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# THE DOUBLE-DESIGN DILEMMA: POLITICAL SCIENCE, PARLIAMENTARY CRISIS AND DISCIPLINARY JUSTIFICATIONS

*Abstract: Two separate, but inter-linked, dilemmas have highlighted the importance of design-led thinking. First, the crumbling physical fabric of the Palace of Westminster has prompted a multi-billion rebuilding project, which will require the parliamentary studies specialism to engage with questions of design, space, and architecture. Separately, political science more generally has been challenged to utilize the insights of design-thinking and design-practice: a challenge to which it is culturally and methodological ill-equipped. This article considers what a design-led approach to political science looks like in theory, and in practice, in the case study of the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. This represents a first attempt at how such a fusion could be beneficial for both politics as theory and politics as practice. The main conclusion is that although design-orientated political science is not a panacea for the challenges of modern democratic governance - in intellectual or practical terms - it does appear to offer significant potential in terms of theoretically-informed but solution focused research.*

Keyword: Design; Democracy; Designing Democracy; Palace of Westminster; Restoration and Renewal.

Recent events such as the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, the election of Donald Trump in the United States, the rise of populist nationalism across Western Europe, the emergence of what has been termed ‘post-fact’ or ‘post-truth’ politics plus continuing evidence of rising levels of anti-political sentiment in many advanced liberal democracies has led to a broad debate about the capacity of traditional democratic institutions to respond to contemporary socio-political pressures. This is reflected in an established seam of scholarship on the ‘end’, ‘crisis’, or ‘suicide’ of democracy, increasing analytical focus on the concept of ‘post-democracy’ and a significant body of work on public attitudes and ‘why we hate politics’. This is the broad empirical and intellectual canvas on which this article attempts to make a very specific and potentially transformative contribution that is defined by the confluence of two what might be termed ‘design dilemmas’. The first relates to the adaptive capacity of institutions and the notion of institutional (re)design. The ‘dilemma’ here is that the governance of some democratic institutions facilitates the blockage of a decision-making structure which would utilise design thinking and skills to challenge embedded institutional norms and structural inequalities *vis-à-vis* the distribution of political resources (i.e. a classic institutionalist rational-actor trap). This article provides this design-thinking in an analysis of a key case study—the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster—through a design audit of the current building.

These structural challenges within the political sphere arguably mirror a similar design dilemma within the academic sphere due to the manner in which the social and political sciences have rarely drawn explicitly upon the insights offered by the field of design. It is for this reason that Gerry Stoker has consistently argued that not only has political science ‘failed to deliver’ on the ‘road to relevance’ (2010) and that the discipline is ‘methodologically and culturally ill-equipped’ (2013) to offer a solution-focused and design-orientated vision of the discipline that can respond to the demands of research-users. Furthermore, in failing to cultivate such an approach Stoker suggests that political science has overlooked a key intellectual and social justification for its existence as a

self-standing discipline at a historical point where evidence regarding social impact and relevance are crucial. It is therefore possible to identify what might be labelled a ‘double-design dilemma’ that unites both ‘politics in theory’ and ‘politics in practice’. In relation to the latter the dilemma highlights an institutional landscape that generally exhibits little design enthusiasm; in relation to the former the dilemma highlights the evolution of political science away from what Ernest Boyer (1990) termed ‘the scholarship of application’ towards a more esoteric and abstract ‘scholarship of discovery’. This flows into an extensive literature on ‘the tyranny of relevance’ (Flinders, 2013) within the social and political sciences and a range of prescriptions for making the social and political sciences ‘matter’ (Schram and Caterino, 2006) or have ‘meaning’ (Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen, 2017). Stoker’s thesis regarding design-orientated political science sits within this seam of scholarship but what is lacking from the existing research base is any attempt to develop and apply a ‘deep-design’ approach based explicitly on design-thinking and then apply it to a major empirical case study. This is the core research contribution of this article and is achieved through the exploration of four inter-related research questions:

**RQ1**– What evidence is there that both these professional and intellectual ‘dilemmas’ exist? [*The focus of Parts I and II*]

**RQ2**– What would a design-orientated political science actually look like? [*The focus of Part III*]

**RQ3**– What would a design-audit of a political institution in crisis reveal? [*The focus of Part IV*]

**RQ4**– What are the broader implications of this analysis for both politics and the study of politics? [*The focus of Part V*]

The main conclusion is that although design-orientated political science is not a panacea for the challenges of modern democratic governance - in intellectual or practical terms - it does appear to offer significant potential in terms of the development of new insights and perspectives (plus the refinement of existing institutional approaches). This is particularly true in relation to growing external pressures on the discipline to display not only more inter-disciplinary awareness but also a shift towards a more solution-focused mode of analysis.

The research presented in this article resonates with this core argument due to the manner in which it has been generated through an explicit process of coproduction with potential research-users within the Houses of Parliament in the UK. This involved the lead author’s three-year Professorial Fellowship within the House of Commons in which he is both studying and supporting the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) programme for the Palace of Westminster. A three-part methodology involved a systematic review of design-theory and design-thinking as it relates to designing for democracy; a detailed institutional audit involving the analysis of a vast range of reviews, records and papers; and professional review and reflection by research-users based within the Houses of Parliament. The findings make an original contribution to knowledge that can be located within a range of scholarly debates from those focusing on broad issues concerning ‘post-parliamentary governance’ (Koß, 2011) or ‘ruling the void’ (Mair, 2013), through to inter-disciplinary debates concerning the relationship between architecture, history and politics (Judge and Leston Bandeira, 2017, Manow, 2010) or the symbolic representation of gender (Lombardo and Meier, 2014) through to more micro-political analyses of parliamentary modernisation and reform (Kelso, 2009) or the everyday lived experience of parliamentarians (Crewe, 2015). With these professional groups in mind the next and opening section outlines the nature of the design challenge at Westminster.

## I. THE DESIGN CHALLENGE FOR PARLIAMENT

The Palace of Westminster is facing an urgent design challenge, as decades of neglect of the physical fabric of the building has left the stonework crumbling and the infrastructure at high risk of failure. This article sets out two issues to be recognised as part of this design challenge. The first is historically structured in the sense that when construction began on the Palace of Westminster,

instead when construction began in 1042 the building was designed as a royal palace, not a legislature. In this way, its evolution matches that of the institution of Parliament: the MP and historian, Chris Bryant, summarises his magisterial two-volume biography of parliament by stating, ‘So the history of parliament is not the tracing out of some hidden, intelligent design, but a story of the vagaries of chance’ (Bryant, 2014). The changing role of the Palace as Parliament itself evolved, and the difficulty of adapting a royal palace as a legislative building is discussed to some extent in Sir Barnett Cocks’ *Mid-Victorian Masterpiece* (1977). As Cocks’ sub-title—‘The Story of an Institution Unable to Put Its Own House in Order’—suggests, a historical lens reveals that previous restoration phases have generally become mired in failure due to a mixture of inadequate planning, political interference, financial mismanagement, divided governance and incompatible ambitions. In terms of functionality, the Palace of Westminster has evolved in an *ad hoc*, organic manner that has paid little attention to design thinking. Even when crises have created windows of opportunity that might have facilitated a more fundamental engagement with design-thinking and design-practice – notably after the fire of 1834 and the German bombing of 1941 – a preference for *institutional continuity* rather than *institutional change* has been dominant.

