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The Spectre at Vauxhall Cross

Architecture of the State, between Community and Monarchy

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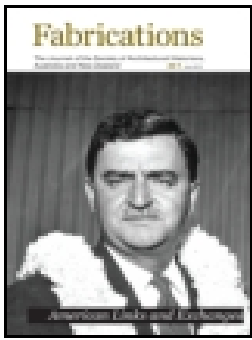
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The Spectre at Vauxhall Cross: Architecture of the State, between Community and Monarchy

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the matter of “architecture of the state” through the development history of the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross in London, which since the early 1990s houses the headquarters of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), designed by Terry Farrell. The story of this site’s decades-long redevelopment saga calls into question what (or who) precisely “the state” is. Is it the (imagined) community that belongs to a state? Is it the governmental institutions and elected officials managing its operation? Or does the constitutional monarchy embody and symbolise the state? What the history of the Esso site and the design of the SIS building demonstrate is that these different groups who are all somehow encompassed in the definition of “the state” do not necessarily hold the same ideas about who “architecture of the state” is to serve, address, or represent.

Introduction

In the category “architecture of the state” the SIS building at Vauxhall Cross in London assumes an uneasy position for multiple reasons [Figure 1](#). First, the building was not built by the state proper, but by Regalian, a private developer who in December 1988 signed a pre-sale agreement with the Department of the Environment (the government ministry responsible for property) assuring them that the British government would buy the building once it had been completed. Second, the building houses the headquarters of a very clandestine governmental organisation: the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), which is perhaps better known as MI6, the employer of Britain’s favourite fictional spy, James Bond. At the time that the pre-sale agreement was signed the British government did not publicly acknowledge the existence of MI6. This only happened in 1994, when the Intelligence Services Act that gave the organisation a legal identity was approved.¹ Third, and finally, Terry Farrell, the architect of the SIS building, has always

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Figure 1. View of the Western elevation of the SIS Building, which faces the River Thames, seen from the Vauxhall Bridge. The SIS Building was designed by Terry Farrell in 1988–89 and officially inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II in 1994. This photograph was taken on 26 February 2014. © Bjanka Kadic/Alamy Stock Photo.

maintained that he was never told (and thus never knew) that he was designing the headquarters for MI6.² These three points call into question whether the SIS building is indeed an example of “architecture of the state” and if so, if its architectural design can be read as an embodiment of state power.

The dubious position that the SIS building holds when it comes to “architecture of the state” was already remarked upon by architectural critic Rowan Moore in 1992, when the building was nearing completion. “It looks like a public building,” Moore wrote,

Its terraces and central aedicule resemble those on which emperors emerged from the Palatine to view the Circus Maximus. Its architecture is declamatory, hierarchic, theatrical. Yet it is the new headquarters of MI6, the least public body in Britain. The building therefore addresses nothing, it offers fortified blankness at ground level; its demagoguery is voiceless. [...] What is more, the building occupies what was once to be, in the words of its own architects [...] a ‘village’, a ‘neighbourhood’. [...] What happened is this. That part of postmodernism that believes in complicity with the market, in riding the waves of enterprise, and in disguise, has gobbled up that other part that believed in urbanity, popular choice, accessibility and pluralism. Because postmodernism placed so much faith in the power of style, of disembodied appearances, it has allowed a scheme to replace the actuality of public space with its simulacrum, without planners, press or even the scheme’s own architect really noticing.³

What Moore is referring to in the latter part of this quote – the bit about the proposed “neighbourhood” being replaced with a simulacrum of public

space – is the difficult development history of the site on which the SIS building is located. In the late 1970s, when its redevelopment began, this site was known as the Esso site.⁴ At that time, an office tower of nearly 150 metres tall was proposed, which never eventuated. Then, in 1981, a national competition was organised calling for a mixed development of offices, retail, and housing to be built on the combined Esso and Effra sites, on either side of the Vauxhall Bridge, in South London. Sebire Allsopp and Happold won the competition, but their project never saw the light of day as in 1983 its developer declared bankruptcy and the scheme was abandoned. In 1986 Regalian bought the site, and a new competition was held, this time for housing, which Farrell won – this was the “neighbourhood” scheme to which Moore referred. The local authority, however, opposed and it took an appeal to secure consent. By then, Regalian had changed its mind and began to consider an office use. In December 1988 the aforementioned pre-sale agreement determined the outcome in favour of the office option and Farrell finalised the design.⁵ In 1994 MI6 moved into the building.⁶

In this fifteen-year-long redevelopment saga of the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross several questions emerge that pertain to the theme “architecture of the state”; not only to its literal understanding – as in how built form can give shape to state idea(l)s and notions of citizenship – but also to its more abstract interpretation; namely the operation and organisation of the state, understood in terms of the relationships between different governmental bodies, political parties, and the constitutional monarchy. This paper engages with both these interpretations of “architecture of the state.” It first considers how matters of urban development are dealt with across different levels of government. The redevelopment of the Esso site became embroiled in a battle between the local (Lambeth) council and the national government. Fuelling this battle were fundamental disagreements about the community that the redeveloped Esso site was to serve. The first part of this paper examines this battle between the local and national government and their respective understandings of “community” through a detailing of the redevelopment history of the Esso site from 1979 up to 1986, when it was purchased by Regalian. It also sheds light on how Farrell, in his initial design proposal for the site, explored what British architecture after modernism might look like, giving much thought to how Britishness could be expressed in built form. The second part of the paper focuses on the realisation of the SIS building proper, and the polarised responses that the building elicited following its completion. In doing so, this second part of the paper not only positions the importance of the SIS building on a geopolitical level but also touches upon another question relating to “architecture of the state”; namely, the role that the British constitutional monarchy plays in its sanctioning, both figuratively *and* literally speaking. The notion of community remains central to this process of symbolic, state sanction, with community

here understood following political scientist Benedict Anderson's concept of nations as "imagined communities."⁷

1979-1986: Casting the British Community

For more than a century prior to its development, London had largely turned its back on the Thames. Admittedly, in Victorian times the Embankment was built to carry sewers and underground trains, but at the same time, long stretches of the riverside were walled in and littered with enclosed docks. During the 1970s, against the background of a deepening economic recession, the obsolescence of these structures began to offer opportunities for redevelopment and questions emerged about what should be built here and, importantly, for whom. These questions became crucial not only for elected government officials, but also for architects whose reputation had suffered because of their involvement in poorly received local authority housing schemes and speculatively developed "office ghettos and redeveloped city centres" of the 1960s and early 1970s.⁸ At this time, the term "community" became very popular in matters of urban development. In Britain, a "community architecture" movement emerged, whose roots according Nick Wates and Charles Knevitt, who authored a book on this subject, "can be traced back to the widespread community action of the 1960s and early 1970s [when] well-intentioned but misguided policies implemented by central and local government [...] led to the wholesale destruction of existing communities in comprehensive redevelopment and rehousing programmes, often accompanied by rampant property speculation."⁹

One of the major drawbacks of this new approach, however, was pinpointing precisely who the "community" is or might be. As Jeremy Till points out, in Wates and Knevitt's book, "the word 'community' is always suggestive but never fully defined."¹⁰ This, added to the movement's very consensual stance, – it was claimed to be neither left or right in the party-political sense of the word, and neither rigidly pro- or anti- public or private development¹¹ – made the community architecture movement susceptible to co-optation. Referencing Richard Sennet, Till explains that in the community architecture movement "the idea of community is often at odds with the reality of the social construction of community" and "any real collective intent [...] is dissipated because the myth of the community does not take into account its actual political and social construction."¹²

From the Local, to the Economic, to the Heritage Community

At Vauxhall Cross the "community" question first reared its head in 1979 when a development proposal was submitted for the Esso site. In 1973, this

land had been bought for £1 million by European Ferries, who in the late 1970s commissioned the architectural firm Abbott Howard to come up with a mixed design that included offices, housing, and leisure facilities. Abbott Howard's proposal included a 150-metre-tall tower clad in green glass – which earning the building the moniker the Green Giant – that contained about 35,000 square metres of offices, parking, and services. [Figure 2](#) At its base the tower's light glass sheath flared out to enclose two levels of exhibition space, including an extension for the Tate Gallery and shops, amounting to about 12,000 square metres of leisure facilities. Between the Green Giant and the Thames were two stepped section blocks, cranked in an L round to the embankment, which included about 9000 square metres of housing.¹³

A fierce opponent of this scheme was the Labour-controlled London borough of Lambeth, within the administrative boundaries of which Vauxhall Cross is located. In 1978, one year prior to the submission of the

