church on the cover!' 1: 'It is food for thought and raises the exciting prospect of making creative, responsible decisions about change. Many things to think about – protecting the heritage – and the future.'
207	Y	Y	1: 'It would have been useful to have received this before today.' 2: 'This is a very useful guide and should be freely available for churches.'
208	Y	Y	1: 'Good for reference – a quick glance.' 2: 'Would need to have "Buildings For Mission" to go with leaflet.'
209	Y	Y...	F: '...once you start to read it' 1: 'A complicated subject put into a few pages. Excellent!' 2: 'Looks complicated at first glance, needs time to follow. (Being talked through part of it helped.)'
210	Y	Y	1: 'Very clear and thought provoking.' 2: 'Very clear and concise, lots of information. Thank you.'

Ref	Q1 Useful	Q2 Clear	Comments
211	Y	Y	1: 'Very useful, succinct and inspirational.' 2: 'Excellent presentation and clear speaker.' 3. 'To presentation:- Perhaps control/designate discussion groups at half time. Maybe 6 to 8 people with a brief for discussion. Makes people up!!'
212	Y	Y	1: 'Very good. Pity I did not have this exercise 4 years ago before I did work on our church; might have saved a lot of time.' 2: 'Very clear and well-delivered.' 3. 'Personally I did not like/follow the leaflet but this is a personal thing.'
213	Y	Y	1: 'So much information in such a small booklet. Also the links to external sources is vital.' 2: 'It provides a good start point for any work being planned. Careful study required to ensure not missing some essential side shoots.' 3. 'Would need to study it in detail, but it is a great starting point.'
214	Y	Y	F: 'More time in order to cover more depth.'
215	Y	Y	N.
216	Y	Y	N.
217	Y		3: 'Send guide at least 1 week before the meeting.'
218	Y	Y	N.
219	Y	Y	1: [tick] 2: [tick].
220	Y	Y	N.
221	Y	Y	N.
222			N.
223	Y	Y	N.
224			F: 'Unable to look at it properly but feel it may be useful.'
225	Y	Y	R: 'Very impressed with the insight put into this work. Really pleased we came.'
226	Y	Y	1: 'A fascinating introduction with lots of good stuff.' 2: 'Needs careful study to make best use.'
227	Y	Y...	F: '...but not instantly. Just needs a playful comment on the front about taking time to focus before exploring.' 1: 'Very. Particularly like the analogy of the path helpfully emphasising the process aspect of changing a building.' 2: 'A playful note about pausing before entry onto this path – it is like a good walk not instant gratification.'
228	Y	Y	1: 'Covers a lot of aspects and is helpful.' 2: 'Some areas very clear and helpful, but so much information to take in.' 3: 'On my level I could perhaps do with a simplified version.'
229	Y		1: 'In expanding on existing thoughts and ideas.' 3: 'Need more examples of how some churches have already moved on.'

Ref	Q1 Useful	Q2 Clear	Comments
230	Y	Y	F: 'I like its diagrammatic form. It has become clearer after your talk. There is a <u>lot</u> in it.'
231	Y	Y	1: 'Help understand the DAC system.' 2: 'Very clear, easy to understand.' 3: 'No improvement needed.'
232	Y	Y	1: 'I think it is useful but need more time to study.' 2: 'O.K.'
233	Y	N	1: 'The content as embedded in the talk are excellent.' Reference to wider literature and real-world allusions <u>very</u> helpful – could be in booklet. The talk was brilliant!' 2: 'Visually baffling. Fussy.' 3: 'the linkages with themes might better be represented in linear way, though obviously this has been avoided in the interests of engagement.'

The comments column provides a transcription of the feedback; all emphasis is original. Numbers indicate answers to the specific questions on the rear of the form (1: Usefulness; 2: Clarity; 3: Scope for improvement). 'F' indicates comment added to the front of the sheet, generally in answer to the request for suggested improvements. 'R' indicates a general response on rear of sheet. 'N' indicates no comment provided.

'Guide for the perplexed' information sheet

YkD-Guide – information

Change to Historic Church Buildings - Guide for the Perplexed Information Sheet

Why do some parishes sometimes find the process of change to their historic building less than straightforward? This is the focus of some research I am conducting, and I would like to invite you to take part in this project by providing feedback on a document that I have written:

Change to Historic Churches - A Guide for the Perplexed.

