

The nineteenth-century Gothic Revival is marked by an increased attention to, and awareness of, architectural detail. Medieval architecture had been systematised and categorised fully by Thomas Rickman in 1817, and designers, such as A.W.N. Pugin, advanced a new type of Gothic design based upon these and other new understandings of medieval architecture. This revision to the style also applied, with dramatic effects, to the interior of nineteenth-century Gothic buildings, ranging from domestic rooms through to parliamentary structures.

George, Prince of Wales, moved into Carlton House, London, in 1783 and over the course of the next thirty years he modified and improved the residence. Part of these modifications included the introduction of a Gothic conservatory by Thomas Hopper, whose ceiling is based upon that in Henry VII's Chapel, much like the Gallery at Strawberry Hill. But instead of being made from *papier mâché*, the conservatory was of iron and glass, and, hence, realises fully the medieval desire to create glass-like structures.

John Nash reconfigured a basement room in the house into a Gothic Dining Room, which was fitted up in 1814. The window brackets were rotated twice around 90° to create the impression of Gothic arcades and vaulting, imitating the lateral ribs in Henry VII chapel, but without lowering the room's already modest ceiling height. A notable aspect of this scheme is the furniture — unlike one of the most well known and written about late-Georgian Gothic Revival houses, Eaton Hall, Chester, this room's furniture is of a typically fashionable Neoclassical form that is quite at odds with the room's overtly medievalising character.

Eaton Hall, a modest Classical-styled house from the seventeenth century was, in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, redeveloped in scale and style. William Porden, the architectural advisor to the Earls Grosvenor, proposed this renovation to Robert Grosvenor (1767–1845), second Earl Grosvenor. Not only were his architectural interventions confined to the house's exterior, but the substantial corpus of Porden's surviving drawings indicate his desire to control every aspect of the house, from the rooms' wall decoration through to the colour and style of carpet, and the furniture. The result is a totally Gothic house, much like Walpole's Strawberry Hill, though on a larger, more ambitious and expensive scale. Porden's originally-proposed budget of £15,000 did not even cover the cost of the first furnishing programme from the mid 1810s, let alone a second consignment of furniture supplied when the house was expanded in the 1820s, which totalled nearly another £15,000. Externally, the sprawling house is firmly of the Perpendicular style, and designed to profess the Earl's ancient and noble lineage, and current rank.

The interior of Eaton, documented by architects and architectural draftsmen J. and J.C. Buckler, record the unified Gothic scheme: the copious range of furniture tallies with each room's overwhelmingly architectural form. The fan vault and Perpendicular tracery (including blind tracery applied to surfaces as ornament) offer an almost oppressive application of Gothic forms without relief. In the foreground of the Drawing

Room it is possible to see a pair of bergère chairs, or chairs with enclosed sides, that resonate with the house's decoration, one of which is now on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Dominated by cusped and gilt decoration, this chair, which can be seen in the image resources section directly below this video, illustrates the scale, ambition and cost of the house's decoration. It is quite different, and far more ornate and opulent than the earlier Georgian furniture considered here, because of the choice of materials.

It is thought that A.C. Pugin was responsible for this chair's design, but as I have shown recently in an article published in *Furniture History*, this seems unlikely. A.C. Pugin, the father of one of the most famous and notable figures in the Victorian Gothic Revival, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, who was responsible in part for the form and decoration of the New Palace of Westminster, did design furniture for the firm of Morel and Seddon that was fitting up the refurbished and rejuvenated Windsor Castle for George IV. The firm had 'to render Windsor Castle in all respects a fit residence for the Sovereign of this country'. It has been commonly accepted that A.C. Pugin, whose designs for Gothic furniture were becoming a staple of Ackermann's *Repository of Arts*, was asked to assist with the design of furniture for Windsor. Benjamin Ferrey, an architect and student of the elder Pugin, records in his diary that

Mr. Morel, feeling the great responsibility of the task thrown upon the firm, applied to the elder Pugin to aid them in the execution of their commission. This was just the opportunity calculated to draw forth the abilities of his son, to whom his father immediately transferred the business. All attempts hitherto made to design furniture in the mediæval style had been feeble and unsuccessful; here was then a good chance for showing what really could be done when the task was confined to proper hands, and where the want of money formed no bar to the production of the best thing which art workmen could produce.

