THE GEORGIAN GROUP

Anya Lucas, '"Costly without, richlier inlaid:" London's post-fire Livery Halls', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXVI, 2018, pp. 1–20

TEXT © THE AUTHORS 2018

'COSTLY WITHOUT, RICHLIER INLAID': LONDON'S POST-FIRE LIVERY HALLS

ANYA LUCAS

The decade following the Great Fire of 1666 represents one of the most dynamic stages in the architectural development of the City of London's Livery Halls, a nationally significant yet under-researched group of buildings. From their earliest days the Livery Halls played an important part in the City's civic culture, characterised as it was by a 'complex pattern of separate but interdependent institutions'; they were critical to the Companies, whose survival depended on a 'capacity to provide an environment where the flexible forms of association and exchange conducive to doing business could prosper'.[1] The Companies were established as trade fraternities from the fourteenth century onwards; by the seventeenth their authority and stability was being challenged by general economic and social trends such as the growth of extramural London where guild control could be evaded,[2] and specific events such as enforced loans to the crown, the Civil War, the Great Fire and the *quo warranto* proceedings against corporate charters instigated by Charles II.[3] These threats had important architectural implications. Since the Halls proclaimed the Livery Companies' physical presence in the City, reinforcing this presence and providing a physical environment persuasive enough to retain and enhance Company numbers, even at great expense, became arguably more important than ever for these institutions.[4]

This article contends that the City Livery Companies were among those seventeenth-century patrons for whom buildings were not primarily 'aesthetic statements' but collages of 'heraldry and emblematics' that served 'political motives'.[5] It also argues that the potential for variation and distinctness that the 'richly adorn'd' style offered was particularly pleasing and useful to City patrons such as the Livery Companies, who were seeking to differentiate themselves within the topographically constrained and over-governed Square Mile. John Summerson explicitly associated Artisan Mannerism with the City of London and held its craftsmen responsible for what he regarded as the style's worst excesses.[6] In a now infamous passage of *Georgian London*, a text which remains a classic of English urban history, Summerson derided the taste of early modern London's citizens from a resolutely West End, court-centric standpoint:

> the City folk prided themselves on many things which were merely vulgar to the westerners. They liked fat cornices […] just as they liked starting each day with a draught of sack, over-eating, and pinching each others' fat wives. The City contributed nothing to the arts of the Stuarts and Georgians; it was content with the robust second-rate.[7]

This article follows an injunction to think less about 'ideas of quality' and to look instead at 'seventeenth-century writers about architecture to see what they noticed, thought worth mentioning, and to discover the concepts and competences they used when appreciating architecture'.[8] It thinks more, as contemporaries did, about the materiality of

building – the dressed, textured surface – as well as about such qualities as commodiousness and capaciousness.[9]

Why were the Livery Companies such active builders in what is traditionally regarded as their pivotal century of decline? Economic historians once argued that the Companies of seventeenth-century London were corporate bodies already reconciled to decline and loss of power: 'gothic remnants of a bygone age' and 'hotbeds of economic conservatism'.[10] Starting in the 1980s a new wave of scholarship challenged this decline narrative.[11] It recast the seventeenth century as one in which the Livery Companies, institutions which possessed greater flexibility and stronger survival instincts than was previously thought, retained both their economic and social-symbolic relevance.[12] Mark Knights, for example, asserts that even in the late seventeenth century the Companies

> continued to play an important part in London's civic, religious, political, social and commercial life. That so many […] decided, apparently without controversy, to rebuild their halls after the Great Fire of 1666, and that Kings Charles, James and William were all members of at least one company, are indications of their continuing status after the Restoration.[13]

The link between building activity and continuing status to which Knights alludes has not been the subject of any sustained analysis by historians; architectural patronage is arguably the last area of Company life to be interrogated in the context of this revisionist scholarship. The evidence (chiefly contained in the large corpus of Livery Company records held at Guildhall Library) strongly suggests that building activity was not merely a result of the Companies' continuing status but was critical to it. Though they were funded without any external assistance and in straitened financial circumstances, the Livery Halls were among the first buildings to be reconstructed in the City; the great majority were completed and fitted up by 1675.

LIVERY HALLS: WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS

The Livery Halls were rarely purpose-built and often occupied awkward and constrained sites. Land within the confines of the City walls was prized and freeholds relinquished reluctantly.[14] The Companies tended to acquire medieval courtyard town houses and it was primarily around this type, with its large hall-room and parlour, that their corporate activities and rituals evolved.[15] The whole complex came to be known as a Hall after the room at its centre and this range typically sat behind the principal elevation of the inner courtyard at ground, or sometimes first-floor, level. The courtyard was accessed from the street through a row of shops or tenements belonging to the Company. At the back of the site, furthest from the street and beyond the hall range, there was usually a garden, or simply a yard in the case of the more modest Halls. The sixteenth-century Hall of the Clothworkers' Company followed such an arrangement (Fig. 1). Not all Companies adapted domestic buildings. Nine took advantage of the Dissolution and acquired ranges of monastic complexes; others still converted industrial buildings.[16] Around this, in addition to the Court room or parlour, might be disposed a variety of other reception rooms adorned with tapestries, portraits, plate, turkey carpets and fine furniture. Inventories remind us, too, of the areas and items such as 'pissing places', ovens and lead cisterns that kept the Halls functioning.[17]

DISEMBODIMENT AND DISLOCATION: THE COMPANIES' RESPONSE TO THE FIRE

A common theme of much providentially-minded post-Fire verse and sermon-making was, as Jacob Field has shown, the purgative effect of the flames both on the City's sinful population and on its buildings, which were condemned as either architecturally irregular 'dross' or as sullied by association with the events of the Civil War and