Church congregations who try to change their building often find themselves in a strange and perplexing landscape. There is an official 'map', secularist in its commitments, which ignores many of the salient features of the cultural landscape – not least that the importance of a historic church lies in its communal aspects of mission, theology and worship. The aim of this *Guide* is therefore to supply a better map, and to provide churches with a means to situate their historic building in a more recognisable theological/cultural landscape; it is concerned with an approach to heritage 'as if people mattered' (!)

I am keen to gather a broad range of responses to this document from those with experience of historic church buildings. Specifically it would be good to know whether in your view:

- the document is useful?
- the document is clear enough?
- what could be added or taken away to improve it?

My Background: I am a specialist conservation architect, and run Archangel Architects, a practice based near Cambridge that specialises in working with church communities (of various denominations) to better shape their buildings to match their mission. I have written two Grove booklets on the theology of church buildings, and am co-author of *Buildings for Mission* (Canterbury Press, 2015). I am a member of the Church Buildings Council, and am an active member of my local parish church.

The Project: This research project is part of my on-going PhD in Conservation (Historic Buildings) at the University of York; the project has the working title: '*All is Not Loss*' - *Change, Narrative and the Community Ownership of Historic Buildings*. Responses can be in the form of an email, or we could speak by phone at a time to suit you, or we could meet if you prefer.

Permissions: In terms of consent all that I require is a sentence in an email saying that you are willing to take part in this research and are happy with the proposed arrangement. Anything that you expressed in response to the document would not be attributable to you, except with your explicit consent on a quote by quote basis. In terms of outcome, aside from the PhD thesis itself, I am hoping subsequently to publish the results of this research in journal article and/or book form, and to present the results in lectures and seminars.

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I do hope you will feel able to contribute to this research project. If you would like more information please feel free to contact me on 01223 474817 or at either of the email addresses below.

Nigel Walter

nhw502@york.ac.uk

nw@archangelic.com

'Guide for the perplexed' consent sheet and feedback form

'Change to Historic Church Buildings – A Guide for the Perplexed'



Please help improve this document!

The aim of this *Guide* is to help churches better understand their historic building and the process of changing it; it is concerned with an approach to heritage 'as if people mattered'(!)

You can help this project EITHER simply by ticking the boxes below, OR by writing a comment overleaf, OR by sending me an email (nhw502@york.ac.uk).

I want to know what you think of the *Guide* as it stands:

- Is it useful? YES: NO:
- Is it clear enough? YES: NO:
- What could be changed to improve it?

Please sign below to say you are happy for your input to be used.

Consent: I am willing to take part in this research. Any comments I make will not be attributable to me, except with my explicit permission. I understand that you plan to use my response in your PhD research, to publish the research in article and/or book form, and to use the results in lectures & seminars.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

The Project: This research project is part of my on-going PhD in Conservation (Historic Buildings) at the University of York; the project has the working title: *'To Live is to Change': Tradition and a Narrative Approach to the Conservation of Church Buildings as Community-Owned Heritage.*

Nigel Walter

27/01/2017

Comments on the *Guide*:

1. Usefulness _____

2. Clarity _____

3. Scope for Improvement _____

[Postal Address: Nigel Walter, 3 Doctors Close, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9ND]

If you're happy to have any comments attributed to you, please provide your name and (if you wish) an email contact. I guarantee your email address will not be used for any other purpose.

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

Thank you!

27/01/2017

Appendix 7

‘Guide for the perplexed’: visual grammar

From the outset the ‘Guide’ was intended to have a very different feel from the bureaucratic style of professional writing characteristic of conservation documentation. This formality of style, while ubiquitous, is not neutral; again, approaching such literature through discourse analysis reveals how effective style and genre can be in excluding some voices and privileging others, thereby favouring some outcomes over others. In an attempt to encourage wider participation, a deliberately informal style of presentation was always a key aspect of the booklet. Given the importance attributed to the informality of the document, this appendix details how its visual language is intended to complement its broader purpose. Whether this informality has the desired effect is discussed in Sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4.

In contrast to the plenitude of text-heavy documents, it was decided at an early stage to adopt a visually rich style. While the document still contains a good number of words – some 3,400 – the text is broken into one- or two-sentence pieces, with the key items on each page linked by a dotted line with arrows to denote a primary route through the layout. Around this central route are clustered further text boxes linked to it by map pins and string. Longer items of text are broken up into multiple linked boxes and are often accompanied by a resonant headline as a framing device. Each page is then supplemented by at least one image to provide visual interest and illustrate or comment on the central theme. The front cover introduces the document’s structure of seven sections, and provides ‘navigational aids’ by introducing the visual grammar. Strengthening this introduction was one of the major changes made in response to user feedback.