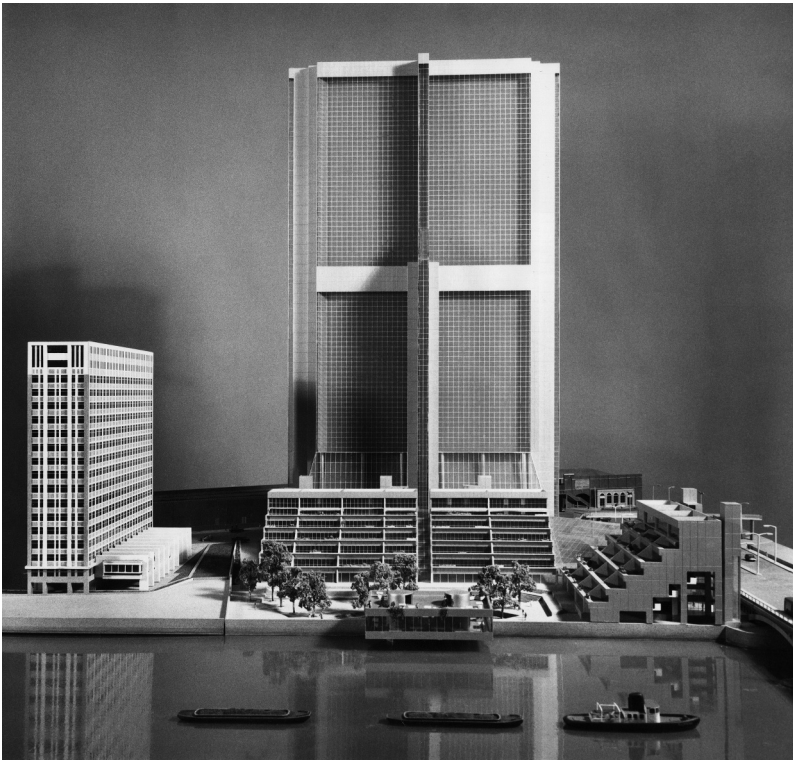


Figure 2. Model of Abbott Howard's 1979 "Green Giant" scheme for the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross. This proposal included a 150-metre-tall office tower clad in a sheath of green glass that flared out at its base to enclose two levels of exhibition space. Between the tower and the Thames were two stepped section housing blocks, cranked in an L round to the embankment. The photograph of the model shows the view of the development from across the River Thames. © Architectural Press Archive/RIBA Collections.

Green Giant scheme, Ted Knight (also known as Red Ted) had won the leadership vote for the Lambeth Council with the promise to “demand extra money and powers from the government to create employment, ensure good housing for all and to provide properly for the under-fives, and the old and the needy.”¹⁴ Under Knight’s leadership Lambeth regularly clashed with the newly elected Conservative government, including over the redevelopment of the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross. When the Lambeth Council received the planning application from European Ferries, it first delayed considering it, allegedly because the developer had provided insufficient detail regarding the scheme’s height, massing and landscaping, and then refused to consider it altogether until more detailed plans were submitted.¹⁵ According to European Ferries, however, the problem was not insufficient detail but “a difference of opinion over building heights” and “a question of interpreting planning laws.”¹⁶ Wherever the truth of the matter lay, what is certain is that Lambeth believed that a scheme like the Green Giant placed economic interests above those of the local community who would be better served with low-cost housing and industry, as architecture critic Tony Aldous pointed out in the *Illustrated London News*:

The battle has intensified between those who see office development as the only viable means of stimulating redevelopment of the central London part of the south bank, with development money used for the benefit of the community, and those (like the [...] Lambeth Council) who say that south bank sites should be used for low-cost housing and industry, arguing that offices provide the wrong kinds of jobs for local people and subordinate community needs to developers’ profits.¹⁷

For the local council, any redevelopment of the Esso site needed to consider the Lambeth community, an ethnically and culturally diverse group of people, including a large proportion of immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean.

By August 1979, the dispute between Lambeth and European Ferries had gone to the Department of the Environment to be resolved, and subsequently became the subject of a public inquiry.¹⁸ At this point the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine, became involved. Heseltine, whom *GQ* magazine christened “Britain’s Beautiful Bad Boy,” had begun his career as a property developer and in 1979, in a bid to bring Labour councils to heel, was appointed Secretary of State for the Environment by Margaret Thatcher when she was elected Prime Minister.¹⁹ In accordance with the 1979 Conservative manifesto,²⁰ Heseltine called in the proposal by European Ferries, although not in an effort to protect the interests of the Lambeth community, but rather on the grounds that Vauxhall Cross was too important visually to be left to local planning authorities. He declared the site one of the finest in all of Europe

and stated that its redevelopment (like other London riverside sites) should be dealt with on a national level.²¹

In 1981, the same year that he established the London Docklands Development Corporation, Heseltine called for a national design competition to be held for the combined Esso and Effra sites.²² This three-stage competition, which was open to all architects registered in the UK and touted as “the grandest competition since the houses of Parliament in 1836,” was promoted by Arunbridge, a developer, in consultation with the Royal British Institute of Architects (RIBA) and the (national) Department of the Environment.²³ The competition brief called for 107,000 square metres of offices and 20,000 square metres of shops, with almost a quarter of the development reserved for housing and leisure amenities.²⁴ Heseltine vowed that if the winning scheme was of proven merit, it would quickly gain planning permission by means of a Special Development Order (SDO) that would bypass the powers of the Lambeth Council.²⁵

Displeased with Heseltine’s promise to adopt an SDO in what they called “a deliberate attempt to ignore the wishes of the local community,” the Lambeth Council declined the invitation to nominate a council representative to act as one of the four assessors of the competition.²⁶ This decision should come as no surprise given that Heseltine, when the competition was first announced, promptly declared himself the “real judge,” “as I am already for all major schemes along the Thames.”²⁷ In February 1982, when the assessors chose eight schemes from the 128 that had been submitted, an announcement was made that these selected eight would be publicly displayed for two weeks to “take into account public comments [...] before picking the final three.”²⁸ On 15 April 1982, a marquee tent was opened on the competition site in which the eight shortlisted schemes were exhibited and where visitors were invited to complete questionnaires.²⁹ Although the shortlisted eight were known by that point in time – they were deBlacam and Meagher, Terry Farrell Partnership, Frederick Gibberd and Partners, Nicholas Lacey and Associates, Michael Newberry, David Richmond, Sebire Allsopp and Happold, and Michael Twigg, Brown Associates – their names were not linked to the models on display to guarantee anonymity.³⁰

In May 1982 Allsopp, Sebire and Happold was declared the winner.³¹ **Figure 5** Their design proposed a sequence of tall, L-shaped office blocks with banks of flats leading down to the Thames. Nestled in the corner of these office blocks were a series of atria that housed the public amenity of the brief, and that were lined with shops, bars, and restaurants on two levels linking up to form a raised concourse with views out to the river. **Figures 3 and 4** By the time that this winning scheme was announced about 1500 responses had been received to the public questionnaire.³² Although the assessors repeatedly confirmed that they had considered this feedback in their selection of the winner, they were suspiciously coy about divulging the



Figure 3. Plan of Sebire Allsopp & Happold's winning entry for the 1981 Arunbridge competition that sought to redevelop the combined Esso and Effra sites at Vauxhall Cross. Sebire Allsopp & Happold's scheme proposed a zig-zag wall of offices to the rear of the site from which stacks of flats stepped down to the riverfront. In the re-entrants of the office zig-zags, the team placed a series of glazed atria that house the public amenity of the brief. Source: *Architectural Review* 172, no. 1026 (August 1982), 19.

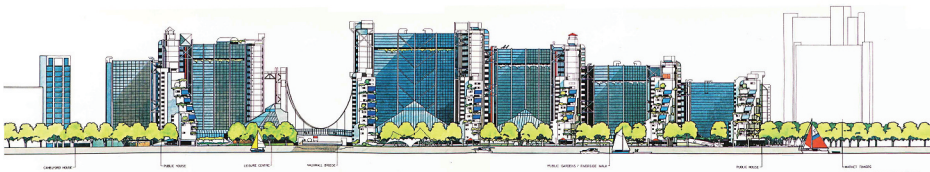
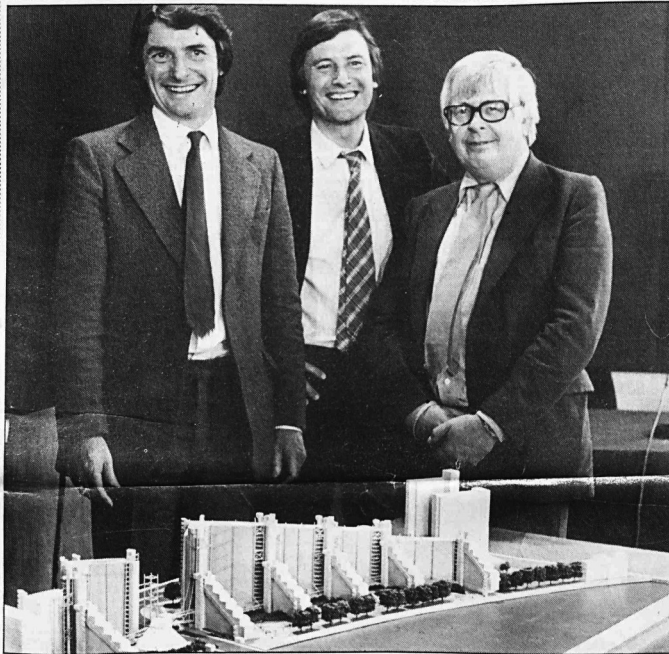


Figure 4. Western elevation of Sebire Allsopp & Happold's winning entry for the 1981 Arunbridge competition. Source: *Architectural Review* 172, no. 1026 (August 1982), 19–20.

preferences that had emerged from this public consultation campaign, leading to speculation that Sebire Allsopp and Happold's scheme was not the public's favourite.³³

Responding to the wishes of this local public was, however, not very high up on Heseltine's agenda. He was more interested in generating substantial



Andrew Sebire, Kit Allsopp and Ted Happold with their winning scheme.