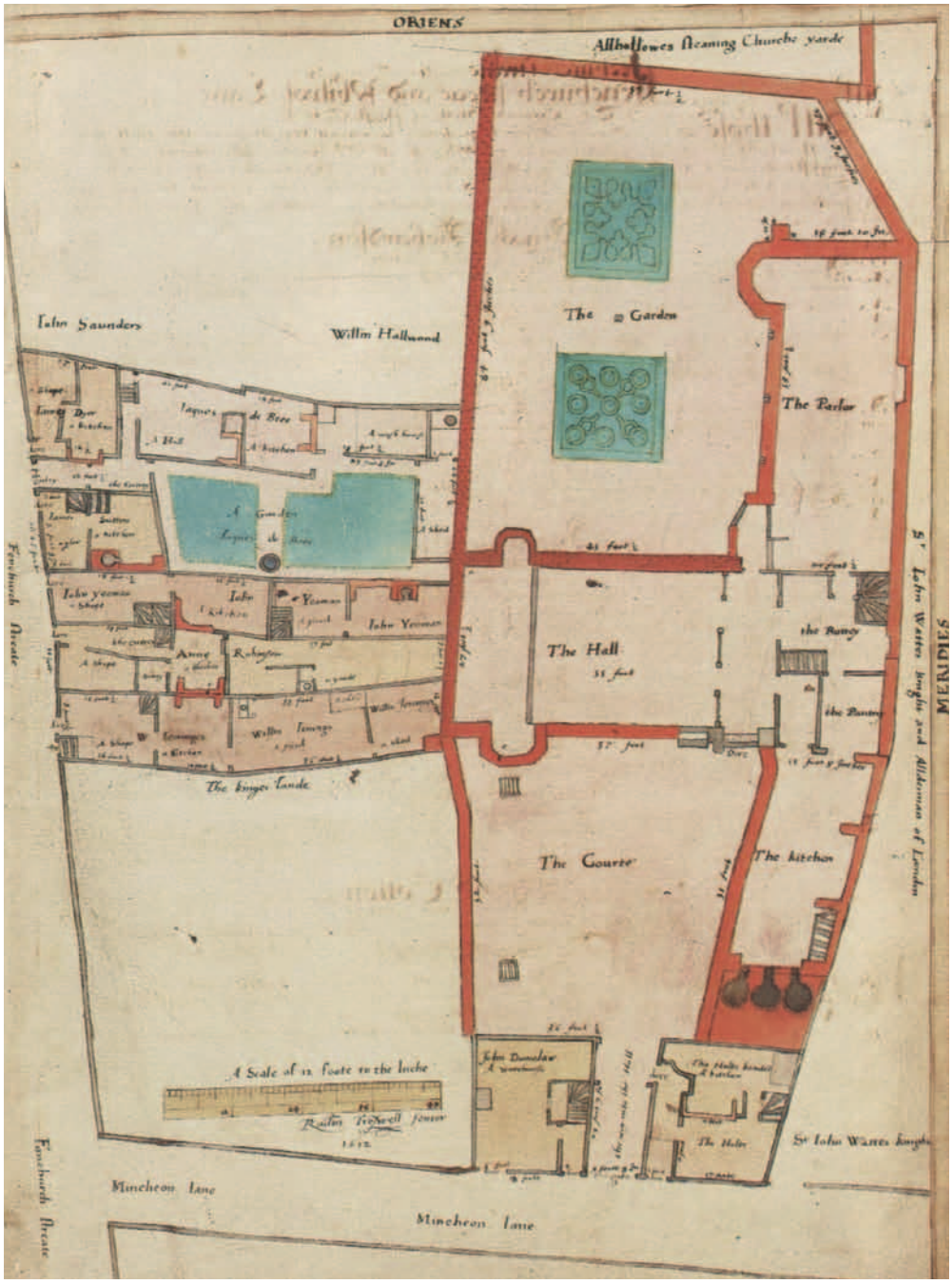

Fig. 1. Watercolour plan of Clothworkers' Hall pre-Fire Hall on Mincing Lane by Ralph Treswell, 1612. Reproduced in John Schofield (ed.), *The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell*. (*London: London Topographical Society, 1987*)

Fig. 2. Wenceslaus Hollar, 'A Map or Groundplott of the Citty of London with the suburbes thereof […] by which is demonstrated the present sad condition of it since the last sad accident of fire, the blanke space signifying the burnt part …'. Etching, 1666. (*British Museum*)

Interregnum.[18] The latter interpretation is strongly in evidence in John Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* (1666), for example, which describes the purifying effect of the Fire on a St Paul's 'prophan'd by civil war'.[19] Others specifically included the Livery Halls, too, in the City's topography of sin.[20] In the midst of the Fire, John Evelyn mourned the loss of the Halls but did so in terms of their ornamental contribution to the City's fabric: 'all the rest of the Companies Halls, sumptuous buildings, arches, entries, all in dust'.[21] Nathaniel Hardy's 1666 sermon *Lamentation, Mourning, and Woe* better captures a sense of what had been lost by citizens: 'let the several Companies weep for the ruine of their Halls, where they were wont to meet each other in love and unity', he intoned.[22]

The Companies' records for the period immediately after the Fire unsurprisingly indicate a profound sense of shock and corporate dislocation. The minutes of their first Court (governing body) meetings following the Fire typically list property burnt in addition to the Hall: sad litanies of loss in line with Hardy's 'let them weep' exhortation.[23] References to the Fire in Court minutes are invariably prefixed with 'most deplorable', 'dismall', 'late lamentable' or 'late sad and dreadfull' as the full implications of the disaster became apparent.

Interim measures were taken remarkably swiftly. Some Companies moved Court meetings to one of the eight unburnt Halls and others met at those private houses and taverns that had escaped the Fire. The Court of the Pewterers' Company, for example,

noted stoically that its meetings would now take place at the Mitre in Aldgate 'since it hath pleased God to destroy ye hall by Fire soe that at this tyme ye company are destitute of a place to meet in as well as ye Beadle of a habitacion'.[24] We are reminded that as well as places to transact Company business, bind apprentices and hold feasts and gatherings, the Halls were also home to at least one full-time member of staff. The Clothworkers' Company, coming to terms with the loss of its Hall as well as a property portfolio across the City worth £540 per annum in rent, met first at Lamb's Chapel by Cripplegate and then made arrangements to use the Leathersellers' Hall, which had narrowly escaped the Fire and stood closer to their Mincing Lane site.[25]

Until its Hall was reconstructed a Company would struggle to discharge its civic duties and participate fully in civic occasions such as Lord Mayor's Day, to the dishonour both of itself and the City. Moreover, as Ian Archer has observed, the Companies liked to invoke the 'rhetoric of antiquity' in order to defend their prerogatives.[26] Without a venerable Hall in which to reverberate, that rhetoric must have felt strangely empty both to the liverymen invoking it and to those at whom it was directed. The vast majority of the Companies, therefore, chose to rebuild after September 1666, but this course of action was by no means straightforward.[27]

A map of the City engraved by Hollar for Charles II in 1666 (Fig. 2) conveys some idea of the vacuum created by the Great Fire and the enormity of the task of rebuilding. This plan and others like it were not only mapping the trauma of the Fire, they were also topographical chessboards which invited speculation about who was going to make the first move towards reconstruction. Before Hollar's engraving was published, there had been several proposals for filling the vacuum. Plans submitted to Charles II by Christopher Wren and John Evelyn in the week following the Fire would have seen the City's erratic medieval street plan swept away in favour of a more uniform street-plan of straight avenues, *rond-points* and piazzas. The maneuvering and manipulation of the Livery Halls' sites were key to the realisation of both. According to *Parentalia*, which provides a second-hand explanation of the drawing, Wren's design would have seen the Halls of the Great Twelve grouped 'into one regular Square annexed to Guild-hall'.[28] Evelyn's design, recorded in a late eighteenth-century etching, would have placed the Halls around the City on the main axes 'between the piazzas, market places and churches […] fronted with stone [and] adorned with statues'.[29] The Halls were thus treated as moveable elements in proposals which reveal little understanding of the Companies' long-standing connection to certain sites or of the near sanctity of private property ownership in the City.