It was A.C. Pugin's involvement that enabled his son, A.W.N. Pugin (1812–52), at the tender age of 15, to assist with the castle's furniture. A.W.N. Pugin entered into his diary on 16 June 1827 that he:

went to design and make working drawings for the Gothic furniture of Windsor Castle at £1 1s per day, for the following rooms. The long gallery, the coffee room, the vestibule anti-room, halls, grand staircase, octagon in the Brunswick Tower and great Dining Room.

Manuscript evidence indicating that a significant amount of furniture had been designed before the younger Pugin started working at Windsor, however, has recently come to light and reveals that A.C. Pugin was working on the Castle's furniture and providing estimates two months before A.W.N. Pugin's claimed involvement.

A.W.N. Pugin therefore had a secondary influence upon Windsor, though he had a notable impact upon the furniture supplied. In particular he pared back his father's

penchant for fussy microarchitectural detail, and instead proposed bold and robustly Gothic designs, such as a sidetable design located below this video in the image resources section. A.W.N. Pugin's design is undeniably intricate, but the decoration is regular and controlled by large bold panels of Perpendicular tracery. It is far less fussy than his father's earlier proposal, which was not adopted.

This gave A.W.N. Pugin an unparalleled opportunity to design 'Gothic' furniture for an ancient and historic setting. But he was not satisfied with what is effectively his early work in the style. In 1841, after he had converted to Catholicism, and become exceptionally enamored of the form of medieval architecture, A.W.N. Pugin suggested that all previous architects and designers responsible for Gothic Revival architecture, interiors and furniture, such as Horace Walpole himself, had been working in a false style that did not reflect the inherently structural and pragmatic form of medieval design. In a highly satirical plate, he exaggerates the application of Gothic motifs to furniture and indicates that one should be lucky not to lose an eye or limb on these razor-like cusped edges. Of course interiors as represented in this illustration did not exist. However the plate's intended function — to illustrate the inappropriate appropriation and redeployment of Gothic forms in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries — was its key point. In *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841) from which this illustration is taken, advances that:

In pointed decoration *too much* is generally attempted; every room in what is called a Gothic house must be fitted with niches, pinnacles, groining, tracery, and tabernacle work, after the manner of a chantry chapel [...]. These observations apply equally to furniture;—upholsterers seem to think that nothing can be Gothic unless it is found in some church. Hence your modern man designs a sofa or occasional table from details culled out of Britton's Cathedrals, and all the ordinary articles of furniture, which require to be simple and convenient, are made not only very expensive but very uneasy. We find diminutive flying buttresses about an armchair; every thing is crocketed with angular projections, innumerable mitres, sharp ornaments, and turreted extremities. A man who remains any length of time in a modern Gothic room, and escapes without being wounded by some of its minutiae, may consider himself extremely fortunate. There are often as many pinnacles and gablets about a pierglass frame as are to be found in an ordinary church, and not unfrequently the whole canopy of a tomb has been transformed for the purpose, as at Strawberry Hill.

As this quotation indicates, Pugin was violently opposed to the forms of the Gothic Revival that he saw at Walpole's Strawberry Hill. Pugin's reformed Gothic, based upon new rules of design where ornament was the structure itself, governed the pieces that he designed for the New Palace of Westminster, including the table at the centre of the

House of Commons, and the chairs for the houses of Lords and Commons, but also other pieces, such as the table illustrated in the images recourses section below. Gothic continued to develop in the nineteenth century, where an interest in form and colour were key to exterior and interior architecture, such as Keble College, Oxford, whose Chapel is illustrative of this later, almost flat, form of Gothic.