Architecture and Politics in the Palace of Westminster, 1399 to the Present

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On 27 April 1940 an editorial column in *The Times* reflected on the passage of a hundred years since Sarah Barry, wife of the architect Sir Charles, had laid the foundation stone of the new palace of Westminster. For what would turn out to be such a momentous building, the event had been surprisingly low-key. No royal or parliamentary dignitaries were in attendance, nor was any inscription carved to mark the occasion. A century later, no-one seemed to know where the foundation stone could be found. Following the ‘almost surreptitious ceremony’, Barry had returned to multiple controversies surrounding the fitting out of the two houses of parliament, the payment of his salary and the cracking of the bell affectionately known as Big Ben. And yet a building which had begun in unceremonious wrangling was now, in 1940, ‘one of the best liked and most distinctive in the world’. More than that, to many people, ‘it has come to symbolize the democratic system of government to which it was dedicated and which we are fighting to maintain’. The long, disheartening, but ultimately triumphant struggle of Charles Barry, suggested the *Times* leader writer, might be taken as a good omen for the difficult days ahead.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Those who heeded the advice of *The Times* would all too soon have experienced a different kind of omen. Bombing raids in September and December of that year damaged the Commons lobby and St Stephen’s Cloister and left a huge crater in Old Palace Yard. Worse was to follow during the weekend of 10-11 May 1941, when an incendiary attack ignited an inferno within the Commons chamber itself.[[2]](#endnote-2) But here too, there was powerful and positive symbolism to be found. The survival of the Speaker’s Bible amidst the furnace of the Commons took on an almost mystical significance, while a bomb embedded in the Lords had somehow failed to detonate. Photographs of Prime Minister Winston Churchill inspecting the ruined chamber strengthened the sense that (to quote the title of an influential GPO Film Unit documentary) ‘London can take it’. Big Ben continued to chime. An identification between the architecture of parliament and the ‘British values’ that it represents is perhaps not so surprising during the height of the Blitz. In fact, the association between Westminster and resistance to assaults on democracy continues to develop new forms of expression, whether in the reconstruction of the Jubilee Room following an IRA bomb in 1974, the unveiling of a plaque in the Commons chamber to Jo Cox MP, or the flowers gathering along the railings where PC Keith Palmer lost his life in 2017 while protecting parliament from attack.[[3]](#endnote-3)

The palace of Westminster is habitually spoken of in superlatives: a masterpiece of Victorian engineering and ‘the greatest building programme in Britain since the Middle Ages’; as instantly recognizable as the Great Pyramid, the Taj Mahal or the Eiffel Tower; its clock tower designed by A.W.N. Pugin ‘one of the most famous landmarks in the world… the crowning glory of the Palace’.[[4]](#endnote-4) These are descriptions of the houses of parliament as reconstructed following the devastating fire of 1834, but an awareness of the building’s deeper history underpins the connection that is often made between parliament as a place and as a representative ideal. The fact that the House of Commons occupied, and came of age in, the converted medieval royal chapel of St Stephen was not forgotten at Westminster, where the lower house was referred to as St Stephen’s well into the 19th century.[[5]](#endnote-5) An older palace of Westminster still endures within the carcase of the building constructed by Barry and Pugin, magnificently on show in Westminster Hall but surviving too in less publically visible spaces: the rededicated chapel of St Mary Undercroft (once the lower chapel of St Stephen’s), and the two ranges of Henry VIII’s cloister that escaped the incendiary attack of 1941.

Less tangible, but every bit as important, as the physical survivals of the pre-1834 palace of Westminster are the customs and procedures bequeathed by that older building. Parliaments had assembled at Westminster (both the palace and the abbey) since the term had been coined in 1236. Medieval peers and commons gathered in spaces decorated to vaunt the splendour of English monarchy: the Painted Chamber for state openings, the Queen’s or Parliament Chamber where the Lords debated, and the chapter house of Westminster abbey (the Commons’ meeting-place during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II) with its tiles depicting the arms of Henry III.[[6]](#endnote-6) In 1548 the Commons acquired a permanent foothold within the royal palace, when St Stephen’s Chapel was converted for their exclusive use; MPs transacted their business in the presence of medieval heraldry and the royal arms over the Speaker’s chair.[[7]](#endnote-7)

The notion that parliament assembled on royal ground persisted, and has still not entirely gone away. In 1841 Prime Minister Robert Peel, speaking in the temporary House of Commons, affirmed that ‘the new building, when completed, would comprise a part of her Majesty’s ancient palace of Westminster’.[[8]](#endnote-8) The appearance of continuity in parliamentary ceremony can be striking, as indeed (we might argue) is the intention of those charged with maintaining it. To a Tudor historian, television footage of Queen Elizabeth II at a state opening – crowned, making her speech from a throne to the seated Lords and standing Commons – irresistibly recalls depictions of her predecessor Elizabeth I in parliament. The precise relationship between the present and the past, however, demands to be interrogated. In what ways has the palace of Westminster shaped the practice and the presentation of the British parliament? What has been inherited, and what imagined or invented? Can we say with confidence, as one recent political science study has it, that the ceremonies of the House of Commons ‘are ancient and not much changed’?[[9]](#endnote-9) The architectural framework within which parliamentary ritual takes place has actually altered a good deal since the 16th century, while the social context has shifted beyond recognition. If the succession of history can sometimes be difficult to measure, however, there is no doubting the importance of the perceived link with the past.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Investigating the interplay between architecture and politics in the British parliament over the *longue durée* invites a multi-disciplinary approach. Since 2012 the University of York has hosted a series of linked research projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust, assembling a team of historians and art historians, archaeologists and experts in digital modelling and acoustics to trace the visual and political culture of key spaces within the palace of Westminster since the 13th century. Manuscript archival research has combined with the study of textual and visual sources, and analysis of surviving architecture and material culture, to inform the digital reconstruction of St Stephen’s Chapel as a place of worship and subsequently as the House of Commons. Acoustic mapping of the pre-1834 chamber and the ventilator space above the ceiling where women listened to Commons debates has enabled new strata of political experiences to be explored.[[11]](#endnote-11)