This, of course, dovetails with the second issue: the British political tradition’s emphasis on organic adaptation. The history of both the Houses of Parliament and the broader parliamentary state upon which it sits at the apex is most certainly one of ‘muddling through’ – to adopt Peter Hennessy’s (1996) phrase – but there is a quite different and subtle political statecraft that must be exposed. To label this ‘the hidden wiring’ would be to take the Hennessy’s *ian* link too far (i.e. Hennessy 1990) but it is possible to suggest that ‘muddling’ is in itself a political ideology that has shaped the design of British politics for centuries. This argument would therefore build upon Chris Bryant’s viewpoint that, ‘evidence for an intelligent plan behind the development of parliament is extremely thin. Rather, this has been a great improvised experiment in which *caprice has played every bit as important a role as any consciously pursued constitutional ideology*’ [italics added] (2014, 19), and expand this contention beyond the institution of parliament and for the Palace of Westminster itself. A more nuanced thesis could argue that while explicit evidence of design may be thin, it has, in fact, played a critical component in British constitutional history: the cultural rejection of blueprints, plans and strategic thinking in favour of a Whiggish preference for *ad hoc* organic evolution, institutional sedimentation, apparent amateurism, is itself design-principle, that has ‘locked-in’ a very specific form or model of politics. This ‘*design in disguise*’ through a mixture of apparent incompetence combined with a strong commitment to a particular institutional form that entrenched a power-hoarding majoritarian polity that benefitted the two main parties was a ‘constitutional ideology’ (*cf.* Bryant) that shaped the architecture of politics. Parliamentary buildings and culture are intrinsically linked to power: Shirin Rai (2010) argued that “ceremony and ritual in parliament are deployed both to awe and to put beyond contestation the everyday workings of institutions and in so doing secure the dominant social relations that obtain within it”. Puwar (2010) described the Palace of Westminster as “a memorial to a particularly selected and crafted history of politics and the nation’. The selected history is of the empire, and a vision of power based solely with the monarch and the House of Lords, as opposed to the Commons or the public (Cannadine 2000; Flinders et al, 2017). The building is exclusionary in other ways: access and facilities for Members, staff and visitors with disabilities is extremely limited (Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, 2016). Leston-Bandeira (2016) described the nineteenth century Parliament as a ‘Gentleman’s Club’, and there are concerns that the Palace has maintained this culture well into the twenty-first century. Professor Sarah Childs has argued that ‘the building facilitates, valorises, and rewards certain kinds of behaviours and performances that are disproportionately practiced by some men – and exclude others’ (*The Guardian*, 2017). Indeed, this ‘lock-in’ function of design was captured in Winston Churchill’s (1943) adage, ‘We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us’.<sup>i</sup> Churchill’s statement was in praise of the Barry/Pugin Palace, but Paul Seward’s (2010) articulation of representation as ‘a multisided process of claim-making and the reception and judgment of claims’ is particularly relevant here. Judge and Leston-Bandeira (2017) have described how the interpretation of the claims around the Palace of Westminster has changed as the building has aged, as MPs viewed the cues offered by the building from positive at the time of Churchill’s speech in 1943 to ‘profoundly negative’ sixty years later. The design challenge for parliament is therefore double-edged in the sense that as an institution practices and norms have not reflected design-

thinking and design-practice, and (secondly) this itself reflected a ‘negative executive mentality’ (Judge, 1993) whereby successive governments historically deployed constitutional conventions and customs in order to eviscerate or reject reform proposals that advocated re-designing democracy through institutional or procedural measures, with the effect of the building excluding much of the public (see Flinders 2002; 2007).

Evidence of severe frailties in the physical fabric of the building, however, do create opportunities in which calls to consider ‘designing for democracy’ are far more difficult to dismiss. In this regard falling masonry, crumbling stonework, endemic asbestos, inadequate fire protection, antiquated electrical systems, evidence of structural subsidence have all combined to produce a set of parliamentary reports and independent expert appraisals that all in their own ways conclude ‘the risk of catastrophic failure is increasing... a major failing of the existing service infrastructure is inevitable’. In September 2016 a Joint Committee of both Houses concluded, ‘The Palace of Westminster faces an impending crisis which we cannot possibly ignore’ and recommended a ‘full-decant’ of both Houses in order to allow the necessary works to be completed quickly and efficiently. After a substantial delay, attributable to the Government’s disinclination to debate and consider the necessary works – further evidence of the negative executive mentality – the full decant was endorsed by the House of Commons and House of Lords in early 2018. Primary legislation to place the necessary governance bodies on a statutory footing is expected to be introduced in late spring 2019 (Peace 2018). The scale and extent of the necessary work is immense – the proposed R&R is a complex mega-project that is likely to cost many billions of pounds and last for around a decade (possibly slightly less, possibly a lot more). It is also unclear what specifically will be ‘restored and reformed’ – is it simply the physical fabric of the Palace of Westminster on a ‘like-for-like’ basis to renew and entrench the existing institutional structure? Or is it more bold and ambitious in seeking to use this crisis to ‘restore and reform’ how we actually ‘do’ politics in the UK? This latter question would open-up questions concerning altering layouts, creating new spaces, introducing new procedures, possibly even new buildings. Reports like the Design Commission’s *Designing Democracy* (2015) and Sarah Childs’ *The Good Parliament* (2016) have adopted this more expansive interpretation; as have analyses that have sought to explore the emergence in 2017 of numerous sexual harassment claims within Westminster (see Meakin, 2017).

To some extent this tension between minimal and more expansive conceptions of R&R is reflected within the core strategic objectives of the project which include (*inter alia*) ‘Accommodate the needs of a 21st Century Parliament’ and ‘Preserve and protect the Palace of Westminster’s status as a Grade I listed building and a UNESCO World Heritage Site’. How exactly the former can be delivered within the latter due to the existence of extensive heritage-based limitations on even the most minor alterations to the building is something that has not gone unnoticed. Neil Gray MP, for example, a member of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, has repeatedly raised his concerns about whether it is possible to ‘artificially crowbar a twenty-first century parliament into an old palace’, and was recorded during the Committee’s final deliberations as calling for a full consideration of the possibility of constructing a permanent new Parliamentary building (Leftly, 2016, Higgins, 2017). (In this regard he joins other MPs who have questioned the decisions of the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee in October 2012 to decide against any consideration of a new-build parliament). The existence of incompatible ambitions is an organisational pathology that is arguably well-recognised within the Palace of Westminster but – as Cocks has illustrated in the case of 19<sup>th</sup> century rebuild – tends to end in failure. Failure in relation to a multi-billion pound public project on a central and globally iconic political building is possibly not something parliament can afford given pre-existing levels of anti-political sentiment. This was recognised by the Joint Committee in 2016 when they concluded,

It would be an error for Parliament to miss this rare opportunity to deliver a more open, efficient, inclusive and outward-facing parliamentary building... Future generations will not thank us if we fail to seize [this] opportunity and instead preserve for posterity all the obstacles to public access and to the effective working of Parliament which the building currently embodies (para. 247).

