

Just a quick reminder that if you have not yet renewed your Alumni membership for 2023, now is an excellent time to do so. We currently have 165 members down from 214 just last November. We will try to increase our renewals, but the more that can renew now will lessen the extra burdens on our Membership Secretary. Since the Alumni Assoc is an all-volunteer effort to primarily raise money for scholarships to the VSA Summer Schools, except for some required administrative expenses, all of your membership fees and donations goes to student scholarships.

These scholarships mean so much to the students. We recently received these notes from students about the scholarship:

“I have no words to describe how happy I am, I never thought this could happen in my life, this is one of the best things that is happening in my life, it's a blessing for me. I'm very emotional. Thank you for everything.”

“I would like to end by expressing my immense gratitude to the Victorian Society in America for their generous scholarship program. While I have been extraordinarily blessed in my academic and professional experiences, these endeavours have also contributed to financial hardship, and I would not have been able to participate in this program without the scholarship I received.”

In 2023, the Alumni Assoc will donate \$24,000 for scholarships. **THANK YOU for your continued support.** For info on how to sign-up or renew your membership, please visit the Alumni website at: [VSA Alumni](#)

NOTE: There is a special membership rate of \$30 per year for those age 35 or younger.

2022 Annual Reports

The Alumni Association is a chapter of the Victorian Society in America (VSA) and receives its tax-deductible status through the VSA. To maintain our status, each year we must submit a number of reports to the VSA. A special thanks to **John Martine, James Russiello, Sara Durkacs, and Jim Buttrick** for their help in putting together these reports.

VSA ALUMNI ASSOC Main, Pitts, & Endowment Fund Acts Inc/Exp 12/31/2022				
	Main	Endowment	Pitts	TOTAL
Balance 1/1/2022	61,019	227,509	45,330	333,858
2022 INCOME				
Membership Dues	8,075			
Donations to our AA Scholarship Funds	4,472			
Events (Lisbon Tour Deposits)			6,450	
Dividends and Interest		4,383		
Donations		350		
Change in Value of Investments				
12/31/2022 TOTAL INCOME	12,547	4,733	6,450	23,730
2022 EXPENSES				
Brokerage Fees		1,588		
Membership solicitation	76			
Gnosis Membership Software	1,140			
Member communications				
Website Maintenance				
Donations: VSA Annual Chapter Dues	100			
Bank Charges	128			
Summer Schools Receptions	750			
Summer Schools Scholarships	21,600			
Portugal Trip Refund Deposits			7,500	
Portugal Trip Pymt to local Guide			4,000	
Portugal Trip Wire Transfer Fees			60	
Portugal Trip Bus Company Deposit			1,777	
Income Reinvested		1,182		
Change in Value of Investments		40,627		
12/31/2022 TOTAL EXPENSES	23,794	43,397	13,337	80,528
12/31/2022 NET INCOME (LOSS)	-11,247	-38,664	-6,886	-56,797
ACCOUNT BALANCE 12/31/2022	49,772	188,845	38,444	277,061
(BOTH BANK BALANCES)				
End of 2012				35,273
End of 2013			20,507	39,250
End of 2014			38,352	58,952
End of year 2015				42,481
End of year 2016	18,810		42,364	61,174
End of year 2017	33,090		17,364	50,454
End of year 2018	49,692		30,340	80,032
End of year 2019	108,791		12,910	121,701
End of year 2020	152,189		46,580	198,769
End of year 2021 (Main & Endowment)	288,528		45,330	333,858
End of year 2022	49,772	188,845	38,444	277,061
Tangible assets laptop and software Purchased 1/25/2018 for \$459 plus tax and shipping charges				
David A Lamdin				
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VSA Alumni Association Report of 2022 Activities

There were no recruitment events in 2022. With the return of the Summer Schools in 2022, the Alumni Association renewed its practice of sponsoring a reception for the Summer Schools students. We sponsored a reception at the Glessner House for the Chicago students. For the London students, we sponsored a reception hosted by the Director of the London Victorian Society. The Newport reception was graciously hosted by **Pauline Metcalf**.

The Alumni Association was pleased to be able to provide \$21,600 for scholarships to 2022 Summer School students. The Alumni Association published seven eNewsletters in 2022. These well received digital newsletters continue to provide an effective and inexpensive means of informing our members of items of interest to the Alumni.

Many members of the Alumni Association participated in, supported, and thoroughly enjoyed the excellent video lectures presented by the VSA in 2022. At the 2021 Annual Meeting, a new Board of Directors was elected for the period 2022 through 2024.

As of November 2022, the Alumni Association had 217 Households registered as dues-paying Alumni bringing our total to 256 members. The Association offered \$25 hardship "COVID-19" membership dues and 85 Alumni renewed at this level.

The Alumni Study Tour to Portugal is on the calendar for 8-19 March 2023 with a full contingent of 30 attending with a few additional on the Waiting List.

The Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools 1 (the "AA FB page") retains 286 likes and 297 followers. Between May 18 and May 23, **David Lamdin** published 19 posts containing photos from the Denver study trip. David published a 20th post on May 24 celebrating Queen Victoria's birthday. Linked posts by **Anne Malleck** were published simultaneously on the VSA national FB page, the AA page, and the Vic-SocAmerica Instagram Account, which is shared between the AA and the VSA national. These included the daily summer school photo posts from June 5 through July 10 for Newport, Chicago, and London, and from the 2nd Take a Seat Fall Lecture series. On June 5 (start of the Newport Summer School), June 17 (start of the Chicago Summer School), and June 26 (start of the London Summer School), the AA page posted a series of posts with up to 14 photos each from each day of the summer schools. Recently on Oct 27, the AA page has started to post weekly advertisements for upcoming virtual lectures on Zoom that are part of the summer school's Take a Seat lecture series.

Performance of the Alumni Endowment Scholarship Fund has closely tracked a very negative market. Among our five equity sectors and one fixed income sector, all were negative, with international equity being the worst performer and high yield fixed income holding up relatively better. It should be noted that our holdings correlated very closely with the sector benchmarks we had chosen, thus producing the market diversification we wanted. The disappointing results can be attributed primarily to the steady increases in interest rates implemented by the Federal Reserve in its attempt to moderate inflation. The market remains vulnerable to further interest rate increases in next few

quarters, but it responds very positively to any signals that the Fed will pivot to a less restrictive policy. The strategy of our portfolio being managed by eCIO has been to be defensive through maximum diversification of geography and asset classes. When our fund was initiated, we knew the market was fully valued. We invested the principal gradually in the hope of improving the average prices paid, but we did not invest gradually enough. With the prospect of interest rates leveling off, the market outlook for the next year looks much improved, with the assumption that a severe recession can be avoided.

The Alumni Association very much appreciates the efforts of its officers and directors whose efforts enable the Alumni Association to be an entirely volunteer organization.



The VSA continues its third season of free online Zoom lectures series for 2022/2023. Please visit the VSA website for info on viewing these lectures:

[Lectures 3 - Victorian Society](#)

For some interesting little tidbits on Victorian Era history, see:

[Victorian Era – 5-Minute History \(fiveminutehistory.com\)](https://www.fiveminutehistory.com/)

“Architects of the Gilded Age”



École Nationale Supérieure Des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where many of the great American architects of the Gilded Age studied

Want to learn everything you can about the great architects of the Gilded Age? The Flagler Museum in Palm Beach, Florida is hosting a fantastic seven-week lecture series highlighting the work of Horace Trumbauer, Stanford White, Julia Morgan, Charles Follen McKim, Daniel Burnham, and Carrère & Hastings. The former director of Museum Affairs at the Flafler, Dr. Laurie Ossman, is giving two of the lectures, including the opening presentation on “The Influence of the École des Beaux-Arts in America.” **Dr. Richard Guy Wilson**, Director of the Newport Summer School, presented a lecture on Charles McKim on March 5.

The “Architects of the Gilded Age” series lectures can still be watched free of charge. To learn more, go to:

www.flaglERMuseum.us/programs/lecture-series.

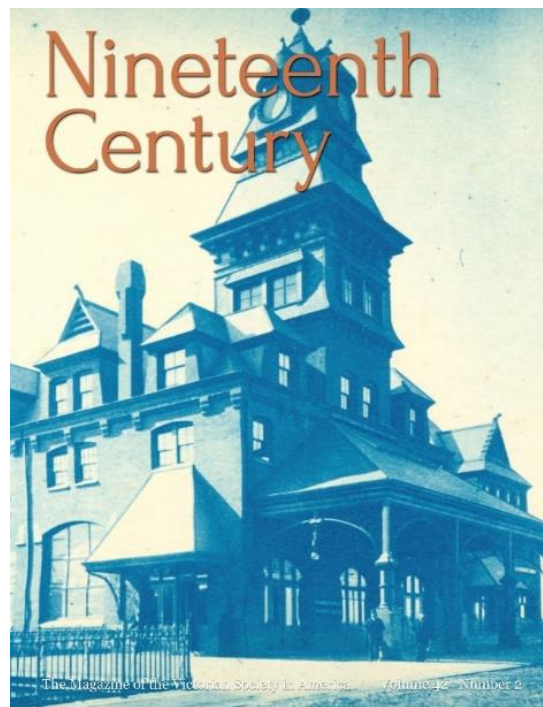
Dr. Michael Patrick Cullinane of Dickinson State University explores the widest range of topics in his "Gilded Age and Progressive Era" podcast, from child labor, union busting and the Chinese Exclusion Act to the glories of Gilded Age food and “The Politics of Trash.” Check it out at:

www.michaelpatrickcullinane.com/podcast.