Bringing these projects into dialogue with complementary research focusing on Westminster and parliament – including recent investigations of the art and archaeology of the medieval palace, political science research on gendered ceremony and ritual in parliament, and the continuing endeavours of the History of Parliament Trust – enables the following four themes to be categorised.[[12]](#endnote-12) The ensuing discussion should be understood within the context of major trajectories of change in the parliamentary environment since the later medieval period including the growth in the power of the Commons vis-à-vis the Lords, the broadening of the franchise to include women and previously unrepresented groups of men, the dwindling prerogative of the crown, and the growth of antiquarian and artistic interest in Westminster as an historic site.[[13]](#endnote-13)

*Architecture and Political Culture in the Commons and the Lords*

Buildings are configured as spaces for particular social purposes, but can also define the actions and interactions which occur within them.[[14]](#endnote-14) The old palace of Westminster acquired its function as a legislative and debating space by virtue of its role as a royal residence and seat of power in the capital. The law courts in Westminster Hall, the revenue-gathering machinery of the Exchequer and the validation supplied by the assembly of parliament were all part of the dominion exercised by the medieval crown, concentrated in a complex of buildings which also proclaimed the spiritual status of English monarchy in St Stephen’s Chapel and Westminster Abbey. The fact that parliament met in royal space, very evidently in the medieval and Tudor periods but also into modern times, needs to be factored into our understanding of the institution and its members.[[15]](#endnote-15) In fact the post-1834 palace took every opportunity to refer – even to defer – to the splendour of monarchy. The Sovereign’s Entrance created by Barry at the base of Victoria Tower dwarfed the former Royal Entrance designed by Sir John Soane. Tudor roses designed by Pugin accentuated the ‘Gothic or Elizabethan’ style which had been specified for the building by the select committee of 1835.[[16]](#endnote-16) Architectural and art historians have noted the didactic quality of the new palace of Westminster: in the vision of Charles Barry ‘a sculptured memorial of our national history’, richly furnished with statues of kings and queens, royal coats of arms and heraldic glass and tiles.[[17]](#endnote-17) David Cannadine has dated the modern revival of British royal ritual and ‘invented, ceremonial splendour’ to the 1870s and 80s.[[18]](#endnote-18) If this chronology is correct, then the Westminster backdrop for that re-staging of monarchy had already been manufactured half a century earlier.[[19]](#endnote-19)

The value of bringing the history of parliament into more sustained conversation with architectural and art history is clearly demonstrated by the case of the Painted Chamber. Situated within the medieval privy palace and used for the ceremonial coming together of king, Lords and Commons for the opening of parliament, this former royal bedchamber was covered with murals depicting St Edward the Confessor, paired secular and sacred virtues, and Old Testament scenes relevant to the practice of kingship. As argued by Jennifer Caddick, these images functioned not simply as a demonstration of royal power but also as potent reminder of the qualities expected in a good king, thus enabling parliamentary dialogue to take place. Sermons drew on the murals for emphasis, for instance the 1427 opening address on the mutual obligations of rulers and subjects based on 2 Maccabees.[[20]](#endnote-20) A similar argument has been made for the royal iconography in the early modern House of Commons, the crowned mace carried by the serjeant at arms in procession and the royal arms above the Speaker’s chair acting to legitimate loyal criticism of crown policy and thus allowing parliament to do its work.[[21]](#endnote-21)

One of the most intriguing, and elusive, aspects of the relationship between architecture and politics in the British parliament relates to the first dedicated House of Commons chamber. Edward VI’s reassignment of the recently-dissolved St Stephen’s Chapel to the use of the citizens, burgesses and knights who made up the lower house was probably practical rather than ideological in origin: a solution to the problem of where to accommodate the Commons now that the abbey refectory had been demolished, and what to do with a redundant place of Catholic worship adjoining Westminster Hall. Whatever its reasoning, the decision had political consequences that were profound and long-lasting. Between 1548 and 1834, the Commons assembled in a converted royal chapel: overpopulated and overheated (notwithstanding a series of ingenious and bizarre experiments in improving ventilation from 1701) but at the same time more the members’ own space than previous meeting-places of the Commons had been, and strategically sited at the juncture between the public and privy apartments of the palace of Westminster. In the words of Chris Bryant, the Commons chamber had acquired ‘a personality of its own’.[[22]](#endnote-22) Following the fire of 1834, the burnt-out shell of St Stephen’s was pulled down to make way for St Stephen’s Hall in the new palace of Westminster.[[23]](#endnote-23) But if Barry’s House of Commons occupied a different footprint from the former chamber, it also recalled the lost chapel in its shape, its layout and its Gothic style; another link in the chain between past and present at Westminster.

Two of the features which, for better and worse, have come to define the practice of the British parliament are oppositional debate and voting by division; both were shaped by the inherited architecture of the first House of Commons chamber. The temptation might be simply to attribute these twin developments to the move into St Stephen’s Chapel, but the reality is somewhat more complex. The custom of voting by division dates back at least to the 1523 parliament meeting at Bridewell palace and Blackfriars as described by the chronicler Edward Hall.[[24]](#endnote-24) Whether a recent innovation or older in origin, the practice assumed new meaning after 1548 when St Stephen’s Chapel and antechapel were converted to become the Commons chamber and the lobby respectively. As argued by the St Stephen’s Chapel research project, it seems likely that the 14th-century timber pulpitum was adapted to demarcate the limits of the chamber.[[25]](#endnote-25) The spatial influence of the former chapel is clear in the description of voting by division supplied by the Elizabethan MP John Hooker: members affirming a bill filed into the lobby before being numbered by tellers ‘one by one’ on their return to the chamber.[[26]](#endnote-26) When the palace of Westminster was replaced following the fire of 1834, separate division lobbies for both the Commons (‘aye’ and ‘no’) and the Lords (‘content’ and ‘not content’) were included within the specification.[[27]](#endnote-27) The reconstruction of the Commons chamber in 1948-50 gave Giles Gilbert Scott the opportunity to widen the lobbies, once again perpetuating the ancient custom of voting by division.[[28]](#endnote-28)