SEBIRE, ALLSOPP HAPPOLD WIN

SEBIRE ALLSOPP and Happold are the £50 000 winners of Arunbridge's Vauxhall Cross site competition, chosen by the developer from a final shortlist including Nicholas Lacey Associates and — media favourite — Terry Farrell Partnership.

Kit Allsopp claimed the victory had been a "total, absolute surprise" and that the pressure of the competition timescale has simply "sharpened the mind".

The design team met DoE officials on Wednesday immediately after the announcement, to sort out details for a special

development order (SDO).

Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine will put an SDO through Parliament to speed the £200 million scheme, provided he considers it of "sufficient architectural merit".

Arunbridge chairman Ronald Lyon said: "In my view it is one scheme which will happen", but he was less categorical about how much SA&H will be involved beyond SDO stage.

He said there was "considerable interest" in the property.

Assessor Richard MacCormac described the scheme as "formally very pragmatic and a powerful architectural statement". Lyons particularly admired the attention given to the roadside view, as well as the visual distinction made between residential and commercial elements on the riverside.

Assessors took account of the 1 500-odd questionnaire responses by visitors to the recent finalists' exhibition, but curiously, could not say which scheme was overall poll favourite.

Lady Rusheen Wynne-Jones may have trouble gathering designs for her "Salon des Refusés" on May 24 at County Hall, as Arunbridge will neither release names of the 120 unsuccessful entrants, nor identify the five shortlisted schemes. *BD* also has a problem: how to judge our own competition? We will find a way...

Figure 5. Article published on the front page of *Building Design* on 14 May 1982 announcing Sebire Allsopp & Happold's win in the Arunbridge competition for Vauxhall Cross that was launched in 1981. © Assemble Media Group Limited.

economic gains from the redevelopment of London's riverside.³⁴ As architecture critic Haig Beck pointed out: "Under the GLC General Development Plan [the Vauxhall Cross site] had a plot ratio of 2.5:1, and a commercial-to-residential mix of 3:1." However, to "sweeten the developers," Heseltine upped the ratios "to the very lucrative levels of 3:1 and 4.7:1 respectively." Thus, Beck continues, "community interests through planning gain were to run a poor second to more commercial interests."³⁵ For Heseltine, the community that was to benefit from the redevelopment of the Esso and Effra sites were those who participated in Britain's national economy. To this end the redevelopment needed to attract international investors. And so it did. On 23 April 1982 *The Times* newspaper named Shaikh Khaled bin Mahfouz and the Kuwaiti Artoc Bank as the backers of Arunbridge, and five months later, *Building Design* confirmed that "Kuwaitis are [...] involved, through the Kuwaiti Investment Office, with the South Bank."³⁶

To secure the deal Heseltine invited the Houses of Parliament to vote on an SDO that would enable the Arunbridge project to gain approval at a record speed, by side-stepping established planning procedures.³⁷ In the lead-up to this historic decision by the Houses of Parliament, another group expressed concerns with regards to the development that was proposed for Vauxhall Cross: the heritage community. On 22 July 1982, the day that the proposed SDO was scheduled to be discussed in the House of Lords, an article entitled "A Decision that Could Doom London" was published in *The Times* newspaper. This opinion piece was authored by Lord Wynne-Jones, a representative of the Labour Party in the House of Lords, and husband of Rusheen Wynne-Jones, leader of the anti-Arunbridge lobby. It decried how Heseltine was placing the interests of the developer above those of the people: "It is not the function of Parliament to sanction the will of the developer over that of the people," Wynne-Jones wrote, continuing: "It is a denial of democracy."³⁸ Citing the people's statutory rights of participation enshrined by law in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1971, Wynne-Jones suggested to remedy this government-sanctioned denial of democracy by introducing a bill to designate a "Central Thames Conservation Area within a three-mile radius of Parliament" and establish "an Environmental Council to deal with architectural competitions expeditiously and provide guidelines to help developers."³⁹

With this bill, Wynne-Jones supported the London Society, who one month earlier, in June 1982, had presented Prime Minister Thatcher with a petition calling for London to be made a conservation area of national importance and for a three-mile protective radius to be declared around the Palace of Westminster. This petition had the support of the River Thames Society and the South Bank Committee; groups who, like the London Society, fiercely opposed the new design for Vauxhall Cross.⁴⁰ Such grass-roots heritage organisations had proliferated throughout Europe from the

mid-1970s, after the Council of Europe had declared 1975 the “European Architectural Heritage Year” with the aim to develop a common European policy for the protection of architectural heritage. The result was the *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage*, a document that aimed to define “the nature of European architectural heritage” and “its importance to the European community.”⁴¹ Sharing many similar aims – the charter, for instance, stressed the need to preserve spiritual, cultural, and social values and community resources⁴² – the community architecture movement took much of its strength from this burgeoning heritage awareness.

The struggle to redevelop the Esso and Effra sites at Vauxhall Cross highlights the discord that existed between the different levels and bodies of government – what one might call “the architecture of the state” – in relation to who or what constituted the community. While the national Conservative government believed that the British economy, and its subjects and interests needed to be served, some left leaning members of the House of Lords supported by grassroots heritage organisations pleaded to consider Britain’s cultural community when deciding the fate of a site located within view of the Palace of Westminster, the symbolic political heart of the British nation. Finally, local Labour politicians, such as Ted Knight, believed that constructing affordable housing for Lambeth residents was the only acceptable course of action on this site.

“Anglo-Saxon Attitudes to Building” for the British Community

If the difference in opinion between the various levels and bodies of government within Britain concerned (for the most part) the programme and size of the development, the architectural community squabbled over aesthetics and form. At the time that the Arunbridge competition took place, the discipline of architecture found itself in a phase of transition. A widespread belief existed that modernism had failed, and that in addition to another approach to building (of which community architecture was a prime example), a new aesthetic was required that connected better with the desires and tastes of the people. Little agreement, however, existed about what precisely this new architectural aesthetic should be, or who these “people” whose desires and tastes needed to be catered to were. The result was a period of experimentation, which was clearly visible in the eight designs that were shortlisted for the Arunbridge competition. When these shortlisted entries were unveiled in the spring of 1982, architecture critic Simon Jenkins wrote a scathing review in *The Times* declaring:

All the Post-modernist styles are gathered in attendance, though sadly none represented by their originators. There is ‘High Tech’ (scheme A) with the visible service ducts, metal frames and drooping greenery of the Norman Foster/Richard Rogers

school. There is Beaux Arts revival (G), complete with Philip Johnson's 'Chippendale' pediments. Scheme H has twin towers looking like Cape Kennedy space-shuttle silos. Scheme D is apparently an exercise in council-estate renaissance. Scheme E is a huge pile of Cote d'Azur ziggurats of the sort now considered de rigueur for all high-density marina developments. And for good measure the judges have included scheme C, a set of extraordinary neo-Stalinist wedding cake turrets straight from the banks of the Moscow River. [...] From the architecture of the shoebox we have leaped in one bound to that of the Mad Hatter's tea party.⁴³

Jenkins' favourite entry was scheme G which he guessed (correctly) was by Terry Farrell. [Figures 6 and 7](#) He wrote:

Here on the shores of the Thames [Farrell] proposes the Baths of Caracalla as redesigned by Palladio. Riverside domestic villas rise on a grid to classical temples and finally to cliffs of offices faced in mirrors to reduce their bulk. All is surmounted by broken, almost deranged, pediments. It is an outrageous revival of the English classical tradition, as if in expiation of the horrors which modern architecture has inflicted on London.⁴⁴

Others also spoke highly of Farrell's entry for the Arunbridge competition. Colin Amery, the architectural editor of the *Financial Times* who contributed greatly to the 1980s revival of Sir Edwin Lutyens, for instance, described it as "masterly in its understanding of the grandeur and formality that can be achieved by the massing of classically-based pavilions on the river" and compared Farrell's design to Sir Christopher Wren's city churches for the way in which it "depended upon a range of variations of the classical theme and an understanding of the London scale."⁴⁵

By the early 1980s Farrell, who had entered the Arunbridge competition in the eleventh hour following a phone call by Owen Luder, then President of the RIBA, had become one of the leading postmodernists in London, known (amongst others) for his design of the TVam Breakfast Television Studios and the Clifton Nurseries in Covent Garden.⁴⁶ In his recent book *Revisiting Postmodernism*, Farrell explains that his interest in postmodernism sprung from his engagement with community architecture, and began in the mid-1970s at Covent Garden in London where a proposal was put forward to demolish and replace the historic market buildings. According to Farrell,

there was a bottom-up, grassroots rebellion against this proposal, with the Covent Garden Community Association and other organisations opposing it. Community architecture became a way of marshalling resources to look at adaptation and conversion. It was a little later that I joined English Heritage, and at that time I attended various Covent Garden meetings and symposiums which were mainly intended to oppose the brave new world of demolition and rebuild.⁴⁷