The Preservation Society of Newport County's Spring 2023 lecture series continues with in person and \$10 Zoom lectures. In this series at The Breakers – a place that epitomizes the Gilded Age – journey through an era that gave shape to the country we know today. Distinguished guest speakers will illuminate the period between the Civil War and the dawn of the 20th century, examining the people, events and inventions that forever shaped our nation's cultural fabric. The next lecture is on May 4th. **Prof Richard Guy Wilson** presents *Creating a New American Image: Architecture, 1870 -1910* on June 1 starting at 6:00pm. For more information and to purchase in-person tickets or Zoom registration, go to:

www.newportmansions.org/events/the-gilded-age-years-transforming-america.



From the Editor: This letter is broadcast to those of you who have authored articles for *Nineteenth Century* in the past. We are writing to say that we are inviting submissions for the upcoming spring issue and beyond. Perhaps you have been working on something or know someone who has. We find ourselves, editorially, with a couple of anticipated submissions that are not suitable and are thus short on content.

As a reminder, we publish articles on American material culture and design that fall within the time period 1830 to 1914. Three to six-thousand words is typical for a feature but we are also happy to read shorter pieces. We regularly consider the work of graduate and doctoral students.



Victorian Society in America Newport Summer School 2022

Christine Dalton, AICP

Ten days, 126,119 steps, 50 historic sites, 3,000 photos, and pages upon pages of notes – that’s how I spent the early summer of 2022 in Newport. I had been fortunate enough to obtain a scholarship and place in the Victorian Society in America’s Newport Summer School. To say that I was thrilled was an understatement. I first learned about the VSA program from a colleague in preservation, and instantly made it my goal to attend, as I just knew the program would be wonderful. I happily solicited my letters of recommendation several months before, and anxiously anticipated word from the VSA. I literally squealed with excitement when I received the email advising that I had been accepted to the program and would receive a scholarship.

I first visited Newport in 2018 and fell in love with the Newport mansions and the work of the Preservation Society of Newport County. I have visited Newport several times since that first visit, always as a tourist. Now I had the opportunity for a closer look at the heritage, history, and architecture of Newport from an insider’s perspective. I was not disappointed. Our fearless leaders, Richard Guy Wilson and Ted Bosley, made the experience truly unforgettable. I am honored to have learned from them, as well as the high quality of guest lecturers we were privileged to have join us throughout the experience.

I am a historic preservationist, urban planner, and educator. In my consulting business, I specialize in education, citizen engagement and local government planning. Over the course of 20+ years in my career, I have learned that students, citizens, and elected officials tend to unanimously love one thing – a great story. Some of the defining elements of a great story are character, conflict, change, and context. With each site we visited, we learned about the people associated with significant events related to that site. We learned about conflicts associated with various sites, representing hundreds of years of history (Newport was incorporated as a Town in 1639, and as a City in 1784). We learned about change of all kinds – changing attitudes towards religion, politics, and architectural design, to name a few. Lastly, we learned about context – the sites we visited all had their own special place in Newport history and have fortunately survived the times.

For some sites, the context had changed very little, though their small changes speak volumes to the growth and development of Newport. For example, the primary façade of the Hunter House, ca. 1748, was once the rear of the home, as the primary façade faced the waterfront, which served as the major thoroughfare in Newport.



For some places, the context of sites had completely changed, such the land on which a modern-day shopping plaza exists on Bellevue Avenue, made possible by the demolition and selling of the property on which a grand estate once stood. As a planner, understanding the change of context for me was one of the most important takeaways, as it provides the starkest contrast between the Nineteenth Century and present day, and offers valuable lessons with that insight.

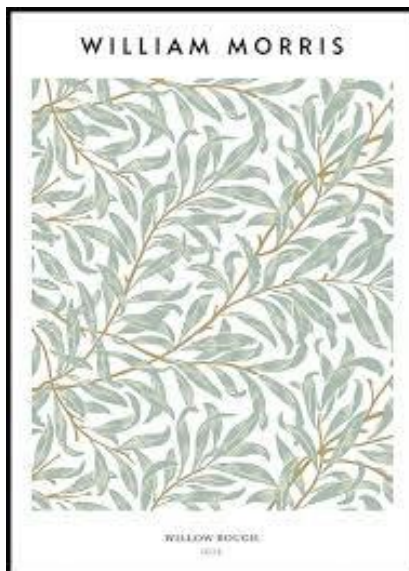
It's difficult to choose a favorite site, lesson, or memory related to the Newport Summer School experience. If I had to choose, it would be the passionate and hardworking people and homeowners that shared their knowledge, experience, and for some – access to their private homes. In many instances, their excitement and enthusiasm for the subject matter was contagious. Though I was exhausted at the end of the ten days, I was mentally stimulated and craving more. The pages upon pages of notes I took will surely make it into future presentations and lesson plans that I prepare. I hope that I am able to share my newfound insight with the same passion that we were fortunate enough to enjoy.

