

SAHGB

The Society of
Architectural
Historians of
Great Britain

2016 Annual Symposium

Saturday 21 May 2016

To be held at the Royal Institute of British Architects, London

The Official Architect; missing chapters in the history of the profession

Official architects, if considered at all, are now most readily associated with the work of the once powerful local authority architects departments of the post-war era. However they have an earlier and more varied history. During the eighteenth, nineteenth and for much of the twentieth century in Britain the title applied to any architect in salaried employment, often working for the state in departments such as the Office of Works, the Admiralty, or the Post Office. Yet such posts were also relied on in bodies as varied as the Miners Welfare Association, the Imperial War Graves Commission, and large private companies such as Boots, Woolworths, the Co-Operative Wholesale Society, and major railway companies such as the L.M.S. Responsible for the design of large swathes of the built environment the work of such architects was as often referred to derogatively as 'departmental architecture' and attacked for its poor quality or gone unnoticed due to the culture of bureaucratic anonymity.

This annual symposium of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, held in partnership with the Royal Institute of British Architects, aims to explore the history of salaried official architects and their work - from Borough Surveyors to County, City or Chief Architects and others - including those in the state and public sectors, major companies and international corporations. Contributions are welcome which highlight individual careers, institutions, working methods, major buildings/projects, and the political and professional debates surrounding Official architecture in this country and beyond over the last two hundred years or more the better to understand this strand in the history of practice.

Please send initial 300 word proposal, or enquiries, to the organiser, Dr. Julian Holder, at symposium2016@sahgb.org.uk by 31 October 2015. Review of papers will be finalised by December 31 2015. Papers should present original research and should be of 20 minutes in duration. Draft papers will be welcomed by 31 March 2016. Publication of suitable quality papers is envisaged.

Speakers are not charged the Symposium fee and are invited to an informal dinner as guests of the Society the night preceding the Symposium. All other associated costs such as travel and accommodation must be met by the speakers.

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