The emergence of postmodernism in the UK thus had close ties with the popularisation of the community architecture movement. If postmodernism sought an aesthetic that would appeal to the tastes of the people by



Figure 6. Scale model of Terry Farrell's entry for the 1981 Arunbridge Competition for Vauxhall Cross. © Farrells.

referencing everyday and popular culture, proponents of community architecture were (avowedly) less concerned with the aesthetics than with the process of design. In fact, to a large extent community architecture deliberately avoided a direct discussion of aesthetics or style through its focus on process as opposed to product. Yet, as Till has pointed out, in spite of its disavowal of style community architecture soon slipped into such an argument anyway as an underlying assumption existed that a certain vernacular – a British regionalist architecture – would emerge effortlessly from the process of collaboration because that is what people most naturally relate to. Community architecture thus often contained visual and linguistic resonances that were to persuade a social body of the presence of community.⁴⁸

Such thinking can be clearly recognised in Farrell's writings and statements of the time, which subtly equate the community that is to be served and represented by architectural design in Britain with a particular view of the state's citizenry. In 1984, for instance, Farrell wrote an essay entitled "British Architecture After Modernism" in which he suggested that "British architects relish an unaggressive, unassertive and loved architecture"⁴⁹ because the Brits are "gentle" people whose "violence is [even] restrained and quiet."⁵⁰ Farrell believed that this "gentle architecture" by British architects, which he described as "familiar in colour, form, imagery and formality of arrangement,"⁵¹ was "accessible and understandable to a wide range of people."⁵²

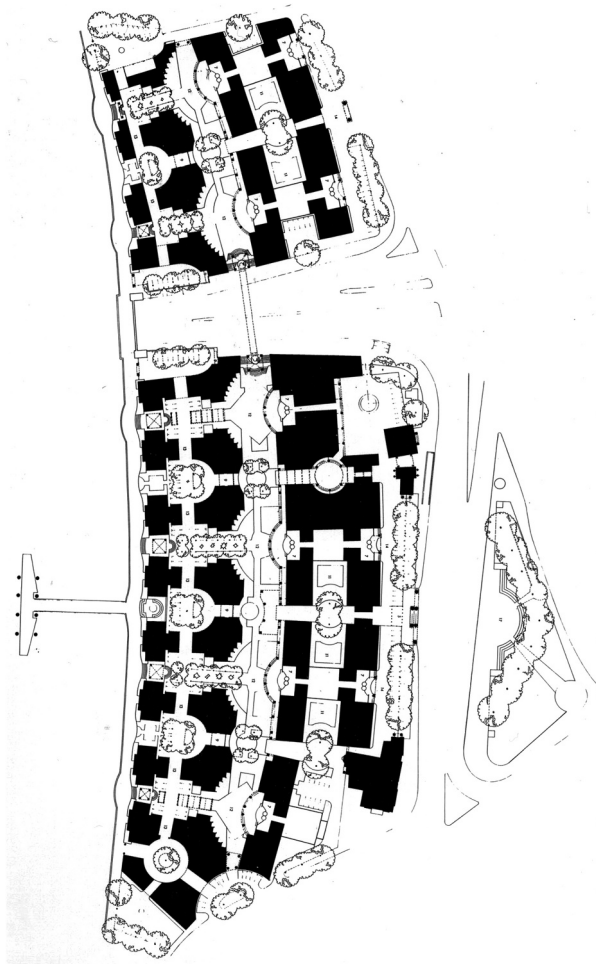


Figure 7. Plan of Terry Farrell's entry for the 1981 Arunbridge Competition for Vauxhall Cross. This scheme was organised along four linear paths that ran parallel to each other and to the River Thames. From the Eastern side of the development to the Western side of the development, there was a business user's route, then a public pedestrian mall, then a residential mews and, finally, a Riverside walk. © Farrells.

This begs the question: How wide *is* this range of people who can understand and appreciate this “gentle” British architecture? And how “familiar” *are* the formal and visual references embedded in such architecture to this “range” of British people?⁵³ Although in the aforementioned 1984 essay Farrell acknowledged that Britain has a broad “class and cultural mix,”⁵⁴ in an interview that he gave to Roger Berthoud for an article published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1986, a narrower conception of “the people” appears. Berthoud wrote:

Good architecture, it has been said, involves the fusion of art and utility. That definition implicitly leaves out the public, who have found a champion in Farrell. He believes in the validity of public opinion. Modernism, born of the marriage of engineering and art at the Bauhaus in Weimar Germany, was assertive and alien to British culture, [Farrell] argues. It alienated the general public by ignoring the continuity of the English tradition epitomized by the Arts and Crafts movement, by Lutyens and the garden cities.⁵⁵

Establishing a link between “British culture” and “the English tradition” on the one hand, and the Arts and Crafts movement and Lutyens on the other, the “public” (or community) that Farrell alludes to in this 1986 interview is an idealised pre-industrial community of landed gentry living in neo-classical country houses and upstanding Englishmen and women residing in rustic villages. It is this notion of “Englishness” and understanding of the “British community” that permeated many of Farrell’s designs and that, as architectural commentator Alastair Best put in 1982, had led to “Farrell [becoming] something of a folk hero.” Best attributed Farrell’s popularity to the fact that he “is a very English architect” who displays “Anglo-Saxon attitudes to building” in his designs.⁵⁶

Post 1986: A Royal Sanctioning of Community

“Anglo-Saxon attitudes to building” are also recognisable in Farrell’s winning design for the competition that Regalian, another developer, organised for the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross in 1986, after Arunbridge declared bankruptcy in 1983.⁵⁷ This competition, by Regalian, was for housing. Echoing his 1982 entry for the Arunbridge competition, Farrell proposed a family of buildings rising in height as they moved further away from the Thames. [Figure 8](#) This meant that the rear of the site was to be lined with three sixteen-storey slab blocks destined to house 270 luxury flats. Drawing on traditional London squares and crescents, Farrell conceived of his scheme for Regalian, which included an existing dock rethought as a pocket marina, as a “formal classical village [...] ‘colonising’ and making habitable the bleak surroundings of the riverfront.”⁵⁸ It was precisely this notion of “colonisation” with which the Lambeth Council took issue. Lambeth had well understood that if implemented Farrell’s scheme would lead to gentrification. “We want to see some benefit for the inner city out of these schemes,” said Bob Colenutt, housing chairman of Lambeth, continuing: “This means low-cost housing for rent, not luxury flats for sale.”⁵⁹ The council also opposed the scheme on design grounds, arguing that the tall slabs at the rear would cut off Lambeth residents from the river front. Accordingly, the council (once again) refused to grant planning permission and another public inquiry ensued.⁶⁰

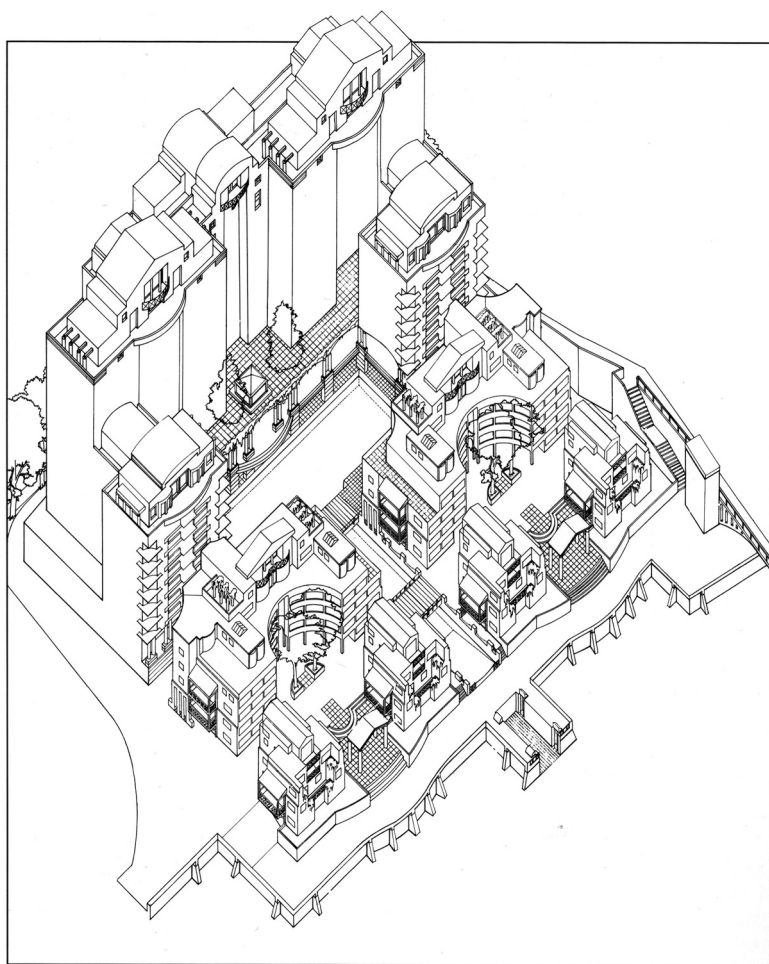


Figure 8. Axonometric drawing of Terry Farrell's winning design for the 1986 housing competition organised by Regalian. This scheme drew on the forms and dimensions of traditional London squares and crescents, and proposed a family of buildings rising in height as they moved further away from the Thames. © Farrells.

