

Heaton Hall : A Palimpsest

By Rachel Siobhan Tyler

2017

Original Prints are a Collaboration Between Rachel Siobhan Tyler and Carys Briggs at Stoff Studios. Individually hand-printed in Bermondsey.

Original photography by Rachel Siobhan Tyler.

Thank You...

Carys Briggs, Tim Smyth, Jane Rendell, Polly Gould,
David Roberts
& My Site-Writing Cohort at The Bartlett [2017].

+

Miles Lambert at Manchester Art Galleries, The staff
at Heaton Park and all those who have cared for the
Hall- including generations of Mancunians.

To Margaret and Nathaniel



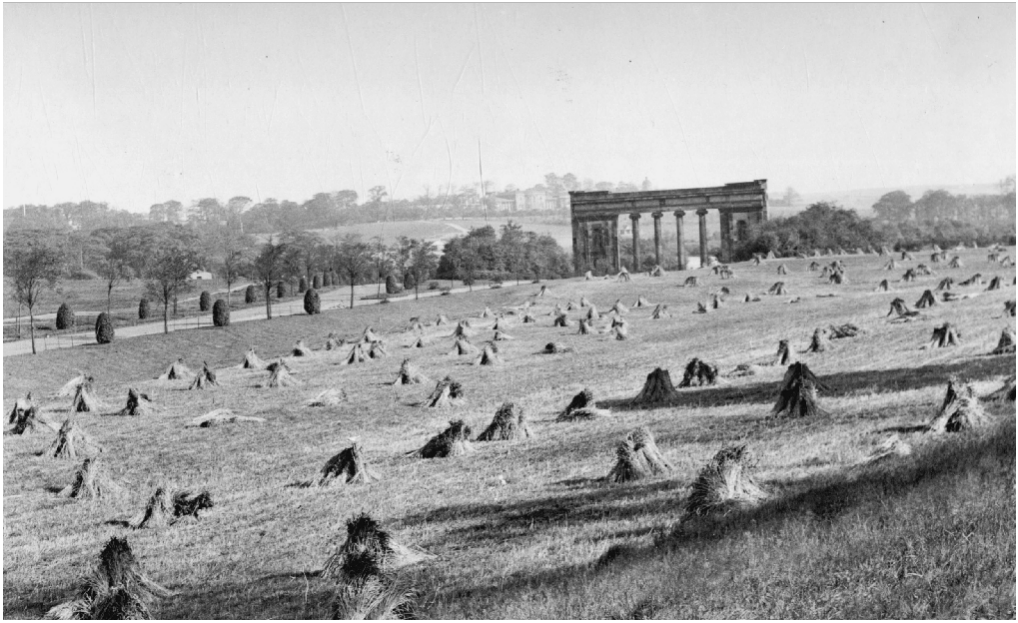
Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.⁵

Of his classical houses, the most important is Heaton, near Manchester, designed in 1772 when the architect was twenty-six and his patron, Sir Thomas Egerton, only twenty-three. *

In each of these works it is the building itself that is taken to be a message which can be presented and not coded. The ambition of the works is to capture the presence of the building, to find strategies to force it to surface into the field of the work. ²⁶



These places of cultural significance must be conserved for present and future generations in accordance with the principle of inter-generational equity. ²



ii.

Identity (self-definition) is primarily fused with identification (a felt connection to someone else).¹⁸

On the S side of the house a characterful lead lion and lioness lie in front of the bow from the yard of John Cheere after Van Nost, their backs polished smooth by generations of Manchester children. †

Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has significant associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.¹³



Movement ceases to function symbolically and takes on the character of an index. By index I mean the type of sign which arises as the physical manifestation of a cause, of which traces, imprints, and clues are examples. ²³



Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups. ⁶



Yet even as that presence surfaces it fills the work with an extraordinary sense of time-past. Though they are produced by a physical cause the trace, the impression, the clue, are vestiges of that cause which is itself no longer present in the given sign. ²⁷

The salient points were made by Aikin in 1795.
'Heaton-house, the seat of Lord Grey de Wilton, about four miles from Manchester, is beautifully situated on an eminence in a rich park, This truly elegant seat was built from a design of Wyatt'.⁴

Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to the community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences. They are historical records, that are important expressions of identity and experience. Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the landscape. They are irreplaceable and precious. ¹

Heaton is exceptional as the creation of a young architect fresh from Venice and Rome bursting with new ideas, and a young Oxford-educated client full of classical enthusiasm. The learned iconography of the decorating both within and without demonstrated its owners classical taste and connoisseurship, but also Wyatt's inclusive approach to Neoclassicism in the first flush of creativity, when his work exuded an innocence and freshness still undimmed by repetition and too much demand. §

As distinct from symbols, indexes establish their meaning along the axis of a physical relationship to their referents. They are marks or traces of a particular cause, and that cause is the thing to which they refer, the object they signify. Into the category of the index, we would place physical traces (like footprints), medical symptoms or the actual referents of the shifters.¹⁹



The aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of a place.⁹

Even in its present denuded and faded condition the Cupola Room remains one of Wyatt's finest designs, and it owes nothing to Adam. ¹¹

The dynamic object is, in some senses, the object that generates a chain of signs. ²⁸



Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.⁷



VIEW OF BEATON HOUSE.