THE HALLS AND THE WIDER RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CITY

Less than a week after the Fire had ended, on 13 September 1666, Charles II issued a proclamation blocking 'hasty and unskilful building' in the immediate aftermath of the disaster so that proposals for reconstruction could be sifted and assessed, and surveying work accommodated.[30] The secretary of the Royal Society, Henry Oldenburg, recorded in correspondence with Robert Boyle on 2 October that London was divided on the question of rebuilding.[31] On the one hand there were those who supported new models such as those advanced by Christopher Wren and John Evelyn. On the other were those who would rebuild like-for-like simply using less flammable materials. Wren's plan would have involved vast sums of money not readily available. England was embroiled in the Second Anglo-Dutch conflict and, as Oldenburg noted, 'the great stresse will be, how to raise money for carrying on the warre and to rebuild the citty at the same time'.[32] A new model of the type proposed by Wren and Evelyn would also have taken a great deal of

time, not least because it would have involved highly complex arrangements for the compulsory purchase and re-allocation of land parcels. Concern that citizens would desert the City was real.[33]

After the meeting to which Oldenburg alluded on 2 October, the Privy Council announced Charles II's intention of appointing a commission for the reconstruction of the City comprising Wren, and the gentleman architects Hugh May and Sir Roger Pratt. To these the City delegation added Robert Hooke, Peter Mills, and the former City Carpenter and highly experienced builder Edward Jerman. The discussions and the surveys of the burnt City conducted by these six men, the three King's Commissioners and the three City Surveyors, led to the first 'act for the rebuilding' which received royal assent on 8 February 1666/7 in time for the 1667 building season. Negotiations between the Privy Council and the City resulted in a piece of legislation that corresponded to the 'middle way' as described by Oldenburg.

In the immediate aftermath of the Fire the Companies were respectful of interventions made by the authorities to prevent unregulated and hasty building. The proclamation Charles II issued regarding rebuilding on 13 September appears to have made a powerful impression on the Courts of the Tallow Chandlers' and Clothworkers' Companies, for example, both of which happened to meet that day. The former received petitions from their tenants asking for repayment of their leases but dismissed them declaring:

> until his Majestie's pleasure shall be fully knowne how affaires between landlords and tenants shall be settled, and how buildings may be carried upp on demolished foundations; this Companie knows not how to give any Resolution.[34]

The Clothworkers' Court also declared itself powerless to act. A tenant of two of the Company's houses by St James in the Wall petitioned that day 'to take the care & charges of the timber and other materials of these buildings which were blown up for prevention of the rageing and increasing fire', but the Court resolved that neither he nor they should 'medle'.[35] In line with the royal proclamation and precepts issued by the Court of Common Council, the Companies did, however, start to clear their land of rubbish. The Clothworkers ordered

> that ye Iron, Brick & Rubbish & other materialls of building belonging to this Companie & which are now remayninge upon ye Companies ground and in the Cellars on which theire Comon Hall & houses adjacent lately stood bee forthwith cleared & secured in the back yard and vaults thereunto belonging to this Companie.[36]

Securing the site and protecting the integrity of vaults and cellarage was vital. The Clothworkers appear to have been particularly security conscious, employing watchmen and spending 21*s*. on four guard dogs.[37] Consolidation and clearing were, for the present, the only legitimate activities and Company records for autumn 1666 tend to follow a similar pattern.

Both Wren and Evelyn had envisaged the maneuvering and manipulation of the Halls, but even once their plans had been abandoned re-siting remained a possibility. This question was one of a number discussed as part of negotiations between the City authorities and the king following the Fire. Charles II retained hope of influencing the overall design of the new City in the first months of 1666/7.[38] Indeed he took a direct and specific interest in the Livery Halls and proposed that the buildings of the lesser companies be erected along the Thames Quay.[39] The Halls ultimately stayed resolutely on their pre-Fire plots, however. The Companies' records demonstrate undoubted awareness of and adherence to the wider legislative framework for rebuilding provided by the 1667 Act, but few signs of outside interference. Livery Hall building projects proceeded with only minimal involvement from the City Corporation, the King's Commissioners and City Surveyors.[40]

Fig. 3. Plan or 'platforme' of the Clerk's house and gates in front of the Brewers' Hall on Addle Street, 1671. (*Guildhall Library, MS 5502*)

SURVEYING AND ENABLING DEVELOPMENT

The progress of building projects in which so much was at stake was of paramount importance and, in all Companies, this was overseen by a dedicated special committee of liverymen who 'treated' with surveyors, craftsmen and workmen. Each Company appointed a committee for rebuilding comprising four to six members of the Court of Assistants (with a minimum quorum of three). The appointment of committees to manage rebuilding projects was not a post-Fire innovation; repair work at the Halls had been directed in this way since the sixteenth century and probably earlier. They were empowered to borrow money at interest using the Company's common seal, negotiate and direct craftsmen, and 'peruse the workemens bills and accompts'.[41]

Before reconstruction began, all of the Livery Hall sites were surveyed in accordance with the first Act for Rebuilding by one of the City Surveyors: this was typically John Oliver, although Peter Mills's and Robert Hooke's hands feature in some cases, too. The Brewers and Tallow Chandlers both took standard approaches to reconstruction by erecting income-generating buildings on their street fronts of their Hall complexes before beginning work on their hall ranges. In June 1669, the Brewers decided

to rebuild a house for their Clerk as the first phase of reconstruction. They agreed with their bricklayer Aldridge he was to have '42 shillings a Rod solid measure for the brick worke & he to find scaffolding & that for extraordinary worke he should be paide besides'. Aldridge declared his acceptance on condition he be considered 'for what is done extraordinary more than the Act of Parliament appointed for a 2*d.* Rate Building'. By 1 March 1669/70 the rebuilding committee was able to hold a first meeting at the new house in Addle Street.[42] Unusually, many of the Brewers' post-Fire rebuilding papers survive (GL MS 5502) and among them is a 'platforme' or plan of this Addle Street range (Fig. 3). The Clerk's house can be seen on the right, while on the left are two shop units with kitchens behind and, presumably, rentable living quarters above.

By January 1667/8 the Tallow Chandlers had commissioned designs for four houses on Dowgate Street in front of their Hall site from Edward Jerman and Captain John Caine (Jerman died in November 1668, but his widow was paid £300 after his death for 'paines taken by him in drawing certaine plots and giving his advice for in and about ye building of the companies fower new Brick Houses att Dowgate'). In July, the committee instructed the carpenter William Stanton to complete 'before the Last Day of August now next coming the Roofes of and for all the ffower houses now a building for this Company att Dowgate, and make the same fitt to be tyled and covered'.[43] The following winter, Caine was busy measuring the work and the Company was already receiving petitions from prospective tenants wanting to take leases on the new houses.[44] It was this form of development that enabled Companies such as the Tallow Chandlers to embark on construction of the rest of their complexes.

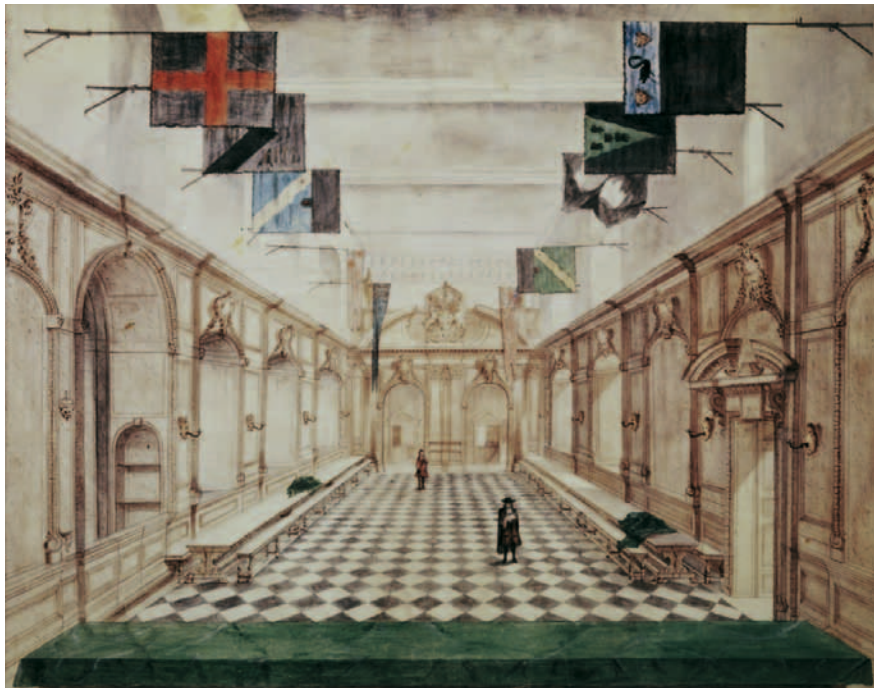

Fig. 4. John Ward, interior of the Goldsmiths' Hall, 1692. (*The Goldsmiths' Company*)