As for oppositional debate and the characteristically British party system, the early practice was for privy councillors to sit on both sides of the chamber close to the Speaker rather than as a single group of government front-benchers.[[29]](#endnote-29) Moreover, the Commons inhabited St Stephen’s for two centuries before a recognisable version of the modern party structure emerged. John Neale may thus have been too eager to see the Elizabethan House of Commons as the direct ancestor of the modern elected legislature.[[30]](#endnote-30) Nevertheless that perception of continuity with the past, and specifically the sense of connection between the architecture of the Commons and the political culture that it has fostered, has been a vital factor in shaping the modern British parliament. In January 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill welcomed a report of the Select Committee on the rebuilding of the Commons which he had effectively instructed two years earlier to privilege continuity over innovation. The fact that the replacement chamber would once again lack the capacity to seat all its members was an asset to democracy, preserving ‘that freedom and that sense of urgency and excitement to which our Parliamentary proceedings have owed a great deal in the past’. Churchill’s reasoning was explicit, both in its appeal to history and its model of politics. Post-war Britain needed to return to the ‘heavy party fighting’ which an oblong chamber encouraged and a semi-circle would hinder. Using language reminiscent of the 18th century Age of Party, Churchill looked forward to a future ‘when the House will be torn with fury and faction and full vent will be given to the greatest passions’. The archway between the lobby and the chamber, which had taken on ‘an appearance of antiquity’ thanks to the ferocity of the 1941 fire, should be preserved as a monument to the ordeal that the palace had survived.[[31]](#endnote-31) On this too, Churchill got his way: the scorched stonework remains a poignant stopping-point on tours of parliament to this day.

*Access and Space in Westminster*

Accessing parliamentary space has been a key element in campaigns to achieve full, fair and equal representation over the past six centuries. This has usually been defined in terms of having the legal ability to stand for parliament, thereby giving rights of access as duly elected representatives. The long campaign for Catholic Emancipation before 1829 and the protracted struggle to achieve female enfranchisement before 1928 provide ready evidence of this trend.[[32]](#endnote-32) However, running alongside this technical definition of legal access have been a series of (sometimes informal) endeavours to make parliament more accessible in other ways: as a space which, though technically under royal control was not circumscribed by it; as a space which was open and accountable to external scrutiny through reporting its proceedings in newspapers and broadcast media, hence Barry’s provision of a gallery for reporters and the incorporation of microphones in the seats in the 1950 chamber; or, most significantly of all, as a space which women could freely enter and observe on equal terms with men. As highlighted by the ‘Voice and Vote’ exhibition in Westminster Hall in 2018, the last of these remains an active political agenda.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Lacking anything akin to modern notions of representation, medieval and Tudor parliaments did not conceptualise access in terms of social class or gender. Within and around the palace of Westminster, however, access was plainly an active political issue. The Painted Chamber where parliaments opened remained royal space, with admission granted or denied by the king. Patterns of movement within the pre-modern palace are difficult to locate in the records, but certain moments can be reconstructed. In 1341, Archbishop of Canterbury John Stratford, currently out of favour with Edward III, was stopped at the north door of Westminster Hall by officers of the king’s household and made to answer charges in the adjacent Exchequer building. He was then allowed to proceed across the Hall, up the steps and past the entrance to the upper chapel of St Stephen, into the Lesser Hall where he was halted once more by serjeants at arms at the door to the Painted Chamber.[[34]](#endnote-34)

For an opening of parliament, the Commons (having assembled in Westminster Hall) were temporarily allowed to move between the open and privy spaces of the palace in order to reach the bar of the Painted Chamber. But their lesser social status than the Lords was signalled by their exclusion from the accompanying mass – or procession and sermon, following the Reformation – at the abbey.[[35]](#endnote-35) Some other patterns of movement within the palace can be traced. MPs heading for the Commons chamber generally made use of the stone staircase up to the west door of the former upper chapel, although those wanting to avoid the petitioners congregating by the steps could approach the house via the court of requests; other access routes may have existed.[[36]](#endnote-36) Elizabethan conferences between the lower and the upper house took place on the latter’s terms, with MPs made to stand in the outer part of the Parliament Chamber until the Lords were ready to treat with them.[[37]](#endnote-37) Another factor in the movement of MPs around the palace was the arrival of Robert Cotton’s library of manuscripts in the 1620s, housed in a building previously owned by the clerk of the parliaments. Cotton House, as it was renamed, was situated between the former St Stephen’s Chapel and the Painted Chamber. Its collection of parliament rolls, copies of Magna Carta, treatises and legal records became a valuable resource for MPs. A covered gallery was constructed opposite the courtyard, for ease of access between the Commons and the Lords.[[38]](#endnote-38)

Chris Kyle and Jason Peacey have drawn attention to the public accessibility of the palace of Westminster in the early modern period: the lobbyists and petitioners, lawyers and their clients, traders and sightseers who thronged Westminster Hall and the Commons lobby and the courts of law which shared the site.[[39]](#endnote-39) Taverns and ale-houses – Heaven and Hell, Purgatory and Paradise – catered for the crowd. The fact that Guy Fawkes and his accomplices were able to rent space within the palace and stack nearly a ton of gunpowder in readiness for the opening of the 1605 parliament, apparently without generating suspicion, illustrates the point.[[40]](#endnote-40) Though often passed over in historical accounts, these Westminster crowds included numerous women. The Gunpowder plotters’ chance came when a coal-merchant named Ellen Bright vacated her premises located underneath the Lords’ chamber.[[41]](#endnote-41) Female booksellers and stationers traded in Westminster Hall in the 1640s and 50s.[[42]](#endnote-42) Other women in early modern Westminster included the wives of MPs and peers, residents of the private dwellings within the palace, domestic staff and elite visitors to parliament. Women may have been denied the vote, but it does not follow that they had no access to Westminster politics. In 1649, several hundred women demanded that parliament release the leaders of the Leveller movement. Four years later, the religious controversialist and haberdasher Katherine Chidley ‘boldly knocked on the door’ of the Commons to present a petition of more than 6,000 female signatures in support of John Lilburne. Rebuffed by an MP arguing that ‘they being women and many of them wives, so that the Law tooke no notice of them’, they smartly replied that some of them were not wives, and those who were had husbands with swords to defend the liberties of the people.[[43]](#endnote-43)