Building a Hollow Spectre for an Imagined British Community

Farrell's 1986 housing scheme for Regalian never saw the light of day. But the community that this design envisaged, corresponded closely with the community that the SIS building, which was constructed on the Esso site in its stead, sought to address and represent. It was an imagined, idealised "pure" British community.⁶¹ In his landmark book on nationalism entitled *Imagined Communities*, political scientist Benedict Anderson argues that every nation is an imagined community as "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." According to Anderson "all communities larger than

primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.”⁶² The British community as imagined by Farrell and his public-private client became an important group to address in the design of the SIS building, a project that was realised in the twilight years of the Cold War and commissioned near the end of Margaret Thatcher’s term as Prime Minister.

Thatcher was elected in 1979 and stayed in power until 1990, just after it was decided that MI6 would take up residence on the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross. This decision was made in 1988. Thatcher was very fond of Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service. According to historians Richard Aldrich and Rory Cormac, she “adored intelligence.”⁶³ In their recent book *The Black Door*, they observe that while “most prime ministers have a soft spot for the security service [...] Margaret [...] was positively besotted by them.”⁶⁴ During her tenure as Prime Minister, Thatcher not only waged a war against welfarism within her own country, but she also fiercely combatted communism internationally and worked closely together with MI6 to do so. Thatcher’s love affair with the British secret service meant that their establishments and their hardware were one of the few areas left untouched by the economic cuts that her government imposed in the 1980s.⁶⁵ What’s more, in 1987 Thatcher’s government decided to build a brand-new headquarters for the secretive organisation, and its eye fell on Vauxhall Cross as a potential site. However, when in July that same year, the government approached Regalian with the possibility of building offices instead of housing on the Esso site, Farrell’s housing scheme was still tied up in public enquiry. It was not until February 1988 that this public enquiry ended and was decided in favour of Regalian, which meant that Farrell’s 1986 housing scheme was approved. As soon as this verdict was in, Regalian approached the Lambeth Council to gauge whether they might consider an office use on the site instead. Lambeth responded positively, and so, pending a firm decision by the government, Regalian asked Farrell to develop two schemes in parallel, one for housing, the other for offices.⁶⁶ By the autumn of 1988, the interest of the government had become more definite, and it approached Regalian with a specific brief. This set in motion a consultation process between the developer, the architect and the government to decide on the final design.

Drawing on his earlier housing scheme for Regalian, Farrell proposed an office building composed of three longitudinal blocks with cream-coloured concrete cladding, low-rise on the side of the river and medium-rise onto the Albert Embankment. These three blocks were linked by green glazed courtyards and atria that were to introduce daylight into the building and enable the incorporation of gardens and greenhouses to soften its rather severe and fortress-like appearance. [Figure 9](#) In December 1988, with the design finalised, a pre-sale agreement was signed, which assured Regalian



Figure 9. Scale model of Terry Farrell's final design for the SIS Building in London, circa 1988–89. The complex is composed of three longitudinal blocks with cream-coloured concrete cladding, rising in height as they move further away from the river, and linked by green glazed courtyards and atria. This photograph shows the *Riverside* elevation of the building. © Farrells.

that the government would buy the building once it had been completed. Regalian issued a press release in February 1989, which revealed that the planned building had been pre-sold to the government for £130 million and that construction was expected to commence before the end of the year.

Construction did indeed commence in 1989. The building was completed circa 1993 and officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in July the following year.⁶⁷ In the interim, however, a few things had changed on the political scene, both nationally and internationally. In 1990, John Major was elected Prime Minister of Britain. Unlike Thatcher, for whom the Secret Intelligence Service had exercised a special fascination, Major was more interested in domestic affairs than foreign policy. Even so, during his Prime Ministership, he was forced to deal with the British Secret Intelligence Service on quite a few occasions given that he took office at a time of momentous flux. In November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and in October 1990 Germany was reunited. Major arrived in Downing Street one month later, on 29 November 1990, just in time for the break-up of the Soviet Union the following year. These events heralded a new era in the history of MI6. Although not as myopically focused on Moscow as its American counterpart, much of the British machine had for more than forty years fixed its gaze upon a frozen frontier that had demarcated East from West.

Interestingly, up until the break-up of the Soviet Union, the British government did not publicly acknowledge the existence of MI6. Following the global glasnost, however, the organisation emerged from this period of deliberate “cloak and dagger” uncertainty and in 1994 the Intelligence Services Act was approved, which gave the organisation a legal identity.⁶⁸ Officially inaugurated that same year, the SIS building soon became the public face of MI6, and a regular fixture in James Bond films, making its first appearance in 1995, in *Goldeneye*. By that time, however, the grandeur and monumentality of Farrell’s design already rang hollow as, quite ironically, the new era for MI6, which had been precipitated by the end of the Cold War, also resulted in a slashing of the organisation’s budget. With the Cold War in the past, the United Kingdom, its Parliament believed, required fewer secret agents.⁶⁹ In 1992, the *Sunday Mirror* newspaper laconically announced: “James Bond to Get Chop.”⁷⁰ This article stated: “Hundreds of secret agents are to lose their jobs in John Major’s shake-up of the intelligence services. Now that MI6 is officially admitted to exist, the Prime Minister wants [...] to cut their budget by £50 million. [...] The cuts have been ordered with the end of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union.” This article was published around the time that the finishing touches were being made on Farrell’s SIS building, but prior to the signing of the 1994 Intelligence Services Act. Therefore, its realisation was still clouded in secrecy, as is indicated in this newspaper article, which continues: “But despite the glasnost about Britain’s own spooks, MPs have been told to keep mum about MI6’s plush new London offices. There’ll be no questions in Parliament about the £130 million ‘spook house’ HQ at Vauxhall Cross.”⁷¹

A Vision of Britain, and Its Community

Around the same time that MI6 took a financial hit from its own government, the organisation’s brand-new headquarters came under attack from architecture critics, both in Britain and abroad. In December 1992, for instance, only a few months after it became known that MI6 would take up residence there, an article published in the German magazine *Baumeister* dubbed the SIS building “Miss Moneypenny’s Nightmare,” and gave a damning appraisal of its fearsome militaristic design: “The new headquarters of the military intelligence service [...] remind us of the Cold War and postmodernism,” the journal proffered, adding: “The waterfront with its bombastic trellises [...] and candelabra, with lions eating victory wreaths, fountains and weirs, could serve as a film set for a Nazi parody. At the guest pier, Göring’s yacht bobs . . .”⁷² In 1995, a year after its official opening, Colin Davis even attributed the demise of British postmodernism to the design of the MI6 headquarters:

For a while, back in the 1980s, critics began to talk of him [Farrell] as London’s local architect with commissions for big office blocks [...] that everybody who wasn’t an

architect quickly grew to love. [...] Quite why British Postmodernism, of which Farrell was undoubtedly the foremost exponent, ultimately failed to capitalise on Modernism's unpopularity and become the people's architecture is a question for future historians. Perhaps the unfortunate occupation of the Vauxhall Cross building by MI6, a conjunction of form and content that cast a comic-sinister light on the building's pre-war styling, had something to do with it.⁷³

If some architecture critics were highly sceptical, others staunchly defended Farrell's MI6 design. [Figures 10 and 11](#) In 1999, Paul Finch, for instance, labelled the SIS building "London's first, last and already legendary Post-Modern monument," describing it as "a powerful piece of architecture and planning which is one of Farrell's most striking designs."⁷⁴ This article by Finch was published in *Perspectives on Architecture*, a journal published by the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, which was established in 1986. From the early 1980s, Prince Charles had become very vocal in the architectural debate in Britain and, as Wates and Knevitt describe it, forced a "breakthrough for the public perception of community architecture in Britain" when he spoke out on the subject in a speech given on 30 May 1984, at the occasion of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the RIBA. At this event he declared that some planners and architects had consistently ignored the feelings and wishes of the mass of ordinary people in the country and went on to praise community architecture as one of the few new ideas giving optimism and hope for the future.⁷⁵ After this event, the prince followed up on his remarks by visiting more than a dozen community architecture projects throughout the country, inviting community architects to private dinners at Kensington Palace, becoming



Figure 10. Photograph of the SIS Building in London, seen from the River Thames, and taken on 1 January 1994, shortly after the building's completion. © Bildarchiv Monheim GmbH/Alamy Stock Photo.