The London Summer School 2022

Lara Damabi

The London Summer School was an unforgettable experience that offered a rich and engaging combination of lectures, guided walks, and behind-the-scenes tours. The program's incredible access to sites and collections greatly enriched my understanding of 19th century art and architecture as well as its principal designers, materials, and styles. It was an amazing opportunity to visit so many different regions of England as well as remote locations that are not easily accessible by public transport. Furthermore, I thoroughly enjoyed the chance to connect and engage with students, academics, and heritage professionals from all over the world and of all ages.

As someone who is enamored by the Arts and Crafts movement and Pre-Raphaelite art, I was most excited to visit William Morris's Red House. In addition to being the only house designed, built, and lived in by Morris, Red House also functioned as a haven for the Pre-Raphaelite circle. It is an iconic site where the Arts and Crafts movement flourished and spectacular works were created. Having a background in fashion and textile history, it was incredibly special to visit the birthplace of some of the most significant designs created by Morris, such as 'Daisy,' the first wallpaper to be produced by Morris & Co., which was created by Morris after embroidering daisy motifs on wall-hangings for the Red House.

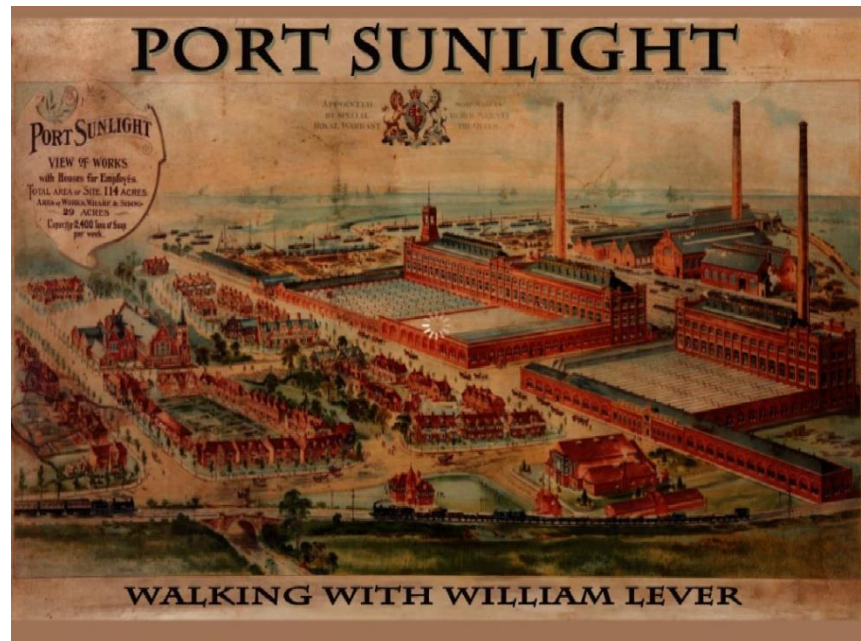


Another highlight of the program was our visit to Kelm-scott Manor, a property that was associated with the Morris family for 67 years. It contains furnishings designed specifically for the Manor by Philip Webb and boasts a fine art collection with works by artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, and Albrecht Durer. The beautiful and accomplished textile works of Jane and May Morris are also on display. The gardens of the Manor were a significant source of inspiration to Morris, and as I walked the grounds, it was not difficult to imagine Morris admiring and sketching the willow trees on the property to create 'Willow Bough,' one of his most well-known designs.

This course was also valuable for its inclusion of sites that I do not think I would have ever heard of. The Crossness Pumping Station, for instance, is a masterpiece of 19th century engineering, architecture, and design. The guided tour we received provided an excellent historical context and fascinating look into Victorian daily life.



Similarly, Port Sunlight, another site I was unfamiliar with, is arguably the finest surviving example of early urban planning in the United Kingdom and contains more than 900 Grade II listed buildings. The village has remained largely intact since its founding by William Hesketh Lever in 1888 and is an excellent example of the architecture of the Arts and Crafts movement with its emphasis on traditional materials and craftsmanship. Indeed, Port Sunlight provided a unique opportunity to experience a complete environment that encapsulates late nineteenth and early twentieth century social and visual ideals.



I would like to end by expressing my immense gratitude to the Victorian Society in America for their generous scholarship program. While I have been extraordinarily blessed in my academic and professional experiences, these endeavours have also contributed to financial hardship and I would not have been able to participate in this program without the scholarship I received.

This program was both professionally and personally enriching and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in 19th century art and architecture. I am now eager to participate in the programs offered in Newport and Chicago!