Historical research on women’s access to parliament gathers pace, although there is work still to do. As Sarah Richardson points out, the suffrage movement of the early 20th century has tended to obscure the longer history of women’s presence at Westminster.[[44]](#endnote-44) Elite women had traditionally been able to listen to debates in the Lords, from behind curtains either side of the throne and later from a gallery designed by Soane as part of his refurbishment of the palace in the 1820s; admission to the house itself had to wait until 1958 (under the Life Peerage Act) and 1963 (for hereditary women peers). Female access to the Commons was more contested. An attempt by the Speaker in 1778 to eject women from the public galleries was subverted by the Duchess of Gordon and others who continued to attend dressed as men. By 1818 it was possible for well-connected women to watch debates through a ventilator in the Commons ceiling, where the 14th-century stonework of the former upper chapel contrasted with the wainscoted chamber below. Variously likened to a chimney, a shed and a sentry-box, the ventilator panels had apertures through which the front benches, mace and clerks could be seen. Access was regulated by social status and gender: tickets were issued to MPs by the serjeant at arms, while green baize benches hinted at a semi-official space. One observer referred to her fellow watchers as ‘dowagers and damsels’. But women also played a role in managing the ventilator space, particularly the Speaker’s wife who took precedence when she was present.[[45]](#endnote-45) As a means for women to access and comment on parliamentary politics, the ventilator set a precedent that could not be denied. A compartment was provided for women to observe the temporary House of Commons constructed after the 1834 fire, while the replacement chamber opened in 1852 included a Ladies’ Gallery: another way in which the old palace of Westminster influenced the new.

*Acoustics and Performance*

A criticism soon levelled against the Ladies’ Gallery in the new House of Commons was its poor acoustic by comparison with the former ventilator space. According to Lady Shelley’s account in 1818, the ventilator had funnelled the sound of debate ‘so perfectly that, with attention, not a word is lost’. But now lattice-work grilles screened female observers from the MPs below, reminiscent (so one critic claimed) of the custom of purdah in Muslim households; ‘something between a bird-cage and a tea-caddy’ was another verdict.[[46]](#endnote-46) Since the Ladies’ Gallery was not considered to be part of the House of Commons, the rule of silence applied to the men-only Strangers’ Gallery was not enforced. Conversation among the listening women implies political engagement, but could also make it difficult to hear what was being said in the chamber. Not every woman spoke in criticism of the Ladies’ Gallery: the correspondent of the *Lady* wrote that ‘we can hear all the good speeches’, and when members chose to mumble to themselves ‘I daresay, we don’t lose much’.[[47]](#endnote-47) Women clearly made the best of the space, remaining in place when the Strangers’ Gallery was cleared and able to dress and behave as they wished away from the male gaze. But the grille obstructed sight as well as sound, and to many it became a potent symbol of women’s exclusion from politics. On 29 October 1908, Muriel Matters and Helen Fox padlocked themselves to the metalwork with the cry ‘We have been behind this grille too long!’, a protest which Nirmal Puwar characterises as ‘an auditory and bodily arrangement of political “noise” as an affront to what was sayable in the soundscape (inside and outside) of legitimate political space’.[[48]](#endnote-48) The grille was finally removed in 1917, as the Representation of the People Act was making its way through the Commons.[[49]](#endnote-49)

Disruptive noise and debate have long gone together at Westminster. The jeering, theatrical coughing and animal noises detailed in Paul Seaward’s account of the pre-1834 House of Commons were a familiar feature of the parliamentary soundscape.[[50]](#endnote-50) One of our earliest references to the Commons meeting in St Stephen’s Chapel described the space as ‘made like a Theater’.[[51]](#endnote-51) John Hooker may have been thinking of a stage for academic disputations rather than the playhouses soon to appear along the South Bank, but his description captures the performative element of politics all the same.[[52]](#endnote-52) Noisy commentary was a feature of the early modern Commons chamber, just as it was in the theatre. Speakers were cheered, chaffed and heckled according to the popularity of their topic and the skilfulness of their speech. Elizabethan sources make repeated reference to ‘murmur’ as a signifier of discontent, frequently accompanied by coughing, throat-clearing and mocking laughter.[[53]](#endnote-53) A quick-witted orator could sometimes turn this around: when a speech by London recorder William Fleetwood met with unwelcome laughter, he reduced the house to silence with a memory of a ghastly execution witnessed as a boy.[[54]](#endnote-54) Noise (and silence) had a particular role to play in the acclamation of a new Speaker, for instance in 1597 when MPs ‘hawked and spat’ at the announcement of an unpopular choice.[[55]](#endnote-55) As Jason Peacey reminds us, gesture was another means to affirm or to intimidate in the Commons chamber – the pointed finger, the calculatedly wry smile, even the act of fidgeting – albeit more of a challenge to recover from the records.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Reconstructing the soundscapes of the pre-20th century British parliament is no easy task. The problem is not so much evidential (parliamentarians and their audiences did comment on the audibility of debates) as interpretative. Sound and hearing are subjective and personal. Anyone who has experienced an academic conference, a church sermon or a public speech will understand that what is said, and what is heard, are not always the same to all people. As research conducted by the University of York has established, positioning within a space can significantly affect the experience of listening and hearing. Working from a specially-constructed digital model of the 18th century House of Commons, Catriona Cooper has demonstrated that some seats in the chamber would have been able to hear speeches more clearly than others. Furthermore, the positions in the Commons that were the most politically and socially prominent (notably the Speaker’s chair and the front benches) were not necessarily those with the best listening experience. Her work reveals that, if you wanted to hear what was being said in the old House of Commons, it could sometimes pay to be a backbencher.[[57]](#endnote-57)

As Catriona Cooper makes clear, the use of technology is not a scientific substitute for historical research. Digital reconstructions are models, to be assessed and critiqued. Taken in tandem, however, archival work and digital modelling can help to make sense of differing perceptions of the soundscape of the old House of Commons, from John Wilson Croker and Philip Howard (opponents of any change to the chamber, which they described in 1833 as having good acoustics) to Colonel Frederick Trench and Benjamin Wyatt (supporters of an enlarged chamber, and suspicious that the ventilator was drawing sound away from the ears of members). In fact, there is evidence to suggest that the listening experience of women in the ventilator space was superior to at least some of the men in the chamber below, which would also account for the dismay with which the Ladies’ Gallery was later viewed.[[58]](#endnote-58) This is how the replica ventilator was presented to the public at the 2018 ‘Voice and Vote’ exhibition in Westminster Hall, using the sound of historic debates recorded in the current Commons chamber and then digitally engineered to reproduce the effect of listening through the ventilator in the 1820s and 30s.[[59]](#endnote-59)