MODELS, PATTERNS AND COMPETITIVE COMPARISON

One of the rebuilding committees' tasks was to select the best models. Indeed the Brewers' Court minutes list viewing 'new built Halls in London' as their rebuilding committee's chief function, followed by treating 'with workmen about building the Companies Hall'. On 29 March 1670 we find the committee discharging this duty:

> In the morning a view was taken by the said Committee of severall new built Halls in London in order to Rebuilding the Companies Hall by the most suitable patterns vizt.
>
> Coopers Hall
> Weavers Hall
> Skinners Hall
> Fishmongers Hall
> Drapers Hall
> were viewed.[45]

We know, therefore, that the Brewers' committee visited at least five other Halls before beginning work on their own. Four of these buildings (the Coopers', Weavers', Fishmongers' and Drapers' Halls) had been completed with the assistance, before his death in November 1668, of the City Surveyor Edward Jerman, who had acted as designer/architect or surveyor/contractor for several other Halls besides.[46] Having completed their view, the Brewers turned to the design of their own building and declared they wanted the 'two Corners of the Hall & the Windows [to] be of Rustick Stone as the Coopers Hall is'. The Brewers' committee repeated this exercise in March the following year when the carcass of their Hall was ready to be fitted out, ordering 'that a View be taken of Companies Hall in London wainscoted & a report thereof made to the Company'.[47]

When the Tallow Chandlers' rebuilding committee were commissioning their new hall screen from the joiner John Symes they ordered it was 'to have a front in the middle as is in the Middle of the plot drawne for the Upper end of Gouldsmiths Hall and then shewed unto the said Committee' (Fig. 4).[48] Likewise the Warden's accounts for the Society of Apothecaries show that in April 1670 money was spent 'on the view of clothworkers hall' and 'viewing severall halls'.[49] This kind of competitive comparison and pattern-taking is highly characteristic of the Livery Companies' building activity though not unique to it. The vestry of St Lawrence Jewry, for example, resolved in 1676 that the 'pewing and lining of walls at St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey be a pattern for this Church' and asked their mason Edward Pearce to use the pulpit of St Magnus as his model.[50] The over-governed and finely-grained seventeenth-century City had an excessive number of parish churches, just as it had a profusion of Livery Halls. The selection of models and patterns

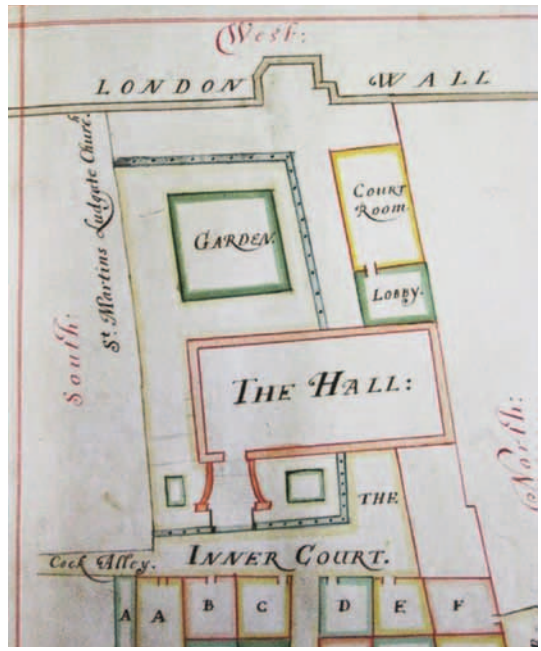

Fig. 5. William Leybourn, plan of the Stationers' Hall off Ave Maria Lane made on completion in 1674. Fol. 3 of a plan book in the Company's possession. (*Stationers' Company*)

absorbed much committee and Court time and decisions were reached in a remarkably democratic fashion, through lengthy debate and occasionally by putting options to the vote.

RE-EMBODIMENT AND RESTORATION: THE HALLS COMPLETED

After the dislocation created by the destruction of the Halls in the Fire, the Companies' response to the completion of their new buildings was, unsurprisingly, one of enormous relief. The Halls were at the centre of restored civic order and ritual and the Court of the Tallow Chandlers noted proudly on 30 October 1671:

> The Master Wardens and Livery of this Company attended the Right Hon:ble Lord Major of the Citty of London […] to and from Westminster it being his oath day; And att their Returne dyned att and in their new rebuilded Comon Hall att a dyner.[51]

We see, in particular, a return to the rhetoric of antiquity. On completion of their new Hall the Vintners made preparations for election day 'according to antient custome'.[52] While the Halls might be 'new rebuilded', as far as the Companies were concerned they were still 'ancient' in essence.

'BUILDINGS IN RETIREMENT PLAC'D': THE POST-FIRE PLAN AND CONTEXT

From the perspectives of both income-generation and cost-saving, rebuilding on old foundations and replicating the traditional courtyard plan had much to recommend it as an approach to reconstruction of the Halls after the Great Fire. As the 1667 poem 'On the Rebuilding of London' explains:

> More sumptuous Buildings in Retirement plac'd
> Are the Emblem of the wary Citie's trade;
> Their Streets and Shops much better lin'd than fac'd,
> Costly without, but richlier inlaid.[53]

Fig. 6. John Ward, Ground plan of Goldsmiths' Hall on Foster Lane, 1692. (*Goldsmiths' Company*)

Fig. 7. Vintners' Hall (1671–75) seen from Thames Street. Drawing, *c.*1780. (*British Museum*)

Most of the Companies adopted this policy of 'retiring' from the street and investing the greater part of the ornament within the complex in their rebuildings. Figure 5 shows William Leybourn's ground plan of the Stationers' complex from the plan book he made of the Company's newly rebuilt property in 1674. The Hall, designed and built by Robert Wapshott, is open to Cock Alley but then concealed behind a range of tenements belonging to the Company, seen at the bottom of the plan, on Ave Maria Lane. The backside of the hall range faces the garden, as is usual with the type. Unsurprisingly, the plan of Edward Jerman's Goldsmiths' Hall (completed 1669) exactly replicates that of its pre-Fire predecessor since the earlier building by Nicholas Stone was only partially destroyed (Fig. 6). Here Stone had achieved a rare instance of pre-Fire courtyard symmetry by placing the hall room off-centre to allow the screens passage entrance to align exactly with the central doorcase of the street range.