Victorian Tiles and the University Main Building in Uppsala

Anna Hamberg - PhD Candidate, Department of Art History, Uppsala University, Sweden

My ongoing dissertation regards the late 19th century architecture in Sweden and more specifically the Uppsala University Main Building in Uppsala from the 1880s. If you would like to experience a well-preserved and cohesive environment from this time period - this is the right place to explore. The building with its location in the old academic quarters, near the Gothic cathedral, still functions today for its original purpose, namely for academic everyday activities and solemn ceremonies. Like a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the building and the University park, the interiors with furniture, decorative painting, art, sculpture still largely preserved from the moment the building was inaugurated.

I applied to The London Summer School because of the exclusive opportunity to study and to deepening my knowledge about the British development of the same era. Sweden is one country among many that was influenced by Victorian England during the 1900-century.

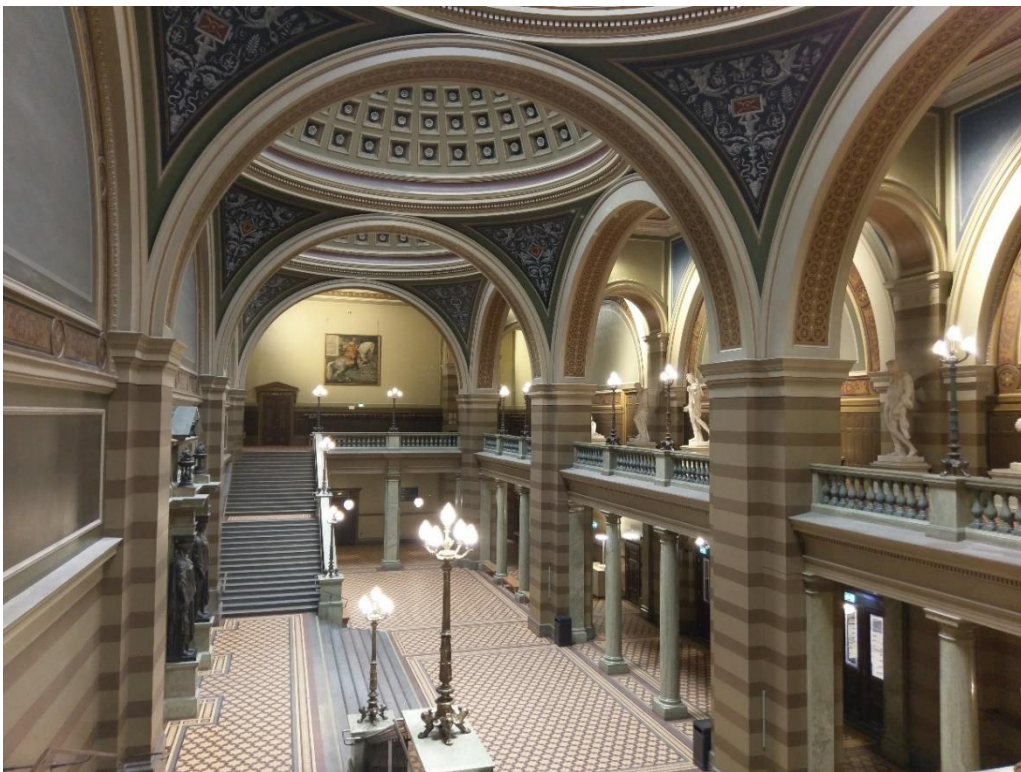
Uppsala University, the oldest in Scandinavia, was founded in 1477. For the upcoming 500th anniversary in 1877, the idea was that a new monumental building would be built and that the entire university, at the time 2000 people, would be accommodated in a new grand auditorium. The construction process was unfortunately delayed, but a new university building was inaugurated at a festive ceremony by King Oscar II in May 1887.