The politics of sound carried from the old to the new palace of Westminster, by way of the temporary post-fire accommodation which the Commons had been enjoying in the Lesser Hall. MPs disliked the first iteration of their replacement chamber and voted with their feet, blaming the high roof for swallowing their voices; Barry was made to lower the ceiling.[[60]](#endnote-60) The question of sound resurfaced a hundred years later when the Commons considered how to replace the chamber destroyed in the bombing of 1941. Once again their debate was inflected by the experience of meeting in temporary housing, this time in Church House (referred to as the ‘annexe’) and afterwards in the House of Lords. A few voices were raised, including Nancy Astor’s, in favour of an imaginative or even radical re-thinking of the shape of the Commons. But it was Churchill’s that prevailed: the British way of politics was conversational and confrontational, and the new chamber should reproduce the old.[[61]](#endnote-61)

*Ceremony, Ritual and Space*

For Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding Westminster is ‘the pre-eminent “theatre of state”’, a stage for national history since the 11th century.[[62]](#endnote-62) The theatricality of the British Parliament provokes many reactions, ranging from affectionate and patriotic appreciation of the deep history of the palace of Westminster, through guarded acceptance of the value of dignified surroundings and ceremony in spite of its anachronism in the modern world, to outright opposition and even derision. That the national politics of the United Kingdom is conducted in a 20th-century makeover of a Victorian building which was itself a re-imagination of a lost medieval royal palace, is a fact which will undoubtedly be thrown into relief by the ‘restoration and renewal’ programme at Westminster over the coming years.[[63]](#endnote-63)

However they are perceived, there is no denying the significance of the traditions and rituals which continue to supply the rhythm of the palace of Westminster. Some are grand set pieces, most obviously the state opening of parliament with its royal pageantry, symbolic challenge to Black Rod’s authority, and disorderly progress of the Commons to hear the Queen’s speech in the Lords. Others take place daily when the houses are in session: the processions of the Commons Speaker (preceded by the serjeant at arms) and the Lord Speaker (attended by Black Rod), followed by prayers in the two chambers. Elements of this parliamentary ritual are deeply historic. The election of a Commons Speaker, and the serjeant with the mace carried across his shoulder, are both recognisable in the descriptions of Elizabeth I’s parliaments supplied by MPs and antiquaries John Hooker and William Lambarde; probably they predate the move into St Stephen’s Chapel.[[64]](#endnote-64) Other traditions are of more recent invention. The lying-in-state of Edward VII in Westminster Hall set a precedent for the British royal family which has been maintained thus far, and was extended to include Winston Churchill in 1965. The office of Lord Speaker dates only from 2005, when the Constitutional Reform Act separated the legal and legislative powers traditionally held by the lord chancellor; a version of the chancellor’s court dress was retained. Other such examples of managed modernisation include the appointment of the first serjeant at arms from an ethnic minority (2016) and the first Lady Usher of the Black Rod (2018), illustrating the capacity of parliamentary ceremony to adapt while retaining its essentials.[[65]](#endnote-65)

To visitors, parliamentary staff, politicians and broadcasters, the ceremonial life of the palace of Westminster marks an apparently deep set of connections with the past. Shouts of ‘Speaker!’ and ‘Hats off, strangers!’ from police officers in traditional uniform, and the hush that falls over a bustling central lobby when the Speaker’s procession comes in sight, create a compelling impression of the dignity and antiquity of parliament – or at least its claims to both those qualities. In the words of one political scientist, parliamentary ceremonies and rituals merit examination ‘not simply as historical backdrops but as operative frames of power in public life’.[[66]](#endnote-66) Interviews with members and senior parliamentary officials, for instance, have highlighted the perceived ‘civilising effect’ of ceremony on the behaviour of the Commons and what might be lost if it were dispensed with.[[67]](#endnote-67) The appeal to history is recognised by supporters and critics alike. Chris Bryant MP introduces his affectionate but iconoclastic history of parliament with a warning against the ‘self-regarding mythology’ that it has acquired over the centuries; the phrase ‘the mother of parliaments’ has been particularly misunderstood.[[68]](#endnote-68) Paul Seaward also cautions us that we know surprisingly little about the ‘real origins’ of practices generally taken as sacrosanct in parliament: the procession of the Commons Speaker, bowing to the chair, and dragging the conventionally unwilling new Speaker to his or her place.[[69]](#endnote-69) The Commons mace is a case in point, variously interpreted as a marker of royal authority and a representation of the authority of the house.[[70]](#endnote-70)

Historical analysis of parliamentary ceremony has tended to focus more on the Lords than the Commons, a function of the proximity of the upper house to the royal court and the social superiority of peers and bishops over elected representatives. From 1510, the processions to and from Westminster abbey to open parliament are described in a series of accounts by the royal heralds.[[71]](#endnote-71) In 1512-13 a fire damaged the king’s apartments at Westminster, within a few years resulting in a longer and more public processional route from Henry VIII’s new palace of Whitehall. The young Edward VI made the journey back to Whitehall by barge, setting a trend for water transport. Mary I was carried on a litter, while Elizabeth travelled variously on horseback, in a coach, or by sedan chair as well as by barge. The streets of Westminster were richly dressed for a parliamentary opening, recalling the celebration of a royal coronation. With some variation (security fears in 1679 prevented Charles II from riding in procession), the royal and noble pageantry of the state opening continued in similar vein until Victoria’s withdrawal following the loss of Prince Albert; the splendour of monarchy was then revived by Edward VII and his successors.[[72]](#endnote-72)

In nearly all of this ceremonial, the Commons were observers at best. At the 1593 state opening, the door to the Parliament Chamber remained shut, preventing many MPs from hearing the lord keeper’s speech; they ‘murmured so loude’ that the Queen herself commanded the door to be opened.[[73]](#endnote-73) Traditionally, the Lords has been the house of magnificence. In one important respect, however, the ritual life of the Commons has been neglected until now. For centuries, MPs have prayed together at the start of each day’s business: for the welfare of monarch and nation, for peaceful and good government, and for their own wisdom and integrity in the service of the common wealth. The earliest evidence discovered so far dates from Elizabeth’s reign, though it is quite possible that members were carrying on a practice which had begun with the introduction of the English prayerbook in Edward VI’s reign or indeed before the Reformation.[[74]](#endnote-74) By the 1570s the Commons were reciting the prayerbook litany, kneeling in their stalls and led by the Speaker or the clerk. In 1597, the parliamentary diarist Hayward Townshend transcribed a prayer for parliament from the clerk’s book, which would one day be echoed in the petition ‘for the high court of parliament’ included in the Book of Common Prayer.[[75]](#endnote-75) The act of praying together must have been a powerful counterpoint to the noise and the barracking that had already come to characterise debate in the Commons. The fact that their prayers were said in the converted shell of St Stephen’s Chapel, a Catholic place of worship reformed by the power of the monarch in parliament, can only have made the experience more pointed.