There were some exceptions to the 'retirement' rule. The Vintners' Company, for example, decided after a lengthy discussion not to rebuild a street range:

> It being this day debated whether the gateway should be built over or left open and made with a hansome brick wall on each side and the same being put to the voate it was ordered that the same should not bee built over, but left open with a hansome bricke wall according to a designe drawne by Mr Lem.[54]

The result was a *cour d'honneur* or a building around 'three sides of a Quadrangle' separated from the street by the brick wall mentioned.[55] Entry was through an iron gate flanked by freestone piers topped with a Bacchus sitting on three tuns, a device found on the shield of the Company's coat of arms. The hall range could, therefore, be easily viewed from Thames Street (Fig. 7). Though Fishmongers' Hall was also rebuilt around a courtyard, its principal elevation faced the river (Fig. 8).

When the street range of a Hall was rebuilt, decisions had to be made about what should appear there, and what ornaments and marks of distinction

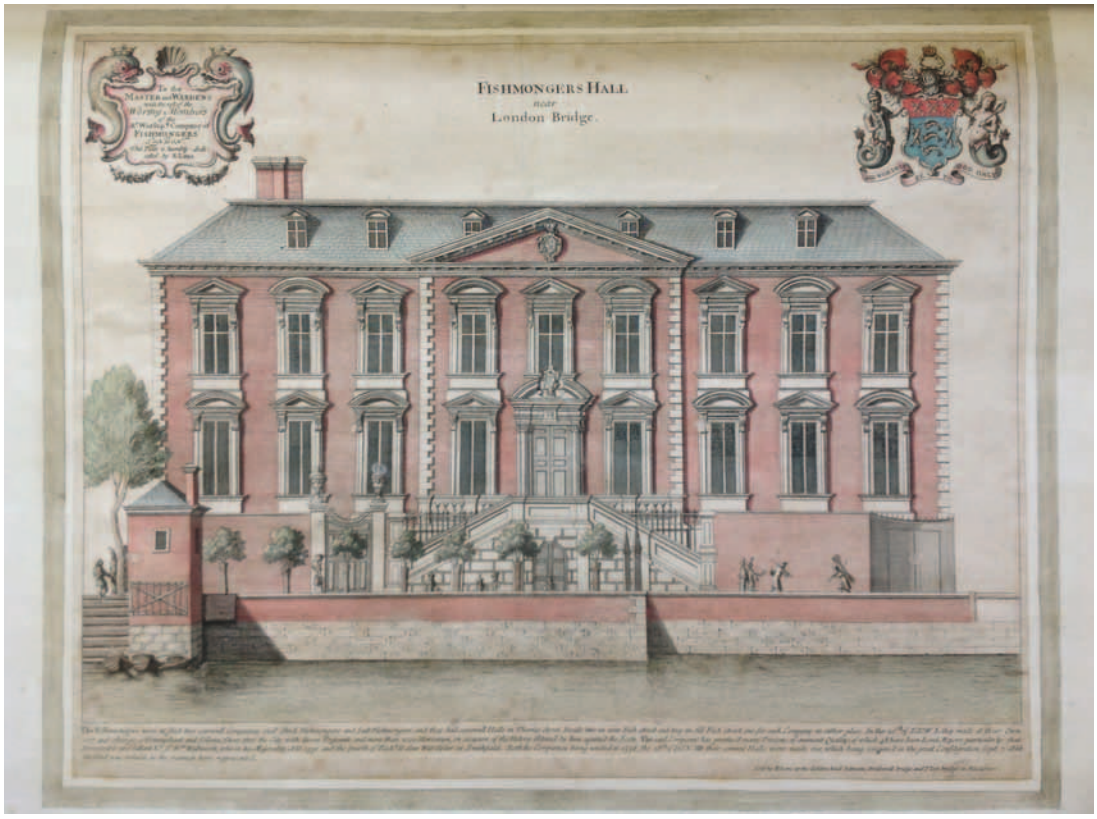

Fig. 8. Bernard Lens, engraving of the river front of the post-Fire Fishmongers' Hall, built 1667–69. (*Society of Antiquaries, London*)

should be reserved for the inner complex: the process of facing and lining described in the poem quoted above. Obscurity was a risk, but with limited resources, spending vast sums on adorning an elevation comprising shops or tenements was not necessarily a sensible course of action. The result was a degree of focused investment on the street range, with the rest of the display reserved for the exterior of the main hall range and, in particular, the interiors. It is this phenomenon of recessive display that led John Strype to observe of the post-Fire Halls that many were 'little inferior to some Princes Palaces' but 'lie for the most part backwards, and cannot be taken notice of by strangers'.[56]

Gates were the natural focus of the street range; in addition to securing the Hall complex, they had an important function as objects which 'structured […] performances of welcome and hospitality' throughout the City.[57] This symbolic function carried with it an expectation of ornament, and so scrollwork, festoons, swags, garlanded Ionic capitals, swan-necks, over-sized coats of arms under shell hoods or breaching segmental pediments, and other ornaments were deployed on this pinchpoint in the plan. Sometimes the architectural emphasis given to a Hall's door or gate extended the full height of an otherwise plain brick elevation creating a vertical 'sliver of splendour'. The centrepiece of the Mercers'

post-Fire street elevation – salvaged in the nineteenth century and refixed on the front of Swanage Town Hall in Dorset – is the most impressive example (Fig. 9).[58] Such frontispieces operated as an index of what lay beyond. Indeed Strype likened the relationship of Hall complex to street gate to the way 'Hercules Body may be judged by his Foot'.[59]

The joiner Thomas Whiting's early design for a frontispiece for the Brewers' Company (Fig. 10) is illustrative of how the contrivers of some post-Fire Halls were forced to think vertically and to pile up this signifying ornament on the street range. At street level, a fleshy cartouche fills a segmental pediment flanked by pilasters topped with foliage capitals. At the next stage is a tripartite mullioned and transomed window which appears to be an adaptation of a Serliana.[60] The window is topped by a keystone filled with a carved head and flanked by leafy scrolls. Above this, two scrolls support the sketchily rendered Moorish woman device of the Brewers' Company. The third stage holds another tripartite window, this time divided by two straight mullions. It is flanked by festoons of carved fruit and topped by palm fronds which hold a cartouche bearing the numerals '1669'. Surmounting the whole frontispiece is a pedimented dormer window above a parapet which is flanked by two over-sized squashed volutes. Whiting's was an eclectic and sophisticated design for a frontispiece which was required to carry a heavy symbolic burden on the Brewers' behalf in a confined corner of the City.

On the other side of the Hall complex, in the deepest part of the plan, was usually to be found a garden or yard on the backside of the hall range. This area was evidently not a high priority architecturally speaking in the post-Fire Halls, though it provided an important space for recreation and was typically well-maintained and planted. A series of pen and ink and watercolour views of the post-Fire Halls made *c.*1794 by the artist, engraver and author Samuel