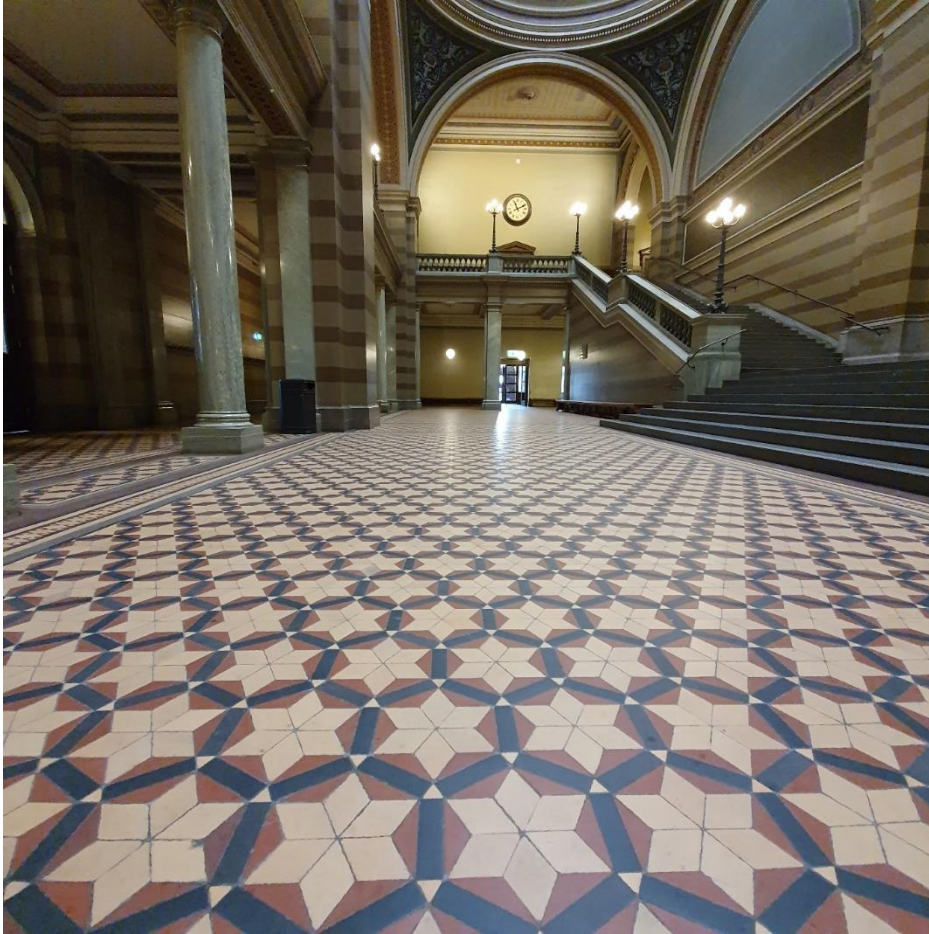


*Inauguration of the Uppsala University Main Building, May 17th 1887.
Photo: Henri Osti/Uppsala University Library*

The main facade shows a two-storey red color brick building with contrasting parts and details in limestone, richly decorated with inscriptions, provincial coats of arms and allegorical figures. In the granite plinth you find the basement floor. During construction they strove to use genuine materials both inside and out, and they did so as far as the economy allowed. In the building, there are many references to Greek antiquity and the Roman Renaissance, and the building is characterized by symmetry and axially that generally characterize classical architecture. The house's architect, Herman Teodor Holmgren (1842 – 1914), was educated at the architecture school of the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in Stockholm, largely influenced by the structure at the French counterpart Ecolé des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

So, what does this building have to do with Victorian England? Well, in the spacious foyer there is an original, nearly 10 800 ft², floor of imported English tiles. Most likely the largest in Sweden. Basically all rooms are in reach of the foyer such as the Grand hall, lecturers' rooms and administration. It stretches through two floors and is crowned with three domes equipped with lanterns. The room has been described by Swedish art historians as one of the finest room creations in Sweden from late 19th century. The floor in the foyer thus forms an important part of the building's original design and has a strong cultural-historical value.





Foyer

Tiles made of ceramic material have existed in large parts of the world for a long time and the techniques have varied. The technique of producing patterned encaustic tiles was developed in the Middle Ages by monks in France and spread from there to England. The technique fell into oblivion but was revived in England during the 19th century, probably as an effect of the increased interest in history and

above all the craze for medieval Gothic. A significant person in this context was, of course, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812 – 1852), one of the foremost advocates of Gothic, and who participated in the reconstruction of The Houses of Parliament in London 1849 - 1868. There he used tiles, of his own design, in the halls, galleries and corridors. The new Parliament building is said to have contributed to the increased popularity of flooring material's and the tiles also spread to other parts of the world such as North America and the rest of Europe. During this period, the production of ceramics and tiles was concentrated in an area in Midlands with Stoke-on-Trent as its centre. Thomas Minton (1765 – 1836) was one of many ceramic manufacturers. He started his company in 1793 and his son Herbert Minton (1793–1858) became interested in encaustic floor tiles in the early 19th century. He acquired the patent for the manufacture of encaustic tiles according to medieval methods and production was developed in collaboration with the prominent architect Pugin.

In Sweden, tiles began to be imported from England starting in the 1870s and became increasingly popular. Both floor and wall tiles became more common because of the increasing housing construction and also public buildings in stone and brick during the 1870s and 1880s.

The floor tiles in the University building were manufactured by The Campbell Brick and Tile co of Stoke-upon-Trent. A company that has its origins in Minton's business from the beginning of the century. The floor was distributed via the company Joseph Leja in Stockholm, which was one of the leading departments stores in Sweden at the time. Joseph Leja can be compared to British Harrods or the French equivalent Au Printemps and important business contacts were made, not least at the major world exhibitions, to make a rich range of goods for the Swedish market. They did not only deliver English tiles to the University building in Uppsala, but was also the largest supplier of specially designed furniture, lightning and textiles for the interiors.