More than any other aspect of its role as the national legislature, the ritual and ceremony of the British parliament are embedded in the building itself. David Cannadine has explained how the splendid stage created for Queen Victoria by Barry and Pugin, ‘more a celebration of royal majesty and ordered hierarchy than of political freedom or legislative autonomy’, in course of time became a picture-gallery for a Whig narrative of history. Scenes from the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution thus tempered the display of Tudor royal majesty elsewhere in the palace.[[76]](#endnote-76) The use of art to alter the meaning of the palace of Westminster continues to evolve. In 2016, an illuminated glass and metal sculpture celebrating women’s suffrage was installed in the archway leading from Westminster Hall to St Stephen’s Hall. Designed by Mary Branson, ‘New Dawn’ changes colour in rhythm with the tide on the Thames to represent the ebb and flow of hopes for women’s political enfranchisement.[[77]](#endnote-77) How parliamentary culture will change when members and officials are required to decant from the palace of Westminster, and are physically separated from the inherited architecture and artwork which structure and justify the British model of national politics, is one of the most interesting questions to ask of the restoration and renewal programme.

*Conclusion*

The relationship between architecture and politics in the palace of Westminster is complex and multi-layered, an interaction of many factors over a span of more than eight centuries. Neither this one article, nor the many others that it points towards, can do the subject full justice. By creating a framework of analysis, however, we can hope to focus attention on some of the principal connections between the houses of parliament and the spaces in which they have met. Some of these associations derive from the physical structure of the palace at different stages in its development: the occupation and adaptation of St Stephen’s Chapel by the Commons after 1548; the accidence of architecture and science which produced a ventilator that early 19th-century women then colonised as an access route to politics; the highly-charged proximity of debate in the Commons chamber which (so Churchill believed, at least) precipitated a uniquely British way of democratic governance. Other connections between place and politics depend more on Westminster as a repository of shared ceremony and memory, perceptions of history and the maintenance (and invention) of tradition. As Chris Bryant warns us, we need to remain alert to the element of caprice in all of this; what he calls the ‘haphazard history’ of parliament, ‘a story of the vagaries of chance’ rather than the working out of some inevitable plan.[[78]](#endnote-78)

Destruction has repeatedly played its part in that Westminster story: most famously in 1834, prompting the creation of Britain’s first purpose-built legislature, but also in 1512-13 (when Henry VIII abandoned the palace of Westminster following a fire, thus accelerating its transition towards becoming the seat of government) and in 1940-1 (prompting the conscious decision to keep the shape of parliament the way it was, influencing the tone of politics to this day). Such moments of destruction enable us to see what parliament represented to commentators at the time. By the early 1830s, the Commons chamber had become symbolic of the corruption of the pre-Reform political establishment: dark and gloomy, crammed with placemen and the products of rotten boroughs, in the words of Scottish journalist James Grant, ‘a second edition of the Black Hole of Calcutta’.[[79]](#endnote-79) Pugin saw its burning as an act of cleansing, exulting in the collapse of modern brick and cement while ‘the old walls stood triumphantly amidst this scene of ruin’.[[80]](#endnote-80) By way of contrast, the Commons chamber that Pugin and Barry went on to create was viewed with far more affection when it, in turn, fell victim to fire. Concluding a 1943 debate on how to replace the lost chamber, the postmaster-general personified the House of Commons as having ‘died’ in a democratic struggle that had begun with the Reform Act and was now a fight against tyranny.[[81]](#endnote-81)

The palace of Westminster is under threat. Roofs are leaking, stonework decaying. Pipework, cabling and other services are often antiquated and sometimes unrecorded on any available plans. Infestations are not uncommon. Successive reports have drawn increasingly urgent attention to the possibility of a catastrophic failure in the structure or another major fire. These are just some of the challenges faced by the restoration and renewal programme in the palace. Another is, of course, how to recreate the Commons and Lords chambers under the full decant of members which will be required if the programme is be completed within an acceptable timescale.

In an article taking the long view on windows of opportunity to build a parliament that is ‘fit for purpose’, Leanne-Marie Cotter asks if lessons can be learned from previous experiences of restoring and renewing the palace of Westminster. Her analysis contrasts the successful expansion of elements of the parliamentary estate (notably the addition of committee rooms and office space in Portcullis House, opened in 2000) with ‘woeful under-investment’ in the main palace site. Citing a range of evidence, from high-pressure steam leaks to an architectural environment which fosters an ‘Oxford Union’ style of debate unpalatable to female members in particular, her bleak conclusion is that the palace is, indeed, unfit for purpose.[[82]](#endnote-82) Cotter’s advice to those responsible for implementing restoration and renewal, not least the need to accept the importance of modernisation and the costs that it will bring, is compelling. Plainly parliament needs to think, and to consult, about what is necessary for the future of the palace of Westminster. Questions of access and of transparency are likely to be of paramount importance. Portcullis House is now generally regarded as a success story, but its early days were plagued with unwelcome media attention on the costly trees in the atrium and the loss of public access to MPs who could now approach the main palace site via a tunnel under the road.[[83]](#endnote-83) As a World Heritage Site and an international beacon of British influence, the palace of Westminster is clearly a tremendous asset to parliament. The challenge facing the restoration and renewal programme is to balance the historic art and architecture of the palace with the requirements of a modern legislature, combining access to the public with protection from terrorist attack. The future British parliament deserves nothing less.