Figure 11. Photograph of the SIS Building in London, seen from the Albert Embankment. © Justin Kase RF/Alamy Stock Photo.

patron of the first award scheme for community architecture, commissioning community architects for projects on his Duchy of Cornwall estate and making several more outspoken speeches over the next three years.⁷⁶ One of these was the controversial *Luftwaffe* speech held at Mansion House in December 1987, in which he accused post-war planners of being artless, mediocre and contemptuous of public opinion, claiming that their interventions had wreaked more havoc on London than German bombers during the Second World War. The royal's speech received a strong backlash from members of the British architecture, planning, and urban design community. But not from Farrell. A week after the Mansion House speech, Farrell launched a campaign of support for the Prince of Wales's view on design and sent a letter to the royal in which he expressed his regret that "the strength of support among the architectural establishment and many powerful and influential clients for anti-historical architecture is a peculiar characteristic of Britain today."⁷⁷

In 1989, Prince Charles set out his own, personal view of architecture in a book entitled *A Vision of Britain*.⁷⁸ In this 160-page-publication, the prince proclaimed himself a defender of the interests and the taste of the people and, extolling the "extraordinarily rich tradition of regional building styles and materials" in the country, launched a plea for conservation, classicism, and community architecture in Britain.⁷⁹ While some architects welcomed the prince's opinions – certainly those engaged in community architecture, such as Wates and Knevitt who even featured Charles on the cover of their *Community Architecture* book – others were less pleased with the royal's incursions. In June 1989, *AD* devoted an entire issue to "Prince Charles and the Architectural Debate," to which Charles Jencks contributed a piece

entitled “Ethics and Prince Charles.”⁸⁰ In this text, Jencks questioned whether it was ethical for the heir to the throne to use his position of privilege to declare himself the defender of the taste and interests of the British community, and to do so to the detriment of (some) contemporary architects whose designs the prince ridiculed and condemned.

Notably, and perhaps not surprisingly, Farrell was *not* amongst those condemned by Prince Charles. Quite the contrary. He was among a handful of architects whom the royal singled out for being able to revive England’s rich architecture tradition, and for humanising the architecture that comes with the necessary economic development of the country.⁸¹ When reading Prince Charles’s book alongside some of Farrell’s contemporary statements about architecture – those made in his 1984 essay “British Architecture after ‘Modernism’” and his 1986 interview with Berthoud are noteworthy, as are his views expressed in the April 1988 issue of the *Architects’ Journal* under the headline “No Trump Please We’re British”⁸² – it appears that the target audience that both men envisaged for architectural design matched; it was an imagined British community that would be able to appreciate the art-deco references and palatial grandeur of the SIS building, which Farrell claims, drew on the 1930s designs of the Battersea and Bankside power stations by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and Colcutt and Hamps’ Adelphi office building.⁸³ Following such references, the SIS building offered a fitting home for Britain’s suave MI6 agents who, as is suggested in James Bond films, meet in wood-panelled, leather-upholstered, regency-style rooms where they devise plans to defend Queen and country. [Figure 12](#) To what extent the imagined community for whom Farrell designed the MI6



Figure 12. Close-up of the central aedicule near the top of the SIS Building, with a Union Jack flag visible in front. © John Gaffen 2/Alamy Stock Photo.

headquarters also corresponded with the actual community of people living and working in the London borough of Lambeth is, however, questionable. Even so, Farrell's ability to express and uphold British (and particularly English) values and traditions through architectural design, was awarded by the monarchy when in 1996 he was named Commander of the British Empire. Five years later, in 2001, he was knighted by Prince Charles.⁸⁴ *Sir Terry Farrell* thus joined the ranks of other illustrious British architects, such as Sir Edwin Lutyens, whose work he much admired.

Conclusion

The decades-long redevelopment tale of the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross complexifies the matter of "architecture for the state." It calls into question what (or who) precisely "the state" is. Is it the (imagined) national community that belongs to a state? Is it the institutions and elected officials governing its operation? Or does the constitutional monarchy embody and symbolise the state? What the pre-history and design of the SIS building demonstrate is that these different groups who are all somehow encompassed in the definition of "the state" do not necessarily hold the same ideas about who "architecture of the state" is to serve, address, or represent. This makes designing architecture of the state a perilous undertaking.

Unfolding at a time when postmodernism, the so-called "people's architecture," gained momentum in Britain, the development history of the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross made this disjunction between the different understandings of "the state" very clear. To get "the people" on board, two approaches were adopted. On the one hand, there were attempts to change the process of design; to directly involve local communities through modes of participatory planning. On the other hand, changes were made to the visual appearance – the aesthetics – of the architectural product. The latter approach was based on the idea that a building could be designed in such a way that it could persuade people of the presence of a community – a sort of community simulacrum. In the development history of the Esso site at Vauxhall Cross, both methods were tried. While in the Arunbridge competition (feeble) attempts were made to directly involve the community in the design process – by putting the models of the shortlisted schemes on display and inviting the public to comment – the final scheme for the SIS building operates mostly in the latter category. Laden with symbolism that hints at the "extraordinarily rich traditions" of building styles in the country, it offers a simulacrum: not a building for the local Lambeth community, but a symbol for an imagined British community; a symbol for the British state.

This is certainly how the building has come to be understood, as the attack that was perpetrated against it on 20 September 2000 by a group called the Real IRA has demonstrated. Around ten pm that day, this

dissident paramilitary organisation launched an RPG 18 rocket at the MI6 headquarters in an attempt to smash the solidarity of the ranks of the Provisional IRA, another Irish republican paramilitary group who remained fully behind their leadership in promoting the peace process in Northern Ireland.⁸⁵ This attack at what the newspaper described as “a high profile and symbolic target at the heart of London” was – like the 1984 Brighton hotel bombing and the 1991 Downing Street mortar shell incident that preceded it – intended as an attack on the British state.⁸⁶

As sensational as this incident might be, perhaps stronger evidence still of the SIS building’s capacity to symbolise British state ideals is its repeated casting in James Bond films. If the Real IRA attacked the building because of the organisation it houses inside, Bond filmmakers cast the building for the capacity of its exterior appearance to support the films’ storyline about a British champion. After its first cameo in *Goldeneye*, the building has been regularly featured in films revolving around the character invented by Ian Fleming, who himself was critical of modern architecture.⁸⁷ For almost twenty years, starting in 1995, the SIS building depicted a stable, fortress-like base in Bond films from where Britain’s favourite spy operated. In 2012, however, things took a turn when the SIS building was gravely damaged in *Skyfall*, leading to its complete annihilation in the 2015 film *Spectre*.⁸⁸ If the 1972 demolition of Pruitt-Igoe symbolised the death of modernism, the CGI demolition of the neo-traditional SIS building in *Spectre* symbolised the end of an era in the history of the franchise, anticipating the arrival of a reinvented 21st century James Bond – a character that has become an avatar of “Britishness” in its own right⁸⁹ – which may prompt a reappraisal of what “being British” today means and which architectural language (if any?) might be able to express it.⁹⁰

Notes

1. Richard J. Aldrich and Rory Cormac, *The Black Door: Spies, Secret Intelligence and British Prime Ministers* (London: William Collins, 2016), 390–391; “Our History, 1994: Intelligence Services Act”, *Secret Intelligence Service MI6*, <https://www.sis.gov.uk/our-history.html> [last accessed 4 September 2022].
2. *Blueprint* 20/20, no. 330 (September/October 2013), 180–186. See also: Terry Farrell, *Terry Farrell: Selected and Current Works*, The Master Architect Series (Mulgrave, VIC: The Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd, 1994), 134–143.
3. Rowan Moore, “Palace of Secrets”, *Blueprint*, no. 91 (October 1992), 21–22 (21).
4. In 1955 Land Securities acquired the Vauxhall Cross site and in the early 1970s cleared away the oil storage tanks that had found a home there in the 1930s, when the site was used as an oil depot. Yet nothing was done with it, despite the building boom of the late 1950s and 1960s and the construction of the Millbank Tower across the Thames in the 1960s, which was one of London’s first new high-rise office blocks. Source: Kenneth Powell, *Vauxhall Cross: The Story of the Design and Construction of a New London Landmark* (London: Wordsearch, 1992), 12–14.