And yet the second element of the design dilemma for parliament is that as an institution it simply lacks design expertise or design-orientated research capacity. It was for this reason that the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP, gave the Crick Centre Annual Lecture in October 2016 on the title of ‘Designing for Democracy’ (see Bercow, 2018). He drew-upon the intellectual heritage of Sir Bernard Crick, especially his book *The Reform of Parliament* (1964), and called for the social and political sciences to assist parliament by providing the underpinning research and frameworks through which critical design choices could be made regarding the future of British democracy, in general, and of the Palace of Westminster, in particular. Research was also needed to underpin and cultivate a necessary process of informed public engagement – ‘a national conversation’ – and R&R was presented as an opportunity for the social and political sciences to demonstrate their social relevance and solution-focused potential. In responding to this invitation, however, the social sciences, in general, and political science, in particular, faces its own ‘design dilemma’.

## II. THE DESIGN CHALLENGE FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

The previous section concluded by identifying a clear *demand-side* opportunity in the absence of design-expertise shaping the management and reform of the Palace of Westminster, both in the past and at present. The focus of this section is on a *supply-side* blockage that may prevent political science from responding to the Speaker of the House of Commons’ request for scholarly assistance. Mr Speaker emphasized the need to develop collective capacity in relation to ‘designing for democracy’ but as Gerry Stoker (2013, 174) has argued political science remains ‘methodologically and culturally ill-equipped to adopt a solution-orientated approach’ that explicitly draws upon the insights of design thinking and design practice. The design challenge for political science arguably therefore revolves around ‘up-thinking’ in just the way it does for parliament. But Stoker is making an argument that goes far beyond parliamentary studies and is actually located within the far broader debate concerning the contemporary relevance or impact of the social sciences. This is not a debate that needs repeating here apart from noting that Stoker sees the failure of political science to focus upon ‘designing politics’ and ‘designing for democracy’ – a failure to develop a *solution-focused* model of political science to counterbalance the mainstream *problem-focused* approach - as neglecting a major non-academic justification for the discipline (i.e. a significant form of impact or relevance).

The argument is not that the issue of design does not feature in the social and political sciences but it is to suggest that the concept of design has tended to be used in a fairly loose manner within analyses of democratic change. Bob Goodin’s *The Theory of Institutional Design* (1998), Cass Sunstein’s *Designing Democracy* (2002), Geoffrey Pridham’s *Designing Democracy* (2007), Peter Emerson’s *Designing an all Inclusive Democracy* (2007), Mark Warren’s *Designing Deliberative Democracy* (2008), Andrew Reynolds *Designing Democracy in a Dangerous World* (2011), Margaret Levi’s *Designing Democratic Government* (2011) – to mention just a few leading texts – are all important international reference points in the debate regarding democratic change but their emphasis is very much on *the politics of democracy* rather than any commitment to a new science of design. To some extent this ‘design-lite’ approach is understandable given both the complexity of the design-field and the discipline’s acknowledged struggle to establish itself as a self-standing discipline within the modern higher education system.<sup>ii</sup> But it is also possible to make a slightly more provocative case: that a great deal of this design-related political science has frequently failed to look beyond the confines of political science for deep intellectual nourishment (i.e. it is ‘design-related’ but not quite ‘design-infused’ in the manner Stoker promotes). Therefore, although Herbert Simon’s *The Sciences of the Artificial* (1969) is generally deployed as something of a touchstone, very few scholars have gone beyond this and into the realms of what is termed ‘complex’ or ‘novel’ design, as epitomized in Harold Nelson and Erik Stolterman’s *The Design Way* (2012). Rarer still is any appreciation of the ‘critical design’ or ‘political design’ literature that promotes the professional responsibility of designers to the public in the sense of a duty to reveal and challenge the existence of embedded power-relationships. Carl Di Salvo’s *Adversarial Design* (2012), for example, goes far beyond simply

applying design to politics; it is implicitly contestational and strives to question conventional approaches to political issues. What is also lacking from the existing research base is any attempt to develop and apply a ‘deep-design’ approach based explicitly on design-thinking and then apply it to a major empirical case study. This is the core research contribution of this article. The next section focuses on developing a ‘deep-design’ conceptual framework.

### III. UNDERSTANDING DESIGN THINKING

‘The use of research in the world of policy’ Stoker (2010, 74) writes ‘is prone to the play of politics and power and the windows of opportunity for political science to demonstrate its relevance may therefore be relatively narrow and infrequent’. This is certainly true but, as the first section highlighted, the proposed restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster provides an opportunity for political science to test Stoker’s arguments concerning the potential of design thinking. And yet a call to take design seriously should not be seen as synonymous with promoting little more than applied political science. To adopt a design perspective is to adopt a different ontological and epistemological mindset while also being perfectly compatible with many elements of mainstream political science. As such, the aim of this section is to act as the intellectual hub or buckle between the ‘double design dilemma’ outlined above and the novel testing of a design-approach in the next section. The goal is to identify an approach that fuses design-thinking with political science in a coherent, fresh, and contemporary manner. Table 1, adapted from Stoker (2010), provides a snapshot of how traditional ‘scientific’ thinking differs from the mode of inquiry within the field of design. The degree of difference between those models of ‘science’ and ‘design’ clearly needs to be softened by an acceptance of two points. The first broad point is that some scientific approaches have moved away from this traditional positioning. The second and more specific point is that political science remains a broad and generally pluralistic scholarly community that could be conceived including both modes of thinking in Table 1. Adherents to a hard-science large-n and generally quantitative informed model of political *science* may well sit within the ‘science’ column, whereas exponents of political *studies* who possess a more qualitative and socially-engaged approach to scholarship may feel more empathy with the right-hand ‘design’ column. Although this overlay underlines the potential complementarity between approaches it also demands some clarity in relation to demarcating difference.

**Table 1. Two Modes of Thinking: Science and Design**

ATTRIBUTES	SCIENCE	DESIGN
<i>Focus</i>	On the natural	On the artificial
<i>Mode of Thinking</i>	Analytical	Synthesis
<i>Empirical-Normative Thought</i>	Separate	Inter-twined
<i>Form of Rationality</i>	Comprehensive	Bounded
<i>Key Tool of Reasoning</i>	Categories	Placements
<i>Context</i>	Scholarly	Embedded
<i>Ambition</i>	Explain	Solve
<i>Form of End Statement</i>	Descriptive, casual, <i>what is</i>	Means to an end: <i>what might be</i>

Source: Adapted from Stoker, 2010.