1. ‘A Century at Westminster’, *The Times*, 27 Apr. 1940, p. 7. The laying of the foundation stone is described in Caroline Shenton, *Mr Barry’s War: Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament After the Great Fire of 1834* (Oxford, 2016), 100-1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Chris Bryant, *Parliament the Biography: Reform* (2014), 180. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See Rachel Cunliffe, ‘There’s nothing more London than its resilience in the face of terror’ (24 March 2017): <http://www.cityam.com/261591/theres-nothing-more-london-than-its-resilience-face-terror> [accessed: 8 August 2018]. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Shenton, *Mr Barry’s War*,5; David Cannadine, ‘The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties’, in Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding, *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture* (2000), 11; Rosemary Hill, *God’s Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (2007), 481-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. On St Stephen’s Chapel and the Commons chamber, see J.P.D. Cooper, ‘The Elizabethan House of Commons and St Stephen’s Chapel Westminster’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. David Harrison, ‘Parliaments, MPs and the Buildings of Westminster in the Middle Ages’, in *Westminster: II. The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Palace*, ed. Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Browne (Leeds, 2015), 139, 144; John Goodall, ‘The Medieval Palace of Westminster’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 55; Alasdair Hawkyard, ‘From Painted Chamber to St Stephen’s Chapel: The Meeting Places of the House of Commons at Westminster until 1603’, *Parliamentary History*,xxi (2002), 67-9. The Commons moved into the refectory of the abbey later in Richard II’s reign. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. House of Commons Hansard, 3rd ser., lix, col 1014. See Matthew Cragoe, ‘Sir Robert Peel and the “Moral Authority” of the House of Commons, 1832–41’, *English Historical Review,* 128 (2013), 55-77. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Faith Armitage, ‘The Speaker, Parliamentary Ceremonies and Power’, *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, xvi (2010), 335. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Roland Quinault, ‘Westminster and the Victorian Constitution’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 6th Series, 2 (1992), 79-104. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. ‘The Building Accounts for St Stephen’s Chapel, Palace of Westminster, 1292-1366’, Leverhulme Trust (2012-14), Principal Investigator Prof Tim Ayers; ‘St Stephen’s Chapel Westminster: Visual and Political Culture 1292-1941’, AH/K006991/1 (2013-17), Principal Investigator Dr John Cooper; ‘Listening to the Commons: The Sounds of Debate and the Experience of Women in Parliament c. 1800’, AH/P012094/1 (2017-18), Principal Investigator Dr John Cooper; ‘The Cloister and Undercroft of St Stephen’s Chapel Westminster, 1348-2020’, Leverhulme Trust (2017-19), Principal Investigators Dr Elizabeth Hallam Smith and Dr John Cooper. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. *Westminster: Art, Architecture and Archaeology*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Browne; ‘Gendered Ceremony and Ritual in Parliament’, Leverhulme Trust (2007-11); History of Parliament, http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/ [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. For some representative work in this area, see Wallace Notestein, *The Winning of the Initiative by the House of Commons* (1926); Valerie Cromwell, ‘The Losing of the Initiative by the House of Commons, 1780–1914’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 5th Series, 18 (1968), 1-23; *The Advent of Democracy: The Impact of the 1918 Reform Act on British Politics* (Oxford, 2018), ed. Stuart Ball; Archibald S. Foord, ‘The Waning of “The Influence of the Crown”’, *English Historical Review,* 62 (1947), 484-507; Rosemary Hill, ‘“Proceeding like Guy Faux”: the Antiquarian Investigation of St Stephen's Chapel Westminster, 1790–1837’, *Architectural History*, 59 (2016), 253-79. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Catriona Cooper, ‘The Sound of Debate in Georgian England: Auralizing the House of Commons’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. In 1965 the Commons Speaker became the monarch’s principal custodian of the palace of Westminster, although the chapel of St Mary Undercroft remains in the care of the Lord Great Chamberlain as a Royal Peculiar. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. House of Lords Hansard, 3rd ser., xxviii, col 774; Sean Sawyer, ‘Sir John Soane and the Late Georgian Origins of the Royal Entrance’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 136-47; Shenton, *Mr Barry’s War*, 203-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. *The Houses of Parliament*, ed. M.H. Port (New Haven and London, 1976), 232. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. David Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the ‘Invention of Tradition, c. 1820-1977’, in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, 1992 edn), 161. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Sawyer dates ‘renewed royal ritual’ at Westminster to Soane’s Scala Regia, Ante-Room and Royal Gallery of 1822-4: ‘Late Georgian Origins of the Royal Entrance’, 141. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Jennifer Caddick, ‘The Painted Chamber at Westminster and the Openings of Parliament, 1399-1484’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Elizabeth Hallam Smith, ‘Ventilating the Commons, Heating the Lords, 1701-1834’ in this volume; Chris Bryant, *Parliament the Biography: Ancestral Voices* (2014), 158. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Plans devised by J.C. Buckler and William Railton, placed second and fourth in the competition to design the new palace of Westminster, would have retained St Stephen’s Chapel in some form. Barry also showed some interest, but in 1838 opted to demolish the remaining structure above ground to make way for St Stephen’s Hall. Alexandra Wedgwood, ‘The New Palace of Westminster’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 113-15; Shenton, *Mr Barry’s War*, 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Alasdair Hawkyard, *The House of Commons 1509-1558: Personnel, Procedure, Precedent and Change* (Chichester, 2016), 332-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. *Parliament in Elizabethan England: John Hooker’s Order and Usage*, ed. V.F. Snow (New Haven and London, 1977), 169. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. *Houses of Parliament*, ed. Port, 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Gavin Stamp, ‘“We Shape Our Buildings and Afterwards Our Buildings Shape Us”: Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and the Rebuilding of the House of Commons’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 154. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. *Hooker’s Order and Usage*, ed. Snow, 164. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Neale’s comparison between the 16th and the 20th centuries is discussed in Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. House of Commons Hansard, 5th ser., cdvii, cols 1003-6. See also Miles Taylor, ‘St Stephen’s in War and Peace: Civil Defence and the Location of Parliament’, 1938-51’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. See Antonia Fraser, *The King and the Catholics. The Fight for Rights 1829* (2018); Ball, *Advent of Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Andrew P. Sparrow, *Obscure Scribblers: A History of Parliamentary Reporting* (2003); <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/vote-100/voice-and-vote/> [accessed: 8 August 2018]. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Harrison, ‘Parliaments, MPs and the Buildings of Westminster’, 138-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Caddick, ‘Painted Chamber at Westminster’, fig. 2; *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. T.E. Hartley (3 vols, 1981-5), i, 68. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. A reference in 1611/12 to ‘beatinge downe a way in the wall’ of the former cloister buildings may refer to the creation of the corridor from Westminster Hall to the Commons that was supposedly used by Charles I and his soldiers, and appears on 18th century plans: TNA E 351/3246. I am grateful to Dr Elizabeth Biggs for her advice on this point. See also Andrew Thrush, ‘Topography’, in *HPC* 1604-29 and Chris Kyle, ‘Parliament and the Palace of Westminster: An Exploration of Public Space in the Early Seventeenth Century’, *Parliamentary History*, xxi (2002), 86-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, Hartley, i, 459-60; Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. C.G.C. Tite, ‘The Cotton Library in the Seventeenth Century and its Manuscript Records of the English Parliament’, *Parliamentary History*, xiv (1995), 121-38. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Kyle, ‘Parliament and the Palace of Westminster’; Jason Peacey, ‘To Every Individual Member: The Palace of Westminster and Participatory Politics in the Seventeenth Century’, *Court Historian*, xiii (2008), 127-47. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Mark Collins, ‘The Topography of the Old Palace of Westminster, 1510-1834’, in *Westminster: Art, Architecture and Archaeology*, ed. Rodwell and Tatton-Browne, 217-18. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Mark Nicholls, ‘Fawkes, Guy (*bap*. 1570, *d*. 1606)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Peacey, ‘Palace of Westminster and Participatory Politics’, 129. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Ian J. Gentles, ‘Chidley, Katherine (*fl*. 1616-1653)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Sarah Richardson, ‘Parliament as Viewed through a Woman’s Eyes: Gender and Space in the Nineteenth-Century Commons’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Richardson, ‘Parliament as Viewed through a Woman’s Eyes’; Amy Galvin-Elliott, ‘From Suffragette to Citizen: An Exploration of Female Experience of Parliamentary Spaces in Long Nineteenth-Century Britain’, University of Warwick PhD, in progress. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Hallam Smith, ‘Ventilating the Commons, Heating the Lords’; Richardson, ‘Parliament as Viewed through a Woman’s Eyes’; *Houses of Parliament*, ed. Port, 168. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Richardson, ‘Parliament as Viewed through a Woman’s Eyes’. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Nirmal Puwar, ‘The Archi-texture of Parliament: Flaneur as Method in Westminster’, *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, xvi (2010), 302. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Images and photos of the Ladies’ Gallery and grille in the Parliamentary Art Collection: <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/>