5. Robert Adam, "Shaping Up: Terry Farrell at Vauxhall Cross", *Architecture Today*, no. 38 (May 1993), 24–30.
6. "Our History, 1994: An Iconic Building", *Secret Intelligence Service MI6*, <https://www.sis.gov.uk/our-history.html> [last accessed 4 September 2022].
7. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).
8. Gillian Darley, "If Architects Could Redesign Their Image", *The Times*, 18 May 1984, 30.
9. Nick Wates and Charles Knevitt, *Community Architecture: How People are Creating Their Own Environment* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 27.
10. Jeremy Till, "Architecture of the Impure Community", in Jonathan Hill, ed. *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 34–42 (35).
11. Wates and Knevitt, *Community Architecture*, 21.
12. Till, "Architecture of the Impure Community", 35.
13. "Window on the World", *Illustrated London News*, 1 March 1980, 24; "Thames-side Tower", *Architects' Journal* 170, no. 44 (31 October 1979), 918. The facts and figures that are listed for this development differ across sources. An article published in *Building*, for instance, speaks of "a speculative development of 34,000 m² of dwellings and 5600 m² of exhibition space". Source: "30-Storey Office Block Proposal for Vauxhall", *Building* 237, no. 7113 (9 November 1979), 13.
14. Stewart Lansley, Sue Goss and Christian Wolmar, *Councils in Conflict: The Rise and Fall of the Municipal Left* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London: Macmillan Education, 1989), 15.
15. "Inquiry to Decide the Fate of Prime Lambeth Site", *Building Design*, no. 459 (17 August 1979), 3.
16. "Inquiry to Decide the Fate of Prime Lambeth Site", 3.
17. Tony Aldous, "The Changing Face of the Thames", *Illustrated London News*, 1 October 1981, 35–42 (35).
18. "Inquiry to decide fate of Prime Lambeth Site", 3.
19. "Heseltine: On the Road Back to Power with Britain's Beautiful Bad Boy", *GQ: Gentlemen's Quarterly, British Edition* (December/January 1989); Lansley, Goss and Wolmar, *Councils in Conflict*, 25.
20. The 1979 Conservative Manifesto pledged to reduce public spending. Since it also promised to increase spending on defence and protect social security and health, the brunt of this new attack had to be borne by programmes such as housing, education, and social services, which were under the purview of local government. With this approach, Thatcher also sought to weaken the power bases of municipal socialism (and the role of local councils) that threatened to impinge the supremacy of the Westminster mandate. See: Lansley, Goss and Wolmar, *Councils in Conflict*, 23.
21. Aldous, "The Changing Face"; Powell, *Vauxhall Cross*, 15.
22. Neal Morris, "Setting the Pace at a Price", *Building Design*, no. 576 (8 January 1982), 4. The terms on which this competition was held were heavily criticised by contemporary British architects, including RIBA councillor Ray Cecil. See: "Vauxhall: Sold Down the River?", *Architects' Journal* 175, no. 24 (16 June 1982), 40–41. For an analysis of the redevelopment of London's Docklands, which describes this shifting balance between central and local government, see: Sue Brownill, *Developing London's Docklands: Another Great Planning Disaster?* (London: Chapman Publishing, 1990).
23. Martin Spring, "Vauxhall Victor", *Building* 242, no. 7242 (21 May 1982), 26–27 (26). See also: "South Bank Competition hangs on GLC", *Architects' Journal* 174, no. 45 (11 November 1981), 927; "Architectural Competition: Vauxhall Bridgefoot Sites", *The Times*, 11 November 1981, 23.

24. Martin Spring, "Vintage Vauxhalls: A Review of the Finalists for the Vauxhall Cross Architectural Design Competition", *Building* 242, no. 7238 (23 April 1982), 32–34; Simon Jenkins, "Is This the Best Way to Bury the Green Giant?", *The Times*, 23 April 1982, 14.
25. "Michael Heseltine: Architectural Champion", *RIBA Journal* 89, no. 6 (June 1982), 7; "Heseltine Recommends SDO", *Architects' Journal* 175, no. 20 (19 May 1982 May), 31.
26. "South Bank Competition hangs on GLC", *Architects' Journal* 174, no. 45 (11 November 1981), 927; "South Bank Competition Boycotted by Lambeth", *Building* 241, no. 7216 (13 November 1981), 15; "South Bank Competition in Disarray", *Architects' Journal* 174, no. 47 (25 November 1981), 1025. The final assessors of the competition included Richard MacCormac and Sir Hubert Bennett, both nominated by the RIBA, and Vic Henty, the in-house architect of Arunbridge.
27. "South Bank Competition hangs on GLC", *Architects' Journal* 174, no. 45 (11 November 1981), 927.
28. "Arunbridge picks eight to develop Vauxhall Schemes", *Building Design: The Weekly Newspaper for the Building Team*, no. 583 (26 February 1982), 4. See also: "South Bank Selection . . . Eight Second-Stage Schemes", *The Architects' Journal* 175, no. 16 (21 April 1982), 32–36.
29. "Design Competition", *The Times*, 15 April 1982, 24.
30. Hugh Clayton, "Models are Chosen in Contest for Thames Site", *The Times*, 16 April 1982, 3; "Arunbridge: Comp on Comp", *Building Design*, no. 591 (23 April 1982), 8.
31. Hugh Clayton, "Sails replace the Green Giant", *The Times*, 13 May 1982, 3.
32. Kit Allsopp and Andrew Sebire had been in partnership since in 1970 and entered the Arunbridge competition together with Ted Happold, formerly consultant engineer for the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Source: Clayton, "Sails replace the Green Giant". The final shortlist of three included Nicholas Lacey Associates, and Terry Farrell Partnership. Source: "Sebire Allsopp Happold Win", *Building Design: The Weekly Newspaper for the Building Team*, no. 594 (14 May 1982), 1; "Arunbridge Winner: You're on Your Own Says RIBA", *Architects' Journal* 175, no. 20 (19 May 1982), 31.
33. Clayton, "Sails replace the Green Giant"; "Sebire Allsopp Happold Win", *Building Design*; Spring, "Vauxhall Victor"; Lord Sudely, "Getting the Best from Architecture", *The Times*, 3 July 1982, Letters to the Editor, 9.
34. Morris, "Setting the Pace at a Price", 4.
35. Haig Beck, "Terry Farrell Partnership Turn to Contextualism for London Site", *International Architect* 1, no. 7 (1982), 4–5 (4).
36. Jenkins, "Is This the Best Way"; Neal Morris, "New Hope for South Bank Plan", *Building Design: The Weekly Newspaper for the Building Team*, no. 657 (16 September 1983), 1.
37. Some of the discussions that were held in the Houses of Parliament are recorded in: "Last Ditch Attempt to Stop Vauxhall Cross SDO Fails", *Architects' Journal* 176, no. 30 (28 July 1982), 11; and "Vauxhall Cross Debate Passes First Hurdle", *RIBA Journal* 89, no. 8 (August 1982), 13. See also: "Arunbridge gains Lord's Approval", *RIBA Journal* 89, no. 9 (September 1982), 11; "Arunbridge SDO 'Lacks Detail'", *Building Design*, no. 600 (25 June 1982), 44.
38. Lord Wynne-Jones, "A Decision that could Doom London", *The Times*, 22 July 1982, 10.
39. Lord Wynne-Jones, "A Decision".
40. Frances Gibb, "Protect London Petition for Thatcher", *The Times*, 28 June 1982, 2.
41. "Cultural Heritage Policy Documents: European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975)", *The Getty Conservation Institute*, https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/research_resources/charters/charter21.html [last

- accessed 4 September]. See also: Council of Europe, *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage* (Strasbourg: s.n, 1975).
42. “European Charter of the Architectural Heritage – 1975”, ICOMOS: *International Council on Monuments and Sites*, <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/170-european-charter-of-the-architectural-heritage> [last accessed 4 September 2022].
 43. Jenkins, “Is This the Best Way”.
 44. Jenkins, “Is This the Best Way”.
 45. Colin Amery, “Pragmatic Art and Spatial Virtuosity”, in Frank Russell, ed. *Architectural Monographs: Terry Farrell* (London: Academy Editions, 1984), 104–106 (106).
 46. Neal Morris, “200 m Pound Competition Fails to Draw”, *Building Design: The Weekly Newspaper for the Building Team*, no. 579 (29 January 1982), 1; Powell, *Vauxhall Cross*, 16. In 1979, Charles Jencks wrote a very complimentary piece for *Domus* about Farrell’s work, labelling his designs as “pragmatic classicism . . . that was particularly British”. Source: Charles Jencks, “Pragmatic Classicism”, *Domus*, no. 619 (July/August 1981), 12–21. For an overview of Farrell’s work, see: Farrell, *Terry Farrell* and Russell, ed. *Architectural Monographs: Terry Farrell*. A recent publication focusing on Farrell’s TVam studios is: Léa-Catherine Szacka, “Insight: Life, Death, and Ephemerality of Postmodern Architecture”, *Architectural Research Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2018), 271–274.
 47. Sir Terry Farrell, “The ‘High Style’ Period of Postmodernism”, in: Sir Terry Farrell and Adam Nathaniel Furman, *Revisiting Postmodernism* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: RIBA Publishing, 2017), 18–57 (32).
 48. Till, “Architecture of the Impure Community”, 35.
 49. Terry Farrell, “British Architecture After ‘Modernism’”, in Frank Russell, ed. *Architectural Monographs: Terry Farrell* (London: Academy Editions, 1984), 8–17 (13).
 50. Farrell, “British Architecture”, 13.
 51. Farrell, “British Architecture”, 13–14.
 52. Farrell, “British Architecture”, 13.
 53. This is, of course, a well-known critique of postmodern design formulated by architectural critics Paul Walker Clarke and Thomas A. Dutton who already in 1986 pointed to a certain cultural imperialism in such designs, by posing the question: “Whose history? Whose notion of context? Whose vernacular? Whose ‘popular’ culture?”. Source: Walker Clarke and Thomas A. Dutton, “Notes Towards a Critical Theory of Architecture: The Discipline of Architecture; Inquiry Through Design”, *Proceedings of the 73rd ACSA Meeting* (Washington, DC: ACSA, 1986), 46–58 (58).
 54. Interestingly, in this 1984 essay, Farrell – presaging the sentiment that informed the 2016 Brexit vote – proffered that “there is a view which is becoming increasingly attractive that the future has been better anticipated by smaller, more introverted countries that achieve mature social and cultural integration with low growth”, concluding that “the future of Britain must be all about achieving the latter”. Farrell, “British Architecture”, 15.
 55. Roger Berthoud, “Farrell’s Rescue Mission”, *Illustrated London News* (July 1986), 35.
 56. Alastair Best, “Attitudes of an Anglo-Saxon”, *Architects’ Journal* 176, no. 45 (10 November 1982), 63–65 (63).
 57. In contrast to the Arunbridge, who organised a nation-wide design competition, Regalian invited entries from only six practices, three of which were finalists in the Arunbridge competition: Sebire Allsopp, Nicholas Lacey, and Farrell. The other invited participants were Conran Roche; Campbell, Zogolovitch, Wilkinson &