Designs for Encaustic and Geometric Tile Pavement (Spine title). Stoke-on-Trent, England:

The Campbell Brick and Tile Co. (and) Robert Minton Taylor Tile Works, 1875, circa. Photo: Uppsala University Library

The floor is laid in two patterns. The star patterning of red, yellow, and black tiles on the ground floor is presented as no 5 in the product catalog from 1877 and the price was 1 SEK per ft². They are so-called geometric, i.e. without colored patterns in the individual tile, but there are also some borders of encaustic tiles in red and yellow. The geometric tiles were cheaper to manufacture and were often laid in complex geometric patterns to attract the visitor's eye, especially in stairwells, entrance halls and galleries. Around the turn of the century, the tile floor began to be out-competed by newer materials and the company

Joseph Leja contributed to the increased popularity of English tiles in Sweden during the last three decades of the 19th century.

During the course, I had the opportunity to see many interiors with tiled floors and thus experience the floor in its British context. One of the highlights was the visit to the Houses of Parliament to see Pugin's designs. Other interesting settings in London were Sir Gilbert Scott's St Pancras Hotel and the Saints Church on Margaret Street by the architect William Butterfield (1814 – 1900). The impressive neoclassical St George's Hall in Liverpool, with interiors by architect Charles Cockerell (1788 – 1863) another one. In Uppsala University building, the Swedish National Property Board has the important mission of preserving the floor, which so far is essentially the original. English tiled floors are therefore cared for and preserved in other parts of the world, and for those interested, Uppsala University building is definitely a building worth visiting.

Architectural Study Tour In Newport And Its Neighbourhood

András Jeney PhD, art historian, tour guide

Budapest, Hungary

I had been planning for some years to travel to Rhode Island because it is the richest state of the United States of America in the aspect of old buildings constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition, the majority of these buildings were built on a high artistic level and are among the main works of very significant architects. So, I participated in the Newport Summer School this year.

In the frame of the summer school, we visited the Watts Sherman House designed by Henry Hobson Richardson, which stands in Newport. More precisely, the plan and the general composition are surely by him, and the exterior details perhaps by another architect named Stanford White. We also visited other buildings by Richardson in North Easton which is in the neighbouring state Massachusetts and where there are five further creatures by this world-famous American artist who preferred the Neo-Romanesque style.

Richard Morris Hunt is another dean of American revivalist architects, who built several remarkable manors in Newport. The Ogden Goelet House was designed in French Neo-Renaissance style.



We also visited The Breakers which has Italian Neo-Renaissance flavor sometimes with Neo-Baroque splendor. I liked the fact that a Hungarian aristocrat named Count László Széchenyi married into the family of the owner at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and his portrait painting is hanging in the interior. Besides, Széchenyi and his wife Gladys Vanderbilt had another, still existing palace in Andrásy Road, Budapest, which is the most elegant avenue of the Hungarian capital.

The present state of the Chateau-sur-Mer palace in Newport was also conceived in Hunt's mind. It was built in the style of the Paris of Napoleon III. Hunt's Marble House is also an eclectic mixture of the Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Baroque styles. The pagoda roofed Chinese Teahouse is a marvelous edifice in the garden of the palace. The many-sided Hunt designed in Stick style too, which derived from the Gothic Revival and the Queen Anne Revival. An example of this style is the Griswold House, where the Newport Art Museum is inside and we checked its exhibitions.

We became acquainted with some buildings of the McKim, Mead & White architect trio, for example The Newport Casino and Isaac Bell's House. They designed these works in the so-called Shingle Style, which derives from the British Old English style. The latter style was developed in the 19th century by Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield British architects from the vernacular farm architecture and Neo-Gothicism. Then it appeared in the United States, where it was combined with some colonial traditions. The most important feature of it is the use of shingles. The architect trio designed other styled houses too, like the Colonial Revivalist Edgar House which we also visited.

We met buildings built in prior styles too. Peter Harrison was a British born significant architect in New England who worked in Palladian style. Besides, this nominalization is not especially authentic because the Palladianism followed not the main works of Palladio but usually the less significant works of the Italian architect. So perhaps the use of the Neo-Classical term would be more appropriate. We visited the Redwood Library and the Brick Market designed by Harrison.

We visited several churches, too. My favorite one was the Saint John the Evangelist Church in Newport designed by Frederick Clarke Withers. I noticed that this Neo-Gothic building was built according to the Puginian church type. The British Victorian architect Augustus Pugin preferred the asymmetrical exterior like in the case of this church. The rugged rustication of the walls of the elevations is also in his spirit. Pugin explored that the Medieval English churches had rood screens so he made this element fashionable again. So, the Saint John the Evangelist Church has a rood screen. Furthermore, the visible roof beam structure is also a Puginian feature.