The aim of Table 1 is to underline that ‘design thinking’ is very different to traditional modes of ‘scientific’ thinking in multiple ways. First, in general, scientific analysis is focused on the natural world whereas design is focused on the artificial world of man-made objects, institutions or processes. Secondly, design is focused on intentional change and therefore accepts an unavoidable normativity within its approach. Whereas traditional ‘political science’ may prioritise neutrality and objectivity in the sense of producing ‘facts’ or ‘knowledge’, exponents of design embrace the practical policy-relevant (*what might be*) implications of their research. Following on from this, whereas science traditionally adopts a very open model of causal analysis design-thinking exhibits

a preference for synthetic research within a model of bounded rationality derived from intensive interactions with commissioners in order to understand the nature of the *design-problem* and the potential range of *design-solutions*. This leads into a generally over-looked dimension: design thinking and design practice is not just about finding solutions to problems. It is equally about working with institutions to agree a ‘problem-definition’ that all parties can accept as a starting point before proceeding to explore the boundaries of response modes. This is what might be termed the *process-based* ‘politics of’ design that has rarely been acknowledged or studied, because the role of external design teams is generally to act, as a small number of ethnographic studies have shown, as referees or adjudicators in a non-partisan but highly political argument about the nature of ‘the problem’ that needs to be ‘solved’.

This counter intuitive emphasis on ‘problem-definition’ rather than ‘solution definition’ raises at least three related issues. First, the initial selection of the designers or design team for any project is likely to be crucial as they are likely to come to a project with a specific professional ideology (i.e. consider the highly politicized and disruptive position of Di Salvi’s ‘adversarial design’ (2012) approach) or reputation (as an innovator, creative thinker, heritage specialist, etc.). The second issue focuses on the potential power of design experts in crisis contexts. Put simply, without careful scrutiny designers may wield significant powers in terms of agenda setting, information framing, non-decision making, etc. especially in contexts where simply defining ‘the problem’ is controversial. Finally, design-thinking and design-practice is not politically naive. It understands that ‘good policy’ or ‘intelligent design’ may well fall upon the procrustean rocks of day-to-day partisan politics with its relatively short time-cycles and irrational incentives. But what design can often do is to provide an underpinning evidence-base about both the nature of ‘the problem(s)’ and the potential ‘solutions’ that can influence and frame decision-making processes and public debates. Pulling this back to a focus on R&R it is interesting that four firms of architects were shortlisted in November 2016 with BDP being announced in July 2017 as the winning architectural and design services company, ahead of the formal approval for the programme being secured from both Houses. There is clearly some ambiguity concerning ‘problem definition’, which the Speaker of the House of Commons has suggested could be clarified through the cultivation of a research-based ‘public conversation’. With this in mind it is useful to highlight that the design-approach generally proceeds through three phases:

*Phase 1:* ‘Problem definition’ – what is the challenge or issue at hand?

*Phase 2:* ‘Solution mapping’ – what are the reform options?

*Phase 3:* ‘Prototyping or testing’ – how can we know what will work?

The focus of this article is on Phase 1 and ‘problem definition’ as it relates to the design challenge at Westminster (Part I, above) in order to assess Stoker’s broader arguments concerning the potential of design-infused political science (Part II, above). And yet what this brief focus on design thinking has done is to re-focus attention on the ‘double-design dilemma’ in the sense that: within Westminster there has been little, if any, detailed analysis of the nature or extent of the design challenge or into what a parliament that was ‘fit for the twenty-first century’ might actually look like, let alone how it might be retrofitted into an ancient Royal Palace (i.e. Design Dilemma I); and within political science there has been very little utilization of design frameworks to help scholars and practitioners understand the nature of specific democratic challenges (Design Dilemma II). In order to make a contribution that responds to both these dilemmas the next section adopts and applies Richard Simmons’ established framework for ‘good design’.

#### IV. DESIGNING FOR DEMOCRACY

In recent years Gerry Stoker has crafted a sustained and far-reaching critique of political science for failing to embrace the insights, tools and ambition of design-thinking and design-practice. More recently, the Speaker of the House of Commons has called for the political and social sciences to exhibit a similar skill set in order to support those involved with the proposed R&R of the Palace of Westminster. What has been missing, however, from this debate is an explicit mid-range



framework that would act as bridge between the broad macro-political arguments of those advocating a design approach and the more specific (micro-political) requests for theoretically informed but policy-relevant institutional analyses. The tool used to fill this gap (and to fuse political science with design) is the influential framework developed by Richard Simmons' in *Good Design: The Fundamentals* (2008). Although issues such as style, taste and fashion may form elements of a design approach they tend to be somewhat transient and therefore secondary to the more important factors that underpin 'good design'. These core or primary factors are variously described both within Simmons' framework and the broader design literature as (1) *robustness or durability*, (2) *usefulness or efficiency*, and (3) *beauty, or the ability to delight people*. 'This set of principles is not new but it can be applied to help everyone recognize a well-designed building or place' Simmons argues 'This should give us all the confidence to identify and understand the kinds of places that work well and that we want to create'. Applying this framework leads to a simple design assessment framework based around a set of simple criteria. Table 2 sets out this framework, and provides a preliminary assessment of the Palace of Westminster, following a major piece of synthetic research. Further detail on each criterion is below. This table provides a valuable starting point to consider Stoker's claims about the potential of design-led political science.

**Table 2. Ten Criteria for Good Design**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>PALACE OF WESTMINSTER</b>
<i>C1. Utility &amp; Resilience</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that are useful, built to last and easy to care for.	The utility of the PoW was widely questioned before Charles Barry's works were even completed. The building is decaying and is very expensive to maintain.
<i>C2. Movement &amp; Accessibility</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings where the public or users can move around easily, regardless of whether or not they are disabled, in a place in which you feel safe.	The public cannot enter or move around easily, especially if they are disabled. The PoW was never designed to cope with mass public access.
<i>C3. Position &amp; Complementarity</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that relate well to the place where they are built; this might mean fitting in quietly or creating new context and new landmarks.	An iconic building that defines and complements the nearby urban landscape. Further spatial planning restricted by complex governance.
<i>C4. Flexibility &amp; Adaptability</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that are flexible and their use can change over time.	The history of the PoW is one of constant low-level adaptation but the future malleability of the building is limited by spatial and heritage restrictions.
<i>C5. Efficiency &amp; Sustainability</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that are environmentally efficient and help users to work sustainably.	Very poor due to a vast combination of outdated structural factors that have now combined to create the current 'crisis'
<i>C6. Environment &amp; Productivity</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that allow users work effectively and deliver services more efficiently.	Environmental issues such as rodent infestation, poor ventilation, limited natural light, etc. limit productivity.
<i>C7. Pride &amp; Identity</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings where the public and users are proud of where they work because the building or place has real identity, character and beauty.	Staff and visitors undoubtedly recognize and cherish the beauty, character and identity of the building. Whether this sense of pride and identity is necessarily attached to the building <i>as national legislature</i> is unknown.
<i>C8. Leadership &amp; Vision</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings where clear project leadership has existed as 'design champions' with vision and who know that better design improves results.	Clear project leadership has often been absent, objectives have been unclear or altered, blame games have been played, historical reluctance to invest money and the necessary time in maintaining the PoW.
<i>C9. Learning &amp; Scrutiny</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that have profited from robust scrutiny of the design decision-making process.	The decision-making process has historically been generally hidden, elite and technocratic with little attempt to challenge basic top-down decisions.
<i>C10. Engagement &amp; Triangulation</i>	Good design is reflected in buildings that have been planned through creative user engagement that draws-upon a range of knowledge sources.	The PoW was never really 'planned' in a rational sense and little emphasis was ever placed on engaging with the public during any historical phase of restoration.