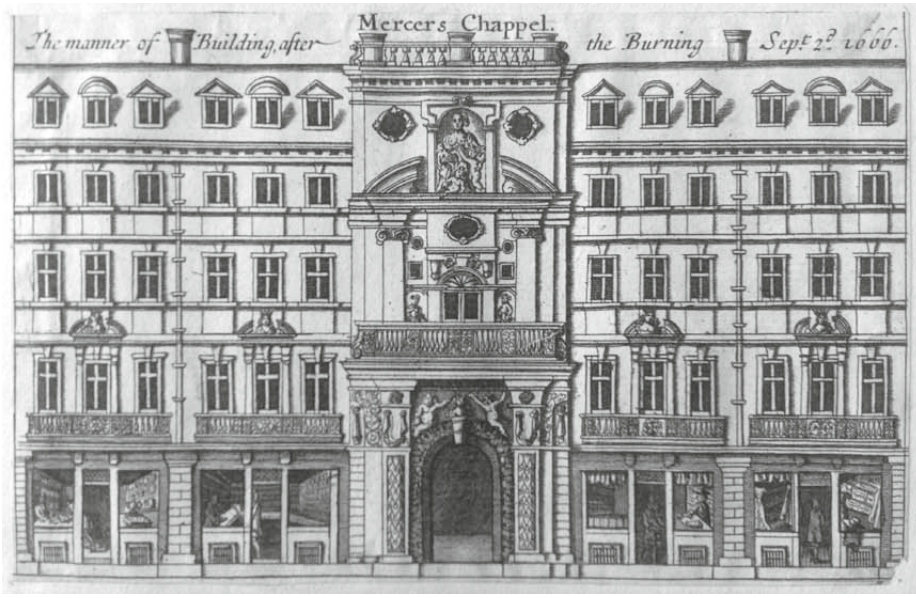

Fig. 9. Early print of the Cheapside elevation of Mercers' Hall, built by John Oliver 1668–82 to outlines suggested by Edward Jerman. The ornate centrepiece (now in Swanage, Dorset) incorporates the figures of Faith, Hope and Charity. (*London Metropolitan Archives*)

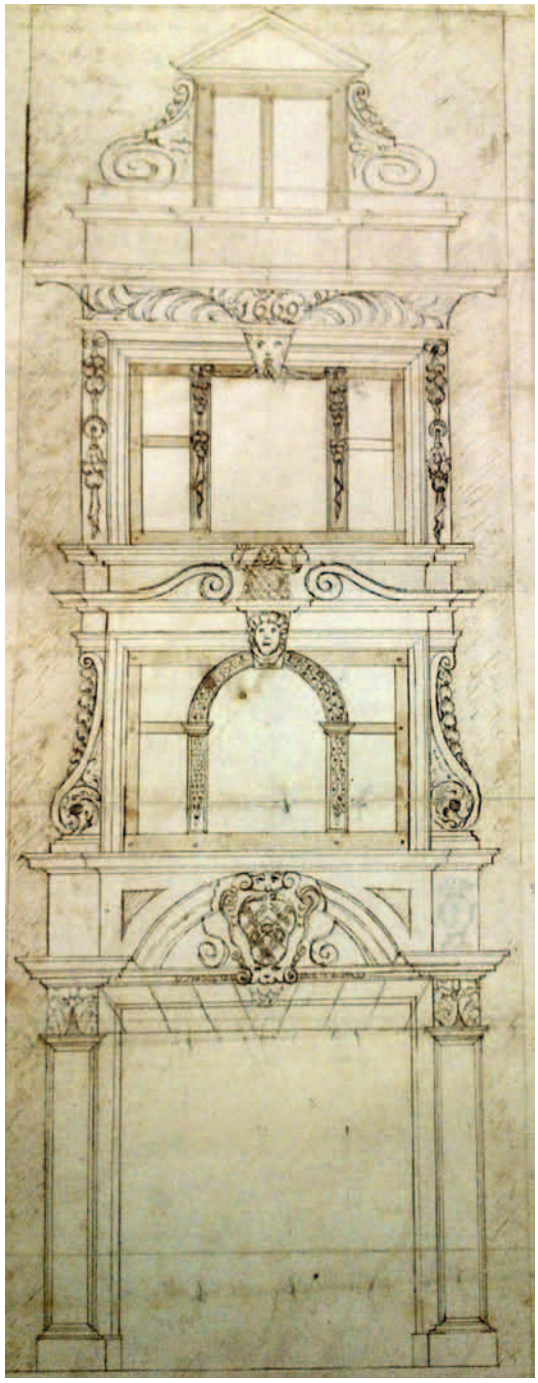

Fig. 10. Thomas Whiting's 'Platforme for the Hall Front, Brewers' Hall, 1669'. (*GL MS 5502*)

Ireland also points to the relative lack of investment in ornament on the Halls' garden elevations. His view of the garden side of Painter-Stainers' Hall, for example, shows a jostling composite of chimney stacks and different window types (*oeil de boeuf*, the Serliana of the type seen in Whiting's 'platforme', and dormers and casements); water is filling a serviceable lead cistern in the lower right-hand corner, while a glimpse through open casement windows reveals a more ornamental interior (Fig. 11).

'COSTLY WITHOUT, BUT RICHLIER INLAID': THE DESIGN AND DECORATION OF THE HALLS

The exterior elevations of the Halls, aside from the gates and frontispieces, were often relatively plain; typically brick elevations with stone dressings. One recurring component of the post-Fire Hall courtyard, however, was the open arched loggia or arcade, a classicising feature found, for example, at Brewers' Hall, Tallow Chandlers' Hall (Fig. 12) and Drapers' Hall. At all three these took the form of moulded and keyed elliptical arches resting on rusticated piers, with engaged columns on the outer face and carved work in the arches. Edward Hatton described the Drapers' Hall as:

> a very spacious noble Building, containing the four sides of a Quadrangle, each side elevated on Columns and adorned with Arches by which there are constituted Piazzas, and between each Arch is a shield mantling and other Fret Work.[61]

The 'Piazza's adorned with Columns and Arches of the Tuscan Order' were the main feature he noted at the other two Halls as well.[62]

The 'piazza' was a prestige architectural component. The contemporary term 'piazza' for an arcade derived from Inigo Jones's work at Covent Garden in the 1630s, as Gerbier explained: 'The undermost part of a Front (as many Palaces in Padua and other Cities in Italy) is left open as the Gallery

in the Bedfort-Piazza'.[63] The origins of the loggia are long and complex. Evelyn, writing in 1664, noted that the ancients favoured 'terraced and cloister'd buildings porticos' and suggested that 'galleries, atrias & co. contiguous to, or standing out from the body of edifices [...] are becomingly proper'.[64] There were pre-Fire intra-mural precedents for the arcaded quadrangle, too, most notably at Sir Thomas Gresham's Royal Exchange building of 1571. Its counterpart, the New Exchange on the Strand, completed in 1609, had an arcade 201 feet long facing the street in an arrangement characteristic of Jacobean enthusiasm for loggias.[65]

Elsewhere, a loggia also covered the entrance to John Wildgos's Salters' Hall – this time one with square fluted columns and coffering in the soffits of the arches. Hatton also noted an Ionic 'piazza' in the inner courtyard of Fishmongers' Hall.[66]

Another shared feature of the Halls was the *oeil de boeuf* window – an oval or round light – as a design accent in an elevation or room. These adorned a large proportion of the Halls, either singly or in rows as the views of the Tallow Chandlers', Apothecaries', Brewers' Salters' and Turners' Halls demonstrate. Elliptical windows were ranged in a row above the main, square-headed windows on the Stationers' Hall elevation, lit the Court Room of the Brewers' Hall and adorned the main elevations of Blacksmiths' Hall and Grocers' Hall. These windows, now most readily associated with French Baroque architecture, featured in Serlio's designs (partially available in translation in England from 1611). More immediately, Jones used them in refacing St Paul's in the 1630s, and they are found on many 'Artisan Mannerist' buildings, including Raynham Hall (1635). This window type was widely used in the post-Fire City churches, too. A delight in variety and in the curves and lines of different forms is no doubt one reason these windows were popular with the Companies. Another was presumably this form's well-established association with elite building types and patrons, both within and without the walls.

Fig. 11. Samuel Ireland, 'Painters' Hall, Little Trinity Lane', *c.*1794.
(*Yale Center for British Art*)

Fig. 12. Samuel Ireland, 'Tallow Chandlers' Hall, Dowgate Hill', *c.*1794.
(*Yale Center for British Art*)

Ornamental loggias, windows, and gates aside, greater decorative investment was undoubtedly expended by the Companies on the interiors of their Halls, particularly when it came to wainscotting and plastering. Fine wainscotting in the hall and Court room and carved screens and chimneypieces abound in these buildings and could be said to be their defining feature. Such wainscotting offered opportunities for an enormous number of combinations of motifs, which typically incorporated those devices and symbols that represented the Company in question.

One notable joiner who worked at both the Halls of the Vintners and the Tallow Chandlers was John Symes (or sometimes Symms).[67] His carved festoons, volutes and classical ornament in the Court room of the former and in the hall and parlour of the latter are extant. The Tallow Chandlers' parlour wainscotting was completed in 1674 as the gift of Sir Joseph Sheldon; its fireplace has a carved bay-leaf architrave (apparently a favourite feature of Symes's), an acanthus frieze, and an overmantel crowned with the Stuart royal arms and foliage festoons.[68] Symes had also been employed at Brewers' Hall once that building was structurally complete in early 1672 and the job of decorating and ornamenting had begun. In October of that year the Company appointed Symes for the sum of £355 to wainscot their hall. His surviving agreement indicates the complexity of the design he had submitted.[69] The result was perhaps one of the finest wainscotted Restoration interiors in the City (Fig. 13). The wainscot reached

to just beneath the oval windows and the festooned shields in the six frontispieces down each side of the hall held the arms of a benefactor to the rebuilding. The arms and names of the wardens for the year 1673 were included over the pedimented door in the north side. The screen, dated 1673, included elaborate carved spandrels and a large broken pediment holding the Company's arms and the crest of a Moorish woman. Either side of it sat carved putti astride the barrels of the brewing trade.

Elsewhere, Joiners' Hall, a building with a restrained and barely ornamented exterior, was 'richlier inlaid' with a fine display of wainscotting and carving, as Hatton noted:

> This Hall is remarkably curious for a magnificent Screen (as you enter the Hall) having demy Savages and other variety Enrichments well carved in right Wainscot, and the great Parlour is wainscotted with Cedar.[70]

Thomas Whiting was employed between 1673 and 1675, and another leading joiner, William Cleare, was paid in the region of £200 for work carried out between 1675 and 1676.[71] The Clothworkers' accounts show that the wainscotting of that Hall was carried out by the joiners 'Day' and 'Kedge'.[72] The wainscotting was dismantled and auctioned off in 1856 but two swags and two festoons survive in the collection of the V&A.[73] The Mercers' Company

Fig. 13. Wainscotting on the north side of the Brewers' hall room by John Symes (now destroyed). Cartouches over the pedimented door hold the arms of the Company's wardens for 1673. (*London Metropolitan Archives*)

also invested heavily in fine wainscotting and carving. Between 1676 and 1682 the carvers Richard Cleare (whom we encountered at the pre-Fire Cutlers' Hall), Ralph Morice, John Miller, and John Baker worked to produce fine examples of their craft including a decorative overmantel for the Ladies' Parlour which survives in the Company's present Hall.[74]

Where ornament was used on the Halls, we have seen how it was characterised by fine craftsmanship, a certain kind of legibility, and great variety. This visual diversity may be attributed both to the inventiveness and individualism of City craftsmen, as well as to the pleasure each group of liverymen took in being able to contrast their own, specific corporate identity with those of other Companies. City craftsmen appear to have had a natural aptitude for what Evelyn called 'dexterity in contriving'. Bound as they were to their pre-Fire sites and to use structural materials stipulated by legislation, ornament was always going to be the arena that provided the Companies as patrons, and their craftsmen, with the most potential for invention. It is certainly through analysis of the Halls' impasted fronts and gates, and the ornament inlaid in their principal rooms, that we get closest to an understanding of these complexes' use and function, and to what mattered to the Companies as architectural patrons. Although the early modern Halls were increasingly the recipients of forms of ornamentation that were fashionable, and to that extent generic, fashion was never allowed to eclipse their primary function of communicating corporate virtue, antiquity and authority.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Christine Stevenson (Courtauld Institute of Art) who supervised the 2015 thesis from which this article is drawn: (Anya Matthews), 'London's Livery Halls, 1603–84: Their Architecture and Political Uses'.

ENDNOTES

1 Derek Keene, 'Livery Companies: What, When and Why?', in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450–1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research in association with Guildhall Library), pp. 171–74, on pp. 172–73.

2 J.R. Kellett, 'The Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 10 (1958–9): 381–94.

3 Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis, 'Introduction', in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450–1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research in association with Guildhall Library), pp. 1–14, on p. 3.

4 Gadd and Wallis, 'Introduction', p. 5.

5 Caroline Van Eck, 'Artisan Mannerism: Seventeenth-Century Rhetorical Alternatives to Sir John Summerson's Formalist Approach', in *Summerson and Hitchcock: Centenary Essays on Architectural Historiography*, ed. Frank Salmon (New Haven; London, 2006), p. 99.

6 John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530–1830*, London, 9th edn (New Haven and London, 1993), p. 142.

7 John Summerson, *Georgian London* (London, 1948), p. 43. On the book's context, reception and impact, see Michela Rosso, 'Georgian London Revisited', *London Journal* 26, no. 2 (2001): 35–50.

8 Van Eck , 'Artisan Mannerism', pp. 101–02.

9 Lucy Gent, '"The Rash Gazer": Economies of Vision in Britain, 1550–1660', in *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550–1660*, ed. Lucy Gent (New Haven and London, 1995), pp. 379–80.

10 S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, 'Introduction', in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400–1800*, ed. S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 1–24, on p. 1. See, for example, George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London, 1908) and S. Kramer, *The English Craft Guilds: Studies in their Progress and Decline* (New York, 1927).

11 Michael Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline? London Livery Companies and the Rise of a Liberal

Economy, 1600–1800', in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy*, 1400–1800, ed. S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 316–41, on p. 327.

12 Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline?', pp. 322–25.

13 Mark Knights, 'A City Revolution: The Remodelling of the London Livery Companies in the 1680s', *English Historical Review* 112 (1997): pp. 1141–78, on p. 1143.

14 *The City of London: A Record of Destruction and Survival* (London, 1947), pp. 130–34. The Brewers' Company, for example, purchased the freehold of its site from the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's as late as 1860, 400 years after it first occupied premises there.

15 John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven and London, 1995), p. 44; Katherine Giles, 'The 'Familiar' Fraternity: The Appropriation and Consumption of Medieval Guildhalls in Early Modern York', in *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain*, ed. Sarah Tarlow and Susie West (London, 1999), pp. 87–102, on p. 90.

16 Robert Scourfield, 'The Livery Company Hall, 1536–1666' (MA dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1993), pp. 2–5.

17 Guildhall Library, London (hereafter GL), MS 5445/21, fol. 55r, 24 February 1671/2.

18 Jacob F. Field, 'Reactions and responses to the Great Fire: London and England in the later seventeenth century' (Ph.D. thesis, Newcastle University, 2008), p. 329.