The primary content on each page sits on the main route denoted by the red dashed line; of this, the most important points appear in red text boxes, with subsidiary material in grey text boxes. These text boxes sit entirely over the background, highlighting the main content for the reader. A second level of information is provided in the text boxes with a clear background to each side of this principal route, either expanding on one of the primary text boxes, or introducing related themes. A ‘rubber stamp’ font is used for the introductory headlines, which belong like place names on the background and which are intended to provoke interest; the same font is used for

quotations, which also sit as part of the landscape. Finally, there are two further types of element intended to be read as subsequent additions to the map. Firstly, yellow post-it notes are placed over other features as a third level of information, providing comment on the application of the primary and secondary ideas, or referring to material in the accompanying *Buildings for Mission* (Walter and Mottram 2015). Secondly, there is meandering text in a handwriting font suggestive of ideas encountered on the journey as features of the landscape. The less formal status of these annotations is indicated by their non-orthogonal geometry.

Clarifying the central metaphor has been important. Initially it was felt sufficient simply to describe a landscape in the form of a map. The shift to illustrating a journey *through* that landscape came in response to comments in the development phase, with the dotted line and then the arrows being added at that stage. The metaphor of the process being a long and winding journey or epic quest is explicitly stated in the introductory text on the cover. For the first edition, on which the first consultation was based, each page used a map as a background image to reflect this central concern that historic buildings cannot be understood except by placing them in an appropriate cultural landscape. The medieval Gough Map was chosen as a natural complement to this metaphor.

In the current, second iteration the map backgrounds were dropped from each page in favour of a non-figurative aged paper, preserving the antique feel but removing what several consultees found distracting. It could be said that this replacement of the 'official' map with paper indicates that it will fall to each church community to draw their own map, notwithstanding the substantial features of the established landscape such as the elements of the faculty system that will inevitably be negotiated along the way. The Gough map still appears on the final page as a means of both asserting the latent metaphor and structuring the descriptive blurb.

Appendix 8

September 2017 workshop flyer



 **LISTEN**
Mission Strategy 2021

 **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**
Diocese of Norwich

Transforming your church building for mission

Creatively working with historic buildings

Tuesday 5 September, St Mary's Church, Old Hunstanton and repeated on Monday 25 September, All Saints Church, Filby 10am – 1pm with light refreshments

A half-day training workshop which will provide a route map for how to change your historic building imaginatively and responsibly to better suit the life of your church community, covering both principles and practical application.

Topics covered include:

- Identifying your needs
- Designing the right solution
- Understanding the key relationships
- Navigating the approval process
- Managing the experts
- Telling your parish's story

Led by Nigel Walter
An architect specialising in change to historic churches, member of the Church of England Church Buildings Council, author and lay theologian.

Places are limited; please book early at www.dioceseofnorwich.org/event?id=9492 or 01603 881724



Committed to Growth www.dioceseofnorwich.org

Fig. 14: September 2017 workshop flyer

Appendix 9

CBC report, July 2017

Report from visits to DAC Meetings – 2015-17

Dr David Knight, Senior Church Buildings Officer and Christina Emerson, Church Buildings officer

Summary

DACs meet between 5 and 11 times a year. Meetings usually taking more than an hour, but not many over 3 hours (excluding lunches etc.). Agendas and papers are usually circulated about a week in advance. The papers can be the full details delivered with the online system (or a file sharing website) or an agenda, with some reports and the papers available at the meeting, but not in advance.

Memberships of committees can be little over the statutory membership (12) although some are large. It is becoming more common for advisers not to be full members, practices vary.

There are various practices over sub-committees and/or readers for papers, or a pre-meeting for some members of the DAC to prepare an initial response to business.

Current Practices

Quality of decision making. The DAC is a committee and its decisions are corporate. Ways of managing this vary. It is obviously not necessary for all members to contribute to all the business. DACs that give all members access to documents in advance achieve a better quality of discussion. The practise of one member commenting in detail would therefore be best managed if their views were circulated in advance so they can be discussed at the meeting. Reading out reports rarely precedes the best discussions.

Practise over pre-meetings varies. They are not universal. Used well they support a well-informed discussion. Used less well they can tend to close down discussion when the DAC is effectively told the result of the pre-meeting discussion and expected to concur. This is compounded if the full papers have not been circulated widely.