*C1. Utility and Resilience*

If 'good design' is reflected in buildings that are useful, built to last and easy to care for then it is hard to argue that the Palace of Westminster deserves a positive assessment. Although Westminster Hall has displayed impressive longevity, the Palace can hardly be said to be either easy to care for or convenient in providing for the demands of a modern parliament. Charles Barry's 'New Palace' was widely viewed as a failure and not being 'fit for purpose' even before the works had finished (Shenton, 2016, Port, 2002).<sup>iii</sup> The design criteria on which Barry won the post-fire competition in 1835 emphasised the past rather the future and therefore notions such as 'future proofing' or 'institutional resilience', or even some assessment of the changing socio-political context, were never discussed (Shenton, 2016). Built on a swamp, the Palace was never going to be easy to care, and failures in the infrastructure and fabric of the building were apparent early in its lifespan. The heating and ventilation systems were "almost entirely unsuccessful" (House of Commons, 2012) and the stone that was selected after the 1834 fire quickly began to dissolve as a result of atmospheric pollution (Joint Committee, 2016; Macintyre, 2016). In the twentieth century the destruction of the Commons chamber by the Luftwaffe in 1941 created another potential opportunity for considering utility and resilience but Churchill pressed strongly to see the chamber "restored in all essentials to its old form, convenience and dignity", and in this he was successful (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, Col 403). While a small number of MPs called for a new modern parliamentary building, they were defeated by 127 votes to 3 (HC Deb, 28 Oct 1943, Col 472). Just a few years after the building works on the Commons chamber were completed, however, MPs were lobbying for changes to the Palace to reflect new ways of working. Percy Daines, the MP for East Ham told the Commons in 1954 that the Palace had been "built for something quite different from the purpose which it serves today" (HC Deb, 22 July 1954, Col 1672). The lack of space for MPs to work, within the Palace was identified as the root cause of the problem—"the key to everything in this Palace is more floor space" in the words of George Benson, the MP for Chesterfield (HC Deb, 22 July 1954, Col 1680)—and as a result the story of the twentieth century was one of constant incremental adaptation as corridors and apartments were gradually modified into office space and neighbouring buildings secured as overspill. While the parliamentary estate grew, however, investment in the physical fabric of the Palace waned. As the 2012 Pre-Feasibility Report stated, 'the long-term under-investment in the fabric and the intensive use to which the Palace is put, it is remarkable that it continues to function. The signs of wear and tear, the number and frequency of relatively minor floods and mechanical breakdowns, the high cost of maintaining obsolescent equipment and the large sums that are now having to be spent on aggressive maintenance and risk reduction all provide tangible evidence of the looming crisis' (House of Commons, 2012). Furthermore, despite the expansion of the Parliamentary Estate, a significant proportion of MPs still have offices within the Palace of Westminster (the most recent figure is 36% in 2005/06 (Administration Committee, 2006). Just as their predecessors in the 1950s found, MPs report that their offices in the Palace are ill-equipped to meet their needs (Administration Committee, 2013).

## ***C2. Movement & Accessibility***

Whereas most modern legislatures are built to emphasize light, transparency and ease of access the Palace of Westminster was not designed with these in mind. The building is a maze of corridors and the movement of the public is highly restricted and made even more problematic by the well-known lack of signs (a heritage protection measure) (Administration Committee, 2012). The House of Commons' own review of its Diversity and Inclusion scheme reported in 2015

There are some overriding constraints that inhibit and prevent action on some equality issues. The special nature of the Palace of Westminster and its listed building status and security needs seemingly prevents some adaptations that would, for example, be supportive of disabled people. (House of Commons, 2015, p 18)

The building does not comply with disability discrimination legislation, denying many people with physical or sensory disabilities an opportunity to visit, explore or work within parliament. A lack of accessible toilets, appropriate lifts, ramps, and electric doors pose significant problems for those

with limited mobility, whereas those with sight-impairments are not helped by the general lack of light and the absence of clear signs. Those with hearing impairments face similar challenges due to high noise levels and poor acoustics in both chambers combined with outdated and frequently inoperative sound reinforcement systems. (The hearing loops do not cover the area in the Lords where those peers in wheelchairs must sit (Joint Committee, 2016b).) Ministers who are also wheelchair users cannot sit with their colleagues on the front benches and even the Press Gallery remains inaccessible for someone in a wheelchair. More broadly, while public access considerations were not a priority for the Palace due to its pre-democratic origins, as the Houses of Parliament has sought to be more open to the public then so too have the challenges of access, security, and visitor flow become far more acute (Governance Committee, 2014). Visitors are often required to queue for long periods, refreshment facilities are limited and expensive, rest room provision inadequate, public access areas restricted and an increasingly securitised atmosphere—complete with uniformed officers, machine guns and anti-attack bollards—creates an atmosphere of quiet deference rather than welcoming openness.

### ***C3. Position & Complementarity***

The Palace of Westminster is an iconic building that provides not only a key landmark within the capital but also symbolises a certain model of democratic values. The building sits at the head of the main thoroughfare on which the main departments of state have traditionally been located (i.e. Whitehall) and the neo-Gothic architecture complements the grandeur of nearby buildings such as Westminster Abbey, Central Methodist Hall and the Supreme Court on Parliament Square. As the institutional demands placed upon the Palace of Westminster have exhausted the capacity of the physical site, the surrounding buildings have facilitated the development of a far larger parliamentary estate (encompassing parts of Millbank plus Parliament Street, the Norman Shaw Buildings, Portcullis House, Tothill Street, and most recently Richmond House). In many ways the position and complementarity of the Palace of Westminster reflect an element of ‘good design’ and certainly in terms of symbolic value. It also underlines why demands to move Parliament out of London often fail to appreciate the existence of a larger parliamentary estate that would also have to be moved, let alone the need to maintain close physical links with ministerial departments. The detractions from the current situation relate to money and space. Although Whitehall and Westminster have traditionally offered the physical home for British parliamentary government it has done so at a high financial price in terms of office space, and staff costs. Moreover, it is possible to argue that the physical space around Westminster has now been exhausted to the extent that the options for institutional innovation are very limited (hence the focus on the underground car park, the filling-in of courtyards, or sequestering part of Victoria Tower Gardens within discussions about R&R). This, in turn, flows into a broader design challenge for the proposed R&R in the sense that where similar major legislative re-design projects have been undertaken around the world, as was the case in Canberra or currently in Ottawa, they have embraced and refashioned the public space around the building itself. In London, however, the physical complementarity of the buildings is matched by a physical incongruity in terms of the control and ownership of the surrounding public space. With around thirty different organisations, arm’s-length bodies, local councils and historic ports or river authorities having responsibility for certain elements of the surrounding area developing a shared ‘vision’ has historically proved problematic (Hansard Society, 2011).

### ***C4. Flexibility & Adaptability***

In many ways the flexibility and adaptability demonstrated by the Palace of Westminster over several centuries can be viewed as a metaphor for the organic, Whiggish, malleability of the British constitutional tradition more generally. It is for this reason that M.H. Port (1976, 193) argued that ‘Charles Barry’s masterpiece has proved enormously adaptable’ while Sir Robert Cooke describes the building as ‘changeless, yet subtly changing’ (1987, 13). The history of the building, notably throughout the twentieth century, has been one of constant adaptation in an attempt to keep pace

with the increasing demands of a modern legislature and increasingly professional politicians. Smoking rooms and bars were no longer viewed as appropriate places to undertake parliamentary businesses and the 1950s and 1960s witnessed a series of building projects to create new office accommodation for MPs. But by the late 1960s and 1970s the malleability of the building had arguably been exhausted and arguments were growing for new facilities to be built beyond but adjacent to the Palace. Questions over cost, position and complementarity (i.e. C3, above) featured heavily in debates and eventually led to the acquisition of the Norman Shaw buildings in the mid-1970s, then into Parliament Street and Bridge Street in the 1980s and finally to the opening of Portcullis House (commissioned in 1992, opened in 2001). The creeping growth of the parliamentary state was similarly constant in relation to the House of Lords with acquisition of 6-7 Old Palace Yard in 1994, the leasing of a part of Millbank House in 2000, the acquisition of Fielden House in 2001 and the eventual acquisition of the whole of the Millbank 'Island Site' in 2005.<sup>iv</sup> This suggests: (1) in many ways the Palace has been incredibly adaptable but this capacity was exhausted almost fifty years ago and has since then led to a sprawling off-site network of buildings and offices; (2) this has occurred in a messy and muddled manner with little attention to any sense of 'grand design'; (3) even within the Palace issues around the lack of basic facilities such as female toilets and office space suggests a failure to meet fairly basic needs (Benger, 2015). This has been officially acknowledged; 'There are legal, practical, aesthetic and historic reasons which mean that it is both difficult and undesirable to make significant alterations to the Palace; but the accommodation within it leaves a great deal to be desired.' The committee making this point proceeded to support the conclusion of a committee that had reported in 1945, 'it naturally does not contain the conveniences of a modern building, nor can it readily be adapted to meet the changed and changing needs of Members of Parliament.' (Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and House of Commons on the Accommodation in the Palace of Westminster, 1945, p 3)<sup>v</sup> There is little evidence from the Pre-Feasibility Study, the Independent Options Appraisal, or the Joint Committee report that there has been consideration or consultation on how parliamentarians' needs and preferences for office and working space may vary over the next century—and more broadly how democracy may change in this time—and how the rebuilt Palace will need to be adaptable in light of these changes..

### ***C5. Efficiency & Sustainability***

The Palace of Westminster was not constructed with issues of efficiency or sustainability in mind. Moreover, the acknowledged failure over the last fifty years to maintain the fabric of the building has exacerbated this issue, due to leaking roofs, ill-fitting windows, poor or absent insulation and antiquated mechanical and electrical systems for heating and hot water. The Pre-Feasibility Study of 2012 suggested that only radical measures would allow the Palace to achieve the carbon reduction targets required under the *Climate Change Act 2008* and that 'the Palace at best achieves energy certificate levels E/F on the A-G scale, where A represents best practice'. In 2016 the Joint Committee concluded that the Palace 'lags behind' many other public buildings in terms of environmental performance, and suggested that while the heritage of the building would make improvements complex, there was still 'significant scope' to make changes to how the building operates.

### ***C6. Environment & Productivity***

If 'good design' is reflected in buildings that allow users to work effectively and to deliver services efficiently then there is a strong argument that the Palace of Westminster is not 'fit for purpose'. Many of the reasons for this position have been highlighted under previous sub-headings (i.e. C1-C5) and were broadly accepted by the Joint Committee in 2016 when it suggested that, irrespective of specific reforms, the Palace of Westminster had not kept pace with the 'changing working patterns and practices of Parliament, its Members and staff' (2016, 79). There are significant environment and productivity problems with the Palace of Westminster. Given its location on the

banks of the Thames and its age it is probably not surprising that the Palace of Westminster has a significant rodent infestation (Department of Information Services, 2014, 26). Mousetraps are a common feature of many parts of the building and the 252 miles of dated electrical cables electrocute a number of rats each year (Connolly, 2017). The guttering and drainage system cannot cope with significant rainfall with water permeation and regular flooding, including an incident when 'Rainwater poured into the basement, forming pools near high voltage cables that carry electricity through the building and triggering a power cut' on the day of the EU Referendum (Riley-Smith, 2016). The sewage system is 130 years old and involves every toilet and waste water pipe in the whole of the building flowing into just one main outlet (situated under the Speaker's Garden). But this outlet's position at a lower level than the main London sewer system brings with it major risks of back-flooding (Riley-Smith, 2016). This might explain complaints from MPs, peers and staff about an appalling smell of sewage in the Palace plus numerous incidents involving waste seeping into offices (Dathan, 2015; Watts, 2016). Indeed, what the evidence reveals is an estate in which many people work in offices that lack natural light, that have serious heating or ventilation issues and the dilapidated state of many toilet facilities, creating a poor working environment and inefficiencies (UK Parliament, 2014, 26). In December 2016 one MP encapsulated the situation as 'woefully unprofessional, archaic, dysfunctional (Leftly, 2015).

### ***C7. Pride & Identity***

Good design, according to Richard Simmons' is reflected in buildings where the public and users are proud of where they work because the building or place has real identity, character and beauty. This is a very difficult category to assess due to the need to distinguish between the views of the public and users towards the building itself - *aesthetic identity* (i.e. the architectural splendour, interior beauty.) or *symbolic identity* (the value of the building as the symbol of British democracy) as opposed to what might be termed *professional identity* (whether the character of a building is actually fit for its core purpose). This is clearly a subtle distinction that can be difficult to gauge but there is, for example, copious evidence of positive *aesthetic identity* amongst those million or so people that visit the building each year. The submission to the Joint Committee on R&R by the Parliamentary Visitors Group, for example, stated that visitors to the Palace of Westminster "arrive with high expectations and those expectations are exceeded... Overall people are 'wowed and in awe'" (Parliamentary Visitors Group, 2016). Numerous member and members' staff surveys, focus groups and interviews also suggest that those working within the Palace are generally proud of working in what they consider to be a beautiful and iconic building. But – as previous sub-sections have highlighted – this positive *aesthetic identity* might be very different to an equally valid but very different assessment of the *professional identity* or utility of a building. Those who visit or work in any building may think it offers 'real identity, character and beauty' while also considering it totally inappropriate for the purpose for which it is being used. The available data seems to suggest that a significant number of MPs, peers and staff possess a real affection for the building while also being highly critical in relation to its capacity to fulfil the needs of a modern parliament. An internal study of the experience of female parliamentarians quoted one MP as describing the Palace 'as more like a museum than a functional office' (Benger, 2015). The All Party Parliamentary Group for Women reported in 2014 that 'throughout the course of our Inquiry we were consistently informed by witnesses that the environment of the Palace of Westminster can be off-putting' (APPG for Women, 2014, p 20). The level of concern expressed by some MPs over the temporary silencing of Big Ben's bongs (to enable the repair of the clock) in August 2017 demonstrated the importance of the building's *symbolic identity*, and perhaps, a prioritising of this *symbolic identity* over the *professional identity*. Indeed, the strength of the building as an icon means the *symbolic identity* can overpower the utility and function of the building: as the Hansard Society Commission on the Communication of Parliamentary Democracy reported in 2005, 'the building itself communicates powerfully to the public before any MP stands up to speak.'

### ***C8. Leadership & Vision***

If good design is reflected in buildings where clear project leadership has existed and where ‘design champions’ have promoted the importance of taking design-thinking and design-practice seriously then the Palace of Westminster cannot be evaluated positively. The history of management of the Palace provides a litany of incompatible and shifting objectives, fragmented governance, inflexible bureaucracy, party political point scoring, a lack of clear political leadership and incredibly dense and aggressive accountability frameworks. This explains the title of Caroline Shenton’s account about the experience of Charles Barry – *Mr Barry’s War* (2016). It also finds support in a number of historical analyses. ‘[T]he House of Commons characteristically wanted the best but were unwilling to pay for much more than the worst’ Sir Barnett Cocks, himself a previous Clerk of the House has written, ‘champagne on beer money’ (Cocks, 1977, 30). Fear of public disquiet over the investment of large sums of public money on political buildings tends to ensure that politicians treat such projects as something to distance themselves from, especially as the MPs’ expenses scandal continues to cast long shadow over Parliament. When the foundation stone was laid for the ‘new’ Palace of Westminster in 1840, for example, no senior member of the government wished to be associated with the project or attended the ceremony. While responsibility for the maintenance of the estate moved from Government to Parliament in 1992, this has not led to clear, unified management of the Palace. This is exactly why the 2012 Pre-Feasibility Study emphasized the need for ‘a coherent leadership group, capable of providing urgency, vision and focus over a prolonged period’ (2012, 57). Whether clear leadership and a clear vision exists *vis-à-vis* the proposed R&R programme is something discussed further in Part V (below) but what other major design projects around the world have shown is the importance of broad engagement and transparency, especially in relation to the early stages of a design process.

### ***C9. Learning & Scrutiny***

Good design is reflected in buildings that have profited from robust scrutiny of the design decision-making process. It is for exactly this reason that the Joint Committee concluded that there will need to be ‘a clear process’ for consulting members and staff of both Houses during the design development phase. However, it is possible to suggest the proposals that received the support of the Joint Committee in 2016 did not emerge out of an open process of internal scrutiny. Indeed, the decision to remove the option of building a new parliament was taken by the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee without any public consultation or detailed rationale (House of Commons Commission, 2012; House of Lords House Committee, 2012). As a result, the Independent Options Appraisal was focused on a relatively narrow range of options and consideration of more innovative design options were beyond the formal review specification. There has also been relatively little formal engagement with policy learning from an either historical or comparative perspective which might explain the decision by both the Treasury Select Committee and the Public Accounts Committee in January 2017 to launch their own inquiries into the R&R programme. Both inquiries were limited however, with the PAC holding one evidence session before reporting in March 2017. The Treasury Committee published a preliminary report, also in March 2017, which did not discuss or utilise any written evidence received, and while the Committee stated its intention to hold oral evidence sessions, the early dissolution of Parliament ahead of the general election meant the Committee (and the inquiry) ceased to exist. While learning from previous scrutiny episodes is essential, the experience of Sir Charles Barry offers an almost perfect case study of the risk of what recent scholarship on the pathological impact of accountability has termed ‘multiple accountabilities disorder’. Scrutiny committees became the ‘mighty procedural octopus with which Barry slowly became more and more entangled’ and therefore any design-thinking must address the need to somehow balance what Anthony Birch (1964) famously described as both the ‘representative’ and ‘responsible’ elements of the constitution.

### ***C10. Engagement & Triangulation***

In essence, good design—as Simmons’ writing demonstrates— is reflected in buildings that have been designed through a process that embraces creative public engagement and that draws upon a range of knowledge sources. These are the issues that particularly concerned the Speaker of the House of Commons during his ‘Designing for Democracy’ speech of October 2016, in which he, emphasised the need to cultivate an evidence-based ‘public conversation’ about what designing for democracy actually means and its implications for the R&R of the Palace of Westminster (Bercow, 2018). The history and culture of the Palace has not encouraged public engagement during previous reform phases. The usual process has been for a Prime Minister to convene a special select committee to decide upon broad design principles (i.e. general plan, usually based on restore and renew the previous design in keeping with a Neo-Gothic fashion) before a process is undertaken to select the appropriate architectural design firm. This rather narrow and executive-driven decision-making process has not gone unchallenged. For example, when the Select Committee on House of Commons (Rebuilding) reported to the House of Commons on 25 January 1945 with plans for Sir Giles Gilbert Scott to rebuild the bomb-damaged chamber the MP for Shrewsbury, Arthur Duckworth, attempted to expand the design parameters under consideration,

This Chamber which we have been offered will be third-hand Gothic in good taste. It will be a prim, anaemic edition of the old Chamber. Will it have any influence anywhere else in the world? Will it ever be said by future generations that it was symbolic and expressive of our times? Even if, finally, no better solution than the present one can be reached, and even if we cannot approve any alternative, I say that to accept this design without any further consideration, without at least inviting other architects to submit their ideas, is to take the easy and defeatist course; it is to accept and admit that we are bankrupt of imagination, aesthetically dead, indifferent to the arts and indifferent to the claims of younger men (HC Deb 25 Jan 1945 col 1067)

His plea was rejected and this lack of scrutiny and triangulation forms something of a historical pattern. Even the inquiry of the Joint Committee on Restoration and Renewal in 2015 and 2016 demonstrated very little appetite for public engagement or the consideration of a wide range of ideas. Whether this attitude has changed and what this design-led experiment in political science contributes to our understanding of this situation is the focus of the next and final section.

## V. SO WHAT?

This article has presented the results of a research project that has sought to test the claims made for the utility and potential of a design-orientated model of political science. The need for research of this nature was attached to evidence of a ‘double-design dilemma’ (Parts I and II, above), answering the first research question. This evidence flowed into a review of both design-thinking and a framework for the assessment of ‘good’ or ‘intelligent’ design. The value of this framework stemmed from its capacity to offer a clear foundation or evidence-base from which debates about reform could then take place. This is a critical point. In relation to R&R there is no clear agreement amongst politicians of what is ‘wrong’ with the Palace of Westminster (beyond obvious structural frailties) or what characteristics a parliament ‘that is fit for the twenty-first century’ might look like. This is the design-problem or issue-at-hand to which design-theory and design-practice offer a range of thematic reference points derived from international research and experience. What this design approach to political analysis has offered – at a very basic level – is a rational starting point from which these fundamental questions can be answered (table 2, above). It provides exactly that emphasis on sustainability, flexibility, learning and leadership that has arguably been overlooked in the early internal pre-design phases but will at some point have to be broached in order to maximize the long-term success of the project. And yet to mention rationality in the context of what are *political* questions of power and control brings the discussion back to Stoker’s initial advocacy of design thinking and a need to work *back* from the case study to broader issues of the role and potential of political science.

First and foremost, when viewed through the lens of Simmons’ framework for ‘intelligent design’ the Palace of Westminster does not appear to fare very well. Many of the criteria do involve a normative element (views about issues of ‘Leadership and Vision’, for example), and an argument

could also be made that some criteria should be weighted higher than others ('Pride and Identity', for example) but the same criticisms can (and have) been made about hugely influential methodological approaches within political science without detracting from their core value (Arendt Lijphart's ten-variable framework for assessing patterns of democracy, for example). And therefore, while the data and conclusions derived from Part V (above) could be contested at the margins, it is arguably methodologically robust at a broad level. Indeed, the findings of this assessment are supported by internal parliamentary reviews: for example, the Pre-Feasibility Study, concluded that such were the deficiencies in the building that, 'If the Palace were not a listed building of the highest heritage value, its owners would probably be advised to demolish and rebuild' (2012, 5).

This is not to suggest that the design-orientated political science presented in this article necessarily sustains or points towards arguments in favour of abolition. Judged against Simmons' criteria that would certainly appear to be true. But judged against a deeper understanding of the British political tradition what might from one perspective be viewed as the irrational perpetuation of a building that appears and looks to many observers to be an antiquated and out-dated remnant of the pre-democratic *ancien regime* is completely rational due to the manner in which the institutional configuration (i.e. the current design of the Palace of Westminster) 'locks-in' a very specific model of politics. That is a generally elitist, insulated, power-hoarding model of democracy and to open a debate about (re)designing democracy is therefore inevitably to seek to open a debate about the distribution of power within a polity which is why – as a vast amount of historical and comparative institutional analysis reveals – embedded elites will generally seek to maintain tight control over any agenda that may threaten their position.

The role of design from Di Salvi's 'critical design' (2012) perspective is to expose the 'hidden politics' through which those elites seek to maintain their position in order to provoke, disrupt and challenge. The satirical architectural installation entitled 'Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament' by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen operates from this perspective but in the main design is concerned with supporting individuals or organisations to achieve clarity in relation to both the 'design-problem' that needs to be resolved and also the full range of potential 'design-solutions' that could be utilized. The aim is not to uncover some 'correct' or incontrovertible truth but to establish a representation – as this article has done in relation to the R&R of the Palace of Westminster – of the actually existing problem that all participants in the discussion can understand in order to facilitate action (see Simon, 1996, 143). From then on it is for commissioners to make decisions on the basis of that information, evidence and advice which is in many ways exactly the position that Stoker advocates in relation to the role of political science. The distinctive character of politics cannot (and should not) be avoided but in the making critical decisions politicians can at least be informed by – and more importantly held to account against – a rigorous and systematic assessment of the challenge. Bringing this back to the case of R&R what this design-approach has revealed are a number of significant gaps in our knowledge about: how parliament works in terms of its internal governance; about how issues such as resilience or flexibility relate to future-proofing; or how R&R might utilize recent scholarship in relation to sensory democracy (see Flinders and Ryan, 2017) in order to forge new connections not just with disabled visitors but with the public more generally. There is – to put the same point slightly differently – a lack of ambition or imagination, which relates to Simmons' point that, 'Good design is not inevitable; it needs to be championed'. In 2015 the Design Council argued that 'design can reconfigure our democratic places and processes to create a new, integrated approach to democracy fit for future generations'. But what is clearly lacking at the moment is any major political figure who is willing to take on this challenge, to act as a design champion, or what political science would call a 'constitutional entrepreneur', to provide a clear vision and drive through change. This, in turn, might reflect a silent acknowledgment that delivering a parliament that is 'fit for the twenty-first century' within the physical fabric of an ancient Royal Palace and world heritage site is highly problematic to the extent that policy failure of some description is likely. Mention of failure provides an opportunity to (finally) reflect back on the implications of this article in terms of a broader set of arguments concerning the 'failure' of political science and Stoker's more positive and specific emphasis on design thinking.



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<sup>i</sup> For a discussion on the dialectical design relationship see Offe, C. 1995. 'Designing Institutions for East European Transformation', in Goodin, B. ed. *The Theory of Institutional Design*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>ii</sup> For a review of this field of research see McDonnell, J. 2015. 'Gifts to the Future: Design Reasoning, Design Research and Critical Design Practitioners', *Journal of Design, Economics and Innovation*, 1(2), 107-117

<sup>iii</sup> Hansards Parliamentary Debates, cxiii, 727,728,737 (2 Aug 1850)

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<sup>iv</sup> See for example: HL Deb: 10 July 2000 vol 615 cc8-9WA; 29 March 2001 c 437; 21 January 2002 c1334; 22 March 2005 WS17. Although the House of Lords acquired the whole of the Millbank Island Site in 2005 and Millbank House reopened after refurbishment in 2011, a portion of the building at the rear is occupied by a third party on a lease which expires in 2015.

<sup>v</sup> In 1964, before the development of the Commons northern estate, a long serving member gave a personal view of the problem: “This is a scandalous place in which to work.... (). Hon. members are scattered round the place like so many passengers at a great railway terminus which Beeching has closed without telling them about it.“ Hc Deb 13 July 1964, Vol 698 c922