    parliamentary-collections/ladies-gallery-grille/ [accessed: 8 August 2018]. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Paul Seaward, ‘A Sense of Crowd and Urgency? Atmosphere and Inconvenience in the Chamber of the Old House of Commons’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. *Hooker’s Order and Usage*, ed. Snow, 163. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. For the continuing currency of this analogy, see Richard A. Gaunt, ‘Sir Robert Peel as “actor-dramatist”’ in *Politics, Performance and Popular Culture: Theatre and Society in Nineteenth-century Britain,* ed. Peter Yeandle, Katherine Newey, and Jeffrey Richards (Manchester, 2016), 216-236. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. Hartley, ii, 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. Hartley, iii, 227. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Jason Peacey, ‘Disorderly Debates: Noise and Gesture in the 17th-Century House of Commons’, *Parliamentary History*, xxxii (2013), 71-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Cooper, ‘Sound of Debate in Georgian England’. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Cooper, ‘Sound of Debate in Georgian England’; *Houses of Parliament*, ed. Port, 13; Seaward, ‘A Sense of Crowd and Urgency?’; Hallam Smith, ‘Ventilating the Commons, Heating the Lords’. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. The University of York ‘Listening to the Commons’ team would like to thank Mr Speaker, members of both houses, and parliamentary staff who enabled these recordings to take place in the Commons chamber. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. *Houses of Parliament*, ed. Port, 146-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Stamp, ‘Scott and the Rebuilding of the House of Commons’, 150-2; Taylor, ‘St Stephen’s in War and Peace’. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding, ‘Theatre of State’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. The latest developments can be followed at:

    <https://restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk/index.html> [accessed: 8 August 2018]. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. *Hooker’s Order and Usage*, ed. Snow, 173; *William Lambarde’s Notes on the Procedures and Privileges of the House of Commons (1584)*, ed. Paul L. Ward (House of Commons Library Document no 10, 1977), 56-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. For developments up to 2010 see *Ceremony and Ritual in Parliament*, ed. Shirin M. Rai(Abingdon, 2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Shirin M. Rai, ‘Analysing Ceremony and Ritual in Parliament’, *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, xvi (2010), 285. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Armitage, ‘Speaker, Parliamentary Ceremonies and Power’, 333-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Bryant, *Ancestral Voices*, 16-17. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Paul Seaward, ‘Institutional Memory and Contemporary History in the House of Commons, 1547-1640’, in *Writing the History of Parliament in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, ed. Paul Cavill and Alexandra Gajda (Manchester, 2018), 214. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. David Dean, ‘Image and Ritual in the Tudor Parliaments’, in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge, 1995), 243-71; Henry S. Cobb, ‘The Staging of Ceremonies in the House of Lords’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 30-47. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Jason Peacey, ‘The Street Theatre of State: The Ceremonial Opening of Parliament, 1603–60’ in *Managing Tudor and Stuart Parliaments: Essays in Memory of Michael Graves* (Oxford, 2015), ed. Chris Kyle, 155-72. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. Hartley, iii, 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Cooper, ‘Elizabethan House of Commons’. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, ed. Hartley, iii, 230. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Cannadine, ‘Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties’, in Riding and Riding, *Houses of Parliament*, 16-17, 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. ‘New Dawn: Celebrating Women’s Suffrage’, https://www.parliament.uk/newdawn [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Bryant, *Ancestral Voices*, 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Seaward, ‘A Sense of Crowd and Urgency?’. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Hill, *God’s Architect*, 128-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. House of Commons Hansard, 5th ser., cccxciii, col 472. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Leanne-Marie Cotter, ‘The Palace of Westminster: Another Window of Opportunity?’ in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. ‘Raise Portcullis’, *The Times*, 7 Nov. 2000; Caroline Shenton, ‘Fixing Westminster’, *London Review of Books* (16 Nov. 2017), 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)