Too many meetings can hinder the work of the DAC. When a DAC Secretary role is dominated by meeting deadlines opportunity for parish engagement is reduced and there tends to be an over involvement of the DAC in matters that are to do with process. Having time to engage with parishes gives a sense of momentum to the work and produces more decision-ready DAC cases.

This shows that the operation of the DAC will ideally be left to the secretariat. The greater the degree of trust for the secretariat to work with parishes, the greater the efficiency of the operation.

Putting a case on the agenda before the full paperwork is ready rarely (if ever) speeds things up. In our experience such cases are invariably deferred by the committee pending further advice. Getting the balance correct can be tricky in early advice – for a full application there is no excuse for statements, plans and specifications not being available.

Declarations of interest are not handled consistently (despite CBC guidance on the issue). On the whole they are correctly recorded, but the involvement of members with a financial interest during discussion of a scheme is always inappropriate.

Mission and development is widely supported by DACs, and many discussions are properly sympathetic to the needs of the church with very few (if any) examples of DACs carelessly hindering missional development. This is remarkable given the large number of listed buildings involved. Some DACs feel of lack of support dealing with large evangelical churches and an implicit assumption that they will receive less scrutiny because of their mission importance.

DACs are good at supporting principles of schemes but the management of details is often the area where discussions become unfocused or skewed to a particular area. Details are often what will make or break a scheme and are important. It is necessary for the DAC to pursue them (and the equivalent secular system would do so too). Details need to be pursued in a way that enable the parish to understand the benefit of them being provided. Technical advisers are most prone to eclipsing the needs of the parish and asking for details without it being clear how the request will assist the parish.

Conservation casework is the area that is least confidently managed, sometimes even when specialist advisers are available. There is a definite over-reliance on knowledge about who the conservator is rather than what is proposed. In some dioceses the link between quality of advice from the DAC and the quality of proposals from conservators is marked – although only a very few raise serious concerns.

Although the technical content of some conservation proposals will be expressed in specialist technical language it is reasonable for them to be expressed so that an intelligent reader will get a good grasp of what is proposed, why it is necessary and how it will be done.

Staff support. Line management of the DAC Secretary does not always appear to provide effective support day to day or inspiration for training and development during the course of employment. Experience of giving feedback after DAC meetings has (too often) reflected that the DAC secretariat can see potential for improvement but are reluctant to introduce the necessary changes. When this is the case the reason is invariably given as lack of someone in the diocese of discuss it with. Even if this is more perceived than true, it is not satisfactory.

Adequate resourcing and training of DAC staff to deal confidently with preparatory matters will give a greater sense to the parish of DAC assistance, rather than needing to wait for a meeting at each turn. The initiative between the CBC and IHBC has started to provide a route to additional training.

When a DAC Chair is closely involved in all casework from an early stage, the DAC Secretary can too quickly become an administrator. Even when this works it will set up expectations for the future that a new Chair may not fulfil and it does not help DAC staff to develop the skills to respond quickly to enquiries from parishes.

Membership - there is no limit on the number of 6-year terms a member can serve. Although Archdeacon and clergy members change, many other members serve for multiple terms, some as long as 40 years. Expectations of inclusion and gender balance have changed over that time. There are some male-dominated committees with little expectation that anyone will join them, as a result of routinely reappointing the existing members. Advertising for new members is not common, although the limited experience of this in some diocese has been successful (usually using the diocesan newspaper and website). BAME representation on DACs is almost exclusively left to clergy members.

When **advisers** are not full members it is good to keep them aware of DAC business so they are aware of the context in which advice is given.

Recommendations/Summary of good practice

- The DAC Secretariat should take responsibility for management of applications for DAC advice and preparing them for the agenda. The DAC is for advice on the merits of proposals, not over process.
- Meetings should not be so frequent as to totally dominate the DAC Secretary role.
- All members should receive sufficient information in advance of the meeting to understand each case, take an informed view and contribute to the discussion.
- When a member is nominated to look at a case in detail, whether a specialist adviser or a nominated member, their report should be circulated in advance so it can be discussed at the meeting.
- There is considerable scope for the CBC (working with the HRBA) to support dioceses recruiting new DAC members. This is particularly acute for members with conservation knowledge and experience.
- When a case is ready for committee discussion DACs should try to gather requests for further details into one document and control members adding new ones at subsequent meetings.
- DACs (and their secretariat) should be confident to ask for conservation proposals to be expressed so that an intelligent reader will understand the intention of the proposal. This should be possible even when the proposed methodology is complex.
- The Diocese, as employer, should provide professional development for its staff and effective line-management.
- Specialist advisers should receive all meeting papers and be encouraged to attend meetings with directly relevant content.

July 2017

Appendix 10 & 11

10: Case study documentation

11: Case study interview transcripts

The attached CD-ROM contains digital material for the above appendices.

Glossary and Abbreviations

AHD – Authorised Heritage Discourse, a term coined by Laurajane Smith (2006).

AHRC – Arts and Humanities Research Council.

AMAAA – Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

AMS – Ancient Monuments Society.

Anglican – (for the purposes of this thesis) Church of England

Archdeacon – Senior clergy with administrative responsibility for part of a diocese, including clergy welfare and church buildings; ex-officio member of the DAC.

ASCHB – Association for Studies in the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

Benefice – generally used of a group of parishes, usually under one stipendiary (paid) minister, but can refer to a single parish.

BPF – British Property Federation.

CBC – Church Buildings Council, a statutory body of the Church of England accountable to the General Synod; its role includes casework, advising chancellors, dioceses and parishes on faculty applications; distributing grants for the conservation of church fabric and fittings; producing guidance on subjects relating to the care and use of church buildings, their contents and churchyards; and advising dioceses and the Church Commissioners on proposals for closing or closed churches (CCBD 2017c).

CCBD – Cathedral and Church Buildings Division of the Church of England: this body provides the secretariat for the CBC, the Council's Statutory Advisory Committee on Closed and Closing Churches and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, describing itself as supporting 'the conservation and development of the Church of England's cathedral and church buildings for worship, mission and community engagement' (CCBD 2017b).

CCT – Churches Conservation Trust: established in 1969 as the Redundant Churches Fund to receive the more important closed Anglican churches, and currently caring for some 350 buildings.

CBA – Council for British Archaeology.

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis.

Chancellor – each diocese has a chancellor who presides over the Consistory Court of that diocese, dealing with disciplinary matters and issues relating to church buildings and their contents. Chancellors are usually judges or barristers. The Diocese of Canterbury uses the terms ‘Commissary General’ and ‘Commissary Court’; all other dioceses use ‘Chancellor’ and ‘Consistory Court’ respectively.

CHS – Critical Heritage Studies.

Church Commissioners – the statutory body responsible for managing an investment fund for the Church of England, including historic property assets.

Churchwarden – one of (usually) two principal lay officers of a Church of England parish.

CIAM – International Congresses of Modern Architecture, founded in 1928 by Le Corbusier, Siegfried Giedion and others.

CMP – Conservation Management Plan.

CofE – Church of England

Consistory Court – the ecclesiastical court of each diocese of the Church of England, presided over by the chancellor of the diocese. The Diocese of Canterbury uses the term ‘Commissary Court’.

Court of Arches – the court of appeal in the Province of Canterbury; in the Province of York the equivalent is the Chancery Court.

DAC – the Diocesan Advisory Committee is a statutory body within each diocese which advises parishes, archdeacons, the diocesan chancellor and the bishop on the care and use of church buildings; its functions are described in Schedule 2 of the 1991 Measure. The DAC considers faculty applications and advises the chancellor with one of three responses: ‘Recommended’, ‘No objection’ or ‘Not recommended’.

DAC Secretary – manages communications between parishes and the DAC. The role differs widely between dioceses, with some being more administrative and others working more proactively.

Deanery – group of parishes presided over by a rural or area dean.

Diocesan Secretary – the strategic and policy role of senior executive officer in the diocese, advising the diocesan (principal) bishop.

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government.

DCMS – Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.

DN – Diocese of Norwich.

EASA – Ecclesiastical Architects' and Surveyors' Association.

Ecc LJ – Ecclesiastical Law Journal.

EDP – Empowering Design Practices (project).

Faculty – the permission required to make changes to a church building (and for other purposes). The legislation on faculties for church buildings is set out in the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991; the specific process is described in the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015.

FJR – Faculty Jurisdiction Rules, latest revision 2015, are a statutory instrument (subordinate legislation) which carries into effect the primary legislation of the 1991 Measure.

HE – Historic England; part of English Heritage until its demerger in April 2015.

HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund.

ICCROM – International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property.

ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites.

IHBC – Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

INTACH – Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage.

Laity – lay people, as distinguished from the clergy; from the Greek *laikos*, meaning 'of the people'.