19 John Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis*: *The Year of Wonders, 1666, An Historical Poem* (Hamburg: Tredition, 2013), verse 276.

20 Henry Hesketh, *A sermon preached before the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London at Guild-Hall Chappel, upon the second of September, 1679* (London: Printed by A. Godbid, and J. Playford, for Will. Leach …, 1679), pp. 13–14.

21 John Evelyn, *The diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1955), Vol. 3, p. 460.

22 Nathaniel Hardy, *Lamentation, mourning, and woe sighed forth in a sermon preached in the parish-church of St. Martin in the Fields, on the 9th day of September* (London: Tho. Newcomb for William Grantham, 1666), lines 23–24.

23 See, for example, the Tallow Chandlers' Court book, GL MS 6153/3, fols 116r and 117v, 13 September and 18 October 1666.

24 GL MS 7090/6, 18 September 1666. The Clothworkers' accounts for that year record 8*s*. 'paid att the Bull Inn in Bishopsgate streete when the Committee met about Rebuilding' and another payment for meeting at the Castle Taverne in Breadstreete. Clothworkers' Company CL/D/5/10, fol. 9v.

25 CL/B/1/10, fols 32v, 46v, 13 September 1666, 17 January 1666/7.

26 Ian Archer, 'Discourses of History in Elizabethan and Early Modern London', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 68 (2005): 205–26, on p. 207.

27 T.F. Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London* (London, 1951), pp. 252–54.

28 Christopher Wren, (ed.), *Parentalia: or, Memoirs of the family of the Wrens… chiefly of Sir Christopher Wren… Compiled, by his Son Christopher, now published by his Grandson, Stephen Wren, Esq., With the Care of Joseph Ames* (London: T. Osborn and R. Dodsley, 1750), pp. 268–70.

29 John Evelyn, *London Revived, Consideration for its Rebuilding in 1666*, ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 41.

30 John E.N. Hearsey, *London and the Great Fire* (London: John Murray, 1965), p. 181; Michael Cooper, *'A More Beautiful City': Robert Hooke and the Rebuilding of London After the Great Fire* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003), p. 106.

31 Henry Oldenburg, *The Correspondence, vol. 3: 1667–1667*, ed. A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 238.

32 Oldenburg, *Correspondence,* p. 115.

33 Reddaway, *Rebuilding of London*, p. 42.

34 GL MS 6153/3, fol. 116r.

35 CL/B/1/10, fol. 31r.

36 CL/B/1/10, fol. 31r.

37 CL/D/5/10, fol. 9v.

38 Reddaway, *Rebuilding of London,* p. 105.

39 London Metropolitan Archives, COL/CC/01/01/044, Journal of the Court of Common Council, no. 46, 1665–1669, 6 March 1666/7.

40 The two important exceptions are the Halls of the Fishmongers' and Stationers' Companies which both attracted royal interest; the former because of

its riverside position, and the latter because of its political importance.

41 GL MS 7151/1, 1 February 1660/1, fol. 414r.

42 GL MS 5445/20, fol. 240r.

43 GL MS 6153/3, fols 134r/v – 135r/v, 10 January 1667/8; GL MS 6153/4, fol. 7v. The payment to Jerman's widow was made in June 1669. The bricklayer was Thomas Jones, the mason Shadbolt, and the plasterer was John Blount who would later work on the ceiling of the hall and parlour.

44 GL MS 6153/4, fol. 13v, 3 December 1668.

45 GL MS 5445/20, fol. 246v.

46 Helen Collins, *Edward Jerman 1605–1668: The Metamorphosis of a Master-Craftsman* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 155.

47 GL MS 5445/20, fol. 398r, 20 March 1670/71.

48 GL MS 6153/49, fol. 79r, 9 July 1674.

49 Society of Apothecaries, MS 8204, 1669–70.

50 *Wren Society*, vol. 19, (1942), pp. 23–24; St Lawrence Jewry Vestry Minutes 1669–1720 (London Metropolitan Archives). I am grateful to Professor Christine Stevenson for this reference.

51 GL MS 6153/4, fol. 54r.

52 GL MS 15201/5, fol. 263v, 17 June 1675.

53 Reprinted in Robert Arnold Aubin, (ed.), *London in Flames, London in Glory: Poems on the Fire and Rebuilding of London 1666–1709* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1943), pp. 122–33, verse 29 on p. 127.

54 GL MS 15201/5, fol. 165r, 20 February 1672/3. The Company's bricklayer Joseph Lem collaborated with Roger Jerman, carpenter, and William Hammond, mason, on the reconstruction project.

55 Edward Hatton, *A New View of London; or an Ample Account of That City*, 2 vols (London, 1708), p. 621. The Vintners adorned their three-sided courtyard with a stone balustrade from York House on the Strand purchased in early 1674 as that building was demolished. They spent 5*d.* per foot on the 'railes and bannisters' which, they felt, would 'bee proper for the coapeing of the front walles'. See GL MS 15201/5, fol. 209v.

56 John Stow, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* … Brought Down from the Year 1633 … to the Present Time by John Strype, 2 vols (London, 1720) Strype, *Survey*, Vol. I, p. 235.

57 Christine Stevenson, *The City and the King: Architecture and Politics in Restoration London* (New Haven and London, 2013), p. 8.

58 Stevenson, *The City and the King*, p. 57.

59 Strype, *Survey*, Vol. I, p. 235.

60 This hybrid window type is discussed in Howard Colvin, 'Thorpe Hall and its Architect', in *Essays in English Architectural History*, ed. by Howard Colvin (New Haven and London, 1999), pp. 164–65.

61 Hatton, *New View*, p. 602.

62 Hatton, *New View*, p. 620.

63 Balthazar Gerbier, *The first and second part of counsel and advice to all builders* (London, 1664), p. 34

64 John Evelyn, 'An account of architects & architecture', pp. 115–42 in *A parallel of the antient architecture with the modern* …, by Roland Fréart de Chambray, transl. John Evelyn (1664), repr. edn. (Farnborough Hants, 1970), on p. 131.

65 Lawrence Stone, 'Inigo Jones and the New Exchange', *Archaeological Journal* 114 (1957): 106–21, p. 112.

66 Hatton, *New View*, p. 605.

67 Symes was free of the Tallow Chandlers' Company rather than the Joiners' Company. See GL MS 6153/4, fol. 79r, 9 July 1674. The tradition of Company membership by patrimony meant that by the seventeenth century Company membership was by no means an indication of a man's trade or craft.

68 GL 6153/4, fol. 77r, 10 December 1673.

69 GL MS 5502.

70 Hatton, *New View*, p. 610.

71 For William Cleare (or Cleere), see Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, 4th edn (New Haven and London, 2008), p. 256; Pete Smith, 'William Cleere, Master Joiner' in *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol XVIII (2010): 8–34.

72 CL/D/5/10, fol. 26r, 1668–69. These were probably Stephen Day (1653–62) and George Kedge (1669–93), members of the Joiners' Company. I am grateful to Nick Humphrey of the V&A and to Laurie Lindey for this information.

73 I am grateful to Jessica Collins, Archivist of the Clothworkers' Company, and to Nick Humphrey of the V&A for bringing these wood carvings to my attention.

74 Jean Imray, *The Mercers' Hall* (London, 1991), p. 48.