- Gough, and Architech. Source: Powell, *Vauxhall Cross*, 23; Amanda Baillieu, "Another Chance at Vauxhall", *Building Design*, no. 1063 (17 January 1992), 1.
58. Farrell quoted in "Farrell and Regalian Plan Housing for Green Giant Site", *Building* 252, no. 7480 (23 January 1987), 10.
 59. Bob Colenutt cited in "Vauxhall Cross Battle Continues", *Building* 252, no. 7510 (21 August 1987), 8.
 60. Robert Cowan, "In the Steps of the Green Giant", *Architects' Journal* 186, no. 35 (2 September 1987), 17.
 61. Till, "Architecture of the Impure Community".
 62. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
 63. Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, 353.
 64. Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, 353.
 65. Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, 390.
 66. Powell, *Vauxhall Cross*, 28.
 67. "Queen Visits MI6", *The Times*, 15 July 1994, 2.
 68. Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, 390–391; "Our History, 1994: Intelligence Services Act".
 69. Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, 390.
 70. Peter MacMahon, "James Bond to Get Chop", *Sunday Mirror*, 10 May 1992, 6.
 71. MacMahon, "James Bond to Get Chop".
 72. Original quote: "Die neue Zentrale des militärischen Nachrichtendienstes [...] erinnert an Kalten Krieg und Postmoderne [...] Die Anlage der Uferzone mit ihren bombastischen Spalieren, Toloi und Kandelabern, mit Siegeskränzen fressenden Löwen, Springbrunnen und Wehrgängen, könnte als Filmkulisse für eine Nazi-Persiflage dienen. Am Gästesteg dümpelt Göings Yacht". Source: "Miss Moneypenny's Nightmare", *Baumeister das Architektur-Magazin* 89, no. 12 (December 1992), 6–7.
 73. Colin Davis, "Populist Show Marks the End of an Era", *Architects' Journal* 202, no. 19 (16 November 1995), 67. This article reviewed an exhibition of the work of "Terry Farrell and Partners" that was on display at the RIBA Architecture Centre in London in the Fall of 1995.
 74. Paul Finch, "Sacred Cows", *Perspectives on Architecture*, no. 27 (February/March 1997), 96.
 75. HRH Prince Charles cited in Wates and Knevitt, *Community Architecture*, 18–19.
 76. Wates and Knevitt, *Community Architecture*, 18–19.
 77. "Farrell Launches Campaign to Support Prince Charles", *Building* 252, no. 7526 (11 December 1987), 9.
 78. HRH the Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* (London, New York, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland: Doubleday, 1989).
 79. HRH the Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain*, 18.
 80. Charles Jencks, "Ethics and Prince Charles", *Architectural Design* 59, no. 5–6 (1989), 24–29.
 81. Images of Farrell's designs for Charing Cross station and Alban Gate were included in this publication, accompanying the words: "One of the City's main functions is to create wealth, but surely there should also be an obligation to spend some of that money on buildings that are beautiful, that are a pleasure to look at – and to work in. We should have architecture that celebrates London's mercantile success, and then *humanises* it." Source: HRH the Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain*, 63.
 82. "No Trump Please We're British", *Architects' Journal* 187, no. 17 (27 April 1988), 9.
 83. Another source of inspiration were Mayan and Aztec temples. Source: Powell, *Vauxhall Cross*, 34.

84. “Terry Became a Sir, Receiving Knighthood in 2001”, *Farrells*, <https://farrells.com/about/history> [last accessed 4 September 2022].
85. Kim Sengupta, “Pot-shot at the Peace Deal”, *Irish Independent*, 22 September 2000, 11; Tom Brady, “Renegade Republicans Step Up Their Campaign”, *Irish Independent*, 22 September 2000, News Analysis, 8.
86. Sengupta, “Pot-shot at the Peace Deal”, 11.
87. Ian Fleming was a British writer who invented the character of James Bond. Interestingly, Fleming named Goldfinger, a villain in his 1959 eponymous James Bond book, after Ernő Goldfinger, the Hungarian architect who emigrated to England in 1930. Ernő Goldfinger settled in London where he became a vocal proponent of what was largely still perceived as “foreign” Modernism in pre-WWII Britain. Nigel Warburton, who published a monograph on Ernő Goldfinger, claims that through Goldfinger’s wife Ursula Blackwell, Fleming knew of the architect, who at this stage lived nearby in the north London suburb of Hampstead. According to Warburton, Fleming disliked Goldfinger’s houses in Willow Road that he had built for his family in 1938 across from Hampstead Heath. Fleming’s aversion for these terraced houses could likely be attributed to the fact that by British standards they were thoroughly ahead of their time. This, along with Goldfinger’s engagement in fundraising for Soviet causes and his designs for both the Daily Worker and Communist Party Headquarters buildings in London, undoubtedly made him the ideal adversary in Fleming’s mind for the British Commander Bond. Source: Nigel Warburton, *Ernő Goldfinger: The Life of an Architect* (London: Routledge, 2004), 2. See also: Hannah Lewi “Look Away Prince Charles: Goldfinger is Classic”, in AnnMarie Brennan and Philip Goad, eds. *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*: 33 (Melbourne: SAHANZ, 2016), https://www.sahanz.net/wp-content/uploads/Lewi_Look-Away-Prince-Charles.pdf [last accessed 5 September 2022].
88. Both the damage inflicted to the building and its demolition only happened in these films. Not in reality.
89. Attesting to James Bond’s status as a British icon is his appearance in the promotional film that was produced for the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London. In this film Bond, portrayed by the actor Daniel Craig, arrives at Buckingham Palace to escort her Majesty the Queen to the Olympic stadium, in a union-jack adorned helicopter, where the pair, equipped with union jack parachutes, jump out of the aircraft to the famous James Bond tune. See: “James Bond Meets the Queen | London 2012 Highlights”, *Olympic Games*, <https://olympics.com/en/video/james-bond-meets-the-queen> [last accessed 5 September 2022].
90. Much speculation and controversy has surrounded the casting of the new James Bond after Daniel Craig announced his retirement from the role. Some have expressed hope that the new Bond might be either Black, female, or non-heterosexual. Barbara Broccoli who controls the James Bond film franchise, however, has stated that a woman shouldn’t play Bond, while other have argued that “Ian Fleming conceived the character as white and Scottish” and that he therefore “can’t be . . . Black”. Whatever the differences of opinion, one thing that everyone agrees on is that Bond should certainly be British. See, for instance: Catherine Shoard, “Next Bond Film will be ‘Complete Reinvention’ But Won’t Shoot for ‘at Least Two Years’”, *The Guardian*, 29 June 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/jun/29/next-bond-film-will-be-complete-reinvention-but-wont-shoot-for-at-least-two-years> [last accessed 5 September 2022]; Tatiana Siegel, “Why ‘Bond’ Mogul Barbara Broccoli Has Earned a License to Chill”, *The Hollywood Reporter*, 7 December 2021, <https://www.hollywood>

dreporter.com/movies/movie-features/barbara-broccoli-profile-james-bond-1235058174/ [last accessed 5 September 2022]; Noah Berlatsky, “The New 007 is a Black Woman – Don’t Make Her a Bond Girl”, *The Guardian*, 15 July 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jul/15/james-bond-007-black-female-actor-lashana-lynch-daniel-craig> [last accessed 5 September 2022]; “Joanna Lumley: Idris Elba Should Not Play James Bond as He Doesn’t Fit Description”, *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/may/09/idris-elba-james-bond-joanna-lumley-colour-blind-casting> [last accessed 5 September 2022]; Ben Child, “Rush Limbaugh: Idris Elba Can’t Be Bond Because He’s Black”, *The Guardian*, 24 December 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/dec/24/rush-limbaugh-idris-elba-james-bond-black> [last accessed 5 September 2022].

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