Measure – primary legislation of the Church of England given Final Approval by the General Synod, passed through both Houses of Parliament and given Royal Assent; the ecclesiastical equivalent of an Act of Parliament.

National Amenity Societies – six bodies that play an active role in commenting on faculty applications. The list is defined in the 1991 Measure as the Ancient Monuments Society, the Council for British Archaeology, the Georgian Group, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Victorian Society; the Twentieth Century Society, created subsequent to the Measure, has been added to this list.

NMS – National Museum of Scotland.

NPPF – *National Planning Policy Framework*.

OED – *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Oxford Movement – also known as the Tractarians; led by John Henry Newman, John Keble, Edward Pusey and others, they argued for the inclusion into Anglicanism of some older Christian traditions of faith, and for closer ties with the Roman Catholic Church; led to the development of Anglo-Catholicism. It published its ideas as *Tracts for the Times* (1833–1841), from which its alternative name derives.

PCC – Parochial Church Council, the executive committee of a Church of England parish comprising clergy, churchwardens and others from the church.

PPS5 – *Planning Policy Statement 5: planning for the historic environment*, published by the DCLG (2010), and superseded in 2012 with the publication of the NPPF.

Reader – A lay reader is a person who is not ordained but is authorised by the bishop to lead many types of service; also known as a licensed lay minister (LLM).

Registrar – a solicitor who, along with the chancellor, is one of two legal officers appointed by each diocese in the Church of England.

RIBA – Royal Institute of British Architects.

RICS – Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

SMIF – Church of St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London.

SPAB – Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Synod – deliberative and legislative bodies of the Church of England at national, diocesan and deanery levels; the General Synod considers and approves legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England.

Tractarian Movement – see Oxford Movement.

Treasure Trove – valuables of unknown ownership that are discovered hidden and declared the property of the Crown; Treasure Trove was abolished in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales by the Treasure Act 1996, but remains in Scottish law.

VS – Victorian Society.

WHS – Wymondham Heritage Society.

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The following are the supporting documents referred to in the description of the case study projects. Most were accessed at the Diocese of Norwich offices, and all are included in Appendix 10 on the CD-ROM of additional material.

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- App10.A02 PCC brochure November 2010
- App10.A03 Client letter dated 23/11/2010
- App10.A04 HE letter dated 01/12/2010
- App10.A05 SPAB letter dated 21/03/2011
- App10.A06 VS email dated 24/02/2012
- App10.A07 CBC letter dated 28/02/2012
- App10.A08 CBC email dated 29/02/2012
- App10.A09 Client outcomes matrix dated 29/02/2012
- App10.A10 DAC letter dated 03/03/2012
- App10.A11 DAC notes dated 20/03/2012
- App10.A12 Client notes dated 10/05/2012
- App10.A13 DAC letter dated 03/07/2012
- App10.A14 Client commentary early 2013
- App10.A15 Client nave screen report early 2013
- App10.A16 Statement of need early 2013
- App10.A17 Statement of significance early 2013

B.Church of St Laurence, Brundall

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- App10.B03 Statement of significance dated February 2008
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App10.C04 Statement of need dated 22/02/2010

App10.C05 Client letter dated 12/04/2010

App10.C06 HE email dated 22/04/2010

App10.C07 DAC site visit report dated 23/04/2010

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App10.D01 Statement of needs from 2013

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App10.D03 DAC site visit report dated 02/10/2014

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App10.D05 SPAB email dated 28/11/2014

E.Wymondham Abbey

App10.E01 HE letter dated 10/03/2009

App10.E02 SPAB letter dated 14/04/2009

App10.E03 CBC letter dated 24/01/2012

App10.E04 Statement of need dated 22/10/2012

App10.E05 Archaeological assessment and mitigation strategy dated 30/10/2012

App10.E06 CMP excerpt – site chronology dated 14/11/12

App10.E07 AMS comments dated 09/12/2012

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- App10.E09 Town Council consultation reply dated 19/12/2012
- App10.E10 WHSEG email dated 19/12/12
- App10.E11 SPAB letter dated 03/01/2013
- App10.E12 DAC meeting minutes 09/01/2013
- App10.E13 HE letter dated 11/01/2013
- App10.E14 Conservation officer email dated 21/01/2013
- App10.E15 Planning approval dated 27/02/2013
- App10.E16 DAC letter 11/04/2013
- App10.E17 Chancellor's judgment dated 26/07/2013

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