Wm. G. Russell & Co. Litho. N.Y.

The photograph heralds a disruption in the autonomy of the sign. A meaninglessness surrounds it which can only be filled in by the addition of a text. ²²

Coade stone is used for capitals, and is the earliest full-scale panoply of this new manufactured material surviving in English architecture. #

Changes to a place should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture. ¹¹



iv.

Cast shadows could also serve as the indexical signs of objects....²⁰



Place has a broad scope and includes natural and cultural features. Place can be large or small: for example, a memorial, a tree, an individual building or group of buildings, the location of an historical event, an urban area or town, a cultural landscape, a garden, an industrial plant, a shipwreck, a site with in situ remains, a stone arrangement, a road or travel route, a community meeting place, a site with spiritual or religious connections. +

Originally, there is unlikely to have been gilding on the plasterwork here or else where in the house. The lack of architectural gilding was indicative of Wyatt's restrained taste. He preferred and popularized painted finishes and usually eschewed gilding in his early ceilings. **

As we speak to one another, both of us using 'I' and 'you', the referents of those words keep changing places across the space of our conversation. I am the referent of 'I' only when I am the one who is speaking. When it's your turn, it belongs to you. ¹⁷



Maintenance is fundamental to conservation. Maintenance should be undertaken where fabric is of cultural significance and its maintenance is necessary to retain that cultural significance. ¹⁴



i.

I define an Index as a sign determined by its Dynamic object by virtue of being in a real relation to it. ²⁹



v.

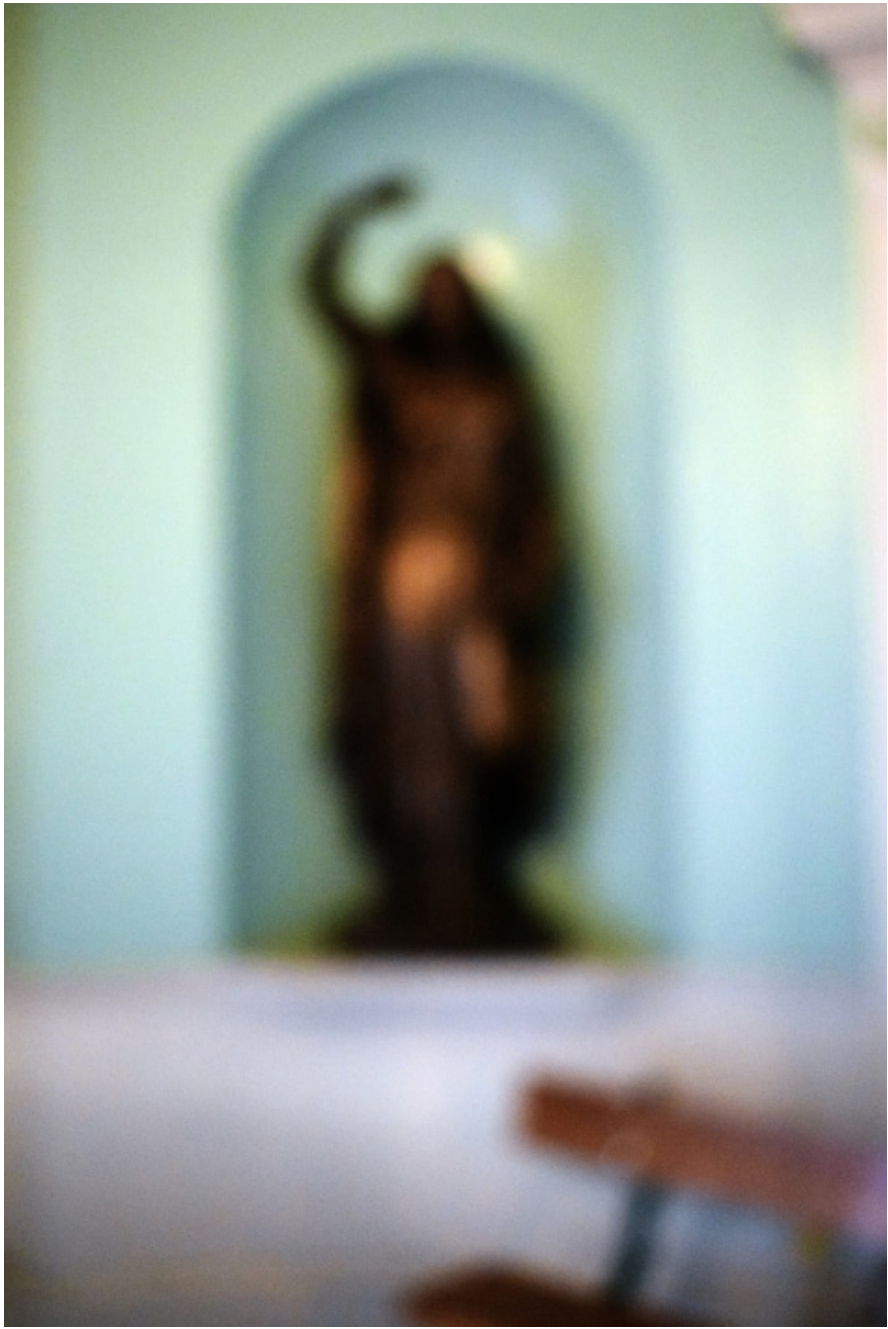
Some associations and
meanings may not be apparent
and will require research. ¹⁶



Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under circumstance that were physically forced to correspond point by point with nature. In that aspect, then. They belong to the second class of signs [indices], those by physical connection. ²⁵

This combination may be studied at the Classical country house which Sir John Summerson thought his most important, Heaton Hall in Lancashire (whose current closure to the public by its long-standing owner, Manchester City Council, is a scandal).^{***}

No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discoloured, no matter how lacking in documentary value the images may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it is the model. ²¹



Places of cultural significance
should be safeguarded and not
put at risk or left in a
vulnerable state.⁸

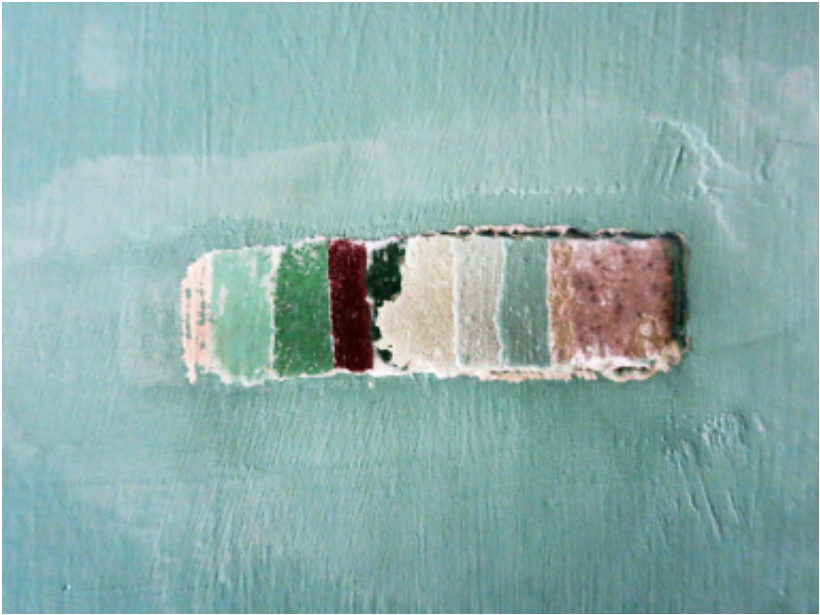


The effective closure of this important house is extraordinary. ††

Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible. ¹⁰



The effect of the work is that its relation to its subject is that of the index, the impression, the trace. ²⁴



Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.¹²



The best conservation often involves the least work and can be inexpensive.¹⁵

Archival Imagery

- i. "356, Manchester Regiment Manoeuvres In Heaton Park". 1915. Manchester. GB127.m08709. Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives.
- ii. "Parks, Heaton Park, Manchester". 1900. Manchester. Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives.
- iii. Greater Manchester Police. 2000. *Pankhurst Protest*. Image. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gmpolice1/4416981622>.
- iv. "Mabel Capper And Patricia Woodlock Advertising A Meeting". 1908. Manchester, Lancashire. Getty Images.
- v. Smyth, Tim. 2015. *Tree Trunk*. Manchester.
- vi. "Postcards Of Heaton Hall And Park". 2017. Image. <http://www.ebay.ie>.

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2. *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*, 2013, p.1
3. (*Burra Charter*), p.1
4. (*Burra Charter*), p.2
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6. (*Burra Charter*), p.2
7. (*Burra Charter*), p.2
8. (*Burra Charter*), p.3
9. (*Burra Charter*), p.3
10. (*Burra Charter*), p.3
11. (*Burra Charter*), p.3
12. (*Burra Charter*), p.4
13. (*Burra Charter*), p.5
14. (*Burra Charter*), p.6
15. (*Burra Charter*), p.9

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16. (*Burra Charter*), p.7
17. Rosalind Krauss, 1986, "Notes on the Index part 1" and "Notes on the Index part 2", *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT, p.197
18. Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index", p.197
19. Krauss, p.198
20. Krauss, p.198
21. Krauss, p.203, citing Andre Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray, Berkley, University of California Press, 1967, p.14
22. Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America. Part 2", *October*, 4 , Autumn 1977, p 58
23. Krauss, Notes on the index. Part 2, p.59
24. Krauss, Part 2, pp.60-63
25. Krauss, p. 63, citing CS Pierce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs", *Philosophical Writings of Pierce*, New York, Dover Publications, 1955, p.106
26. Krauss, p.65

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27. Krauss, R. p.65

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