We also visited Providence, the capital city of Rhode Island. In contrast to Newport which is a little town, Providence's character is more appropriate for a big city with skyscrapers. We visited the City Hall which was built by Samuel J. F. Thayer in French Neo-Renaissance style with French mansard roof and smooth granite facades. Initially, also a center tower was designed but the economic world crisis in 1873 hindered it. However, it is a remarkable building without a tower too.



It was also very interesting that we checked some houses on the last day, where the original historicist exterior and interior was partly destroyed in the past but recently it has been rebuilt. There is a similar tendency in my city Budapest, where the original interior of the Hungarian royal palace has been partly rebuilt.

We visited several further houses in Newport during the nine days of the summer school. It was very flattering that the leaders of the school could arrange these visits because the majority of those buildings are inhabited. We also attended lectures in the mornings where excellent researchers represented the old architecture of the United States. All of my fantastic classmates were also very interested in the architectural and artistic creatures which we checked. This summer school was an unforgettable and professionally very useful journey for me.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The 2023 Newport, Chicago, and London Summer Schools will be in session this summer!

It is now easier than ever to renew your Alumni membership. Visit the Victorian Society website at :

[Home - Victorian Society](#)

Move the cursor over the MEMBERSHIP dropdown menu at the top of the home page and click on JOIN the ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. Scroll down slightly and complete the form indicating the frequency of the donation, the amount/membership level desired, and other information as required to complete the donation.



Kristen Matulewicz (London, 2017) of the Biggs Museum of American Art presented an analysis of artistic depictions of Ophelia on April 20 as part of the Lewes, DE Public Library's annual Shakespeare Festival.

[Shakespeare Festival costume exhibit to open April 1 | Cape Gazette](#)





The *Wall Street Journal* just published a review of the American Museum of Natural History's new addition, the Gilder Center, by **Michael J Lewis**, former member of the Victorian Society in America's Board of Directors.

The Gilder Center's Architecture Is an Expression of the Earth

In its fluid, free-form design, the American Museum of Natural History's new addition evokes the gentle contours that come from living processes acting over deep time.



The Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation Photo: Iwan Baan

Is there a museum anywhere that has not just built an addition? If not, it soon will. Ours is a museum-enlarging age. An architect can build a lucrative practice on that fact (one thinks of Renzo Piano or Annabelle Selldorf).

But additions are a tricky business. You tamper with a landmark at your peril, as Michael Graves learned with his radical proposal of the 1980s to absorb the Whitney Museum within a postmodern colossus. It's much safer to design a neutral box that offers no visual competition. Or to practice museological social distancing, as when Mr. Piano set his 2013 addition to the Kimbell Art Museum away from Louis Kahn's sublime building.

It is nonetheless possible to enlarge a museum in a way that is expressive of the present moment, that is poetically evocative of its purpose and content, and that does not stick out like a sore thumb. Such is the lesson of the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education and Innovation, Studio Gang's \$465 million addition to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, which opens May 4.

The AMNH is a patchwork of a building, a four-block sprawl along the west side of Central Park and more than a century in the making. It was envisioned as a foursquare citadel in red granite, with round towers at the corners and a burly Romanesque portal at the center of each side. Only the south wing was fully realized, and while monumental entrances were eventually built to the east and north, the west side languished.

In 2014 Studio Gang was commissioned to design a 230,000-square-foot addition that would provide exhibition and classroom space and also serve as a new entrance pavilion. But it had to do still more. Because the Romanesque master plan had never been completed, many of the passages were dead ends, which the addition was expected to open—with no fewer than 33 connections. A tall order, like expecting the missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle not only to fit but to transform the rest of the puzzle.



The atrium at the Gilder Center Photo: Iwan Baan

The new pavilion is an essay in free-form design, fluidly curved within and without, and is not so much biomorphic as geomorphic. Jeanne Gang, the founder of Studio Gang, told me that she was inspired by the image of “a canyon, worn down by wind, weather and water.” Instead of a literal facsimile of nature, she wanted to evoke it abstractly, through the gentle contours that come from living processes acting over deep time.

Free-form design can be a breach of architectural good manners, but Ms. Gang’s canyon inspiration works better than expected. It is aligned with the museum’s crucial east-west axis on West 79th Street, which is itself a canyon of tall buildings, and it opens itself to the street grid in a way no other part of the museum does.

Yet at every step it defers to the older buildings, and not only by matching their height. To either side of the cleft, the facade swells outward in a nod to the Romanesque towers; meanwhile the same pink granite is used as the entrance on Central Park West. The interior, a five-story well of light and space, is a rhapsody of flowing structure. Its walls billow and swell, and then abruptly pucker into an opening; it suggests what it would feel like to be inside a Henry Moore sculpture. Its curved surfaces are composed of shotcrete, concrete hosed at high pressure onto a steel rebar cage, forming both the structure and the visible surface. The treatment of the surfaces has been carefully studied to give them a fine-grained handmade texture, one of those subtle tactile refinements that one senses but does not consciously notice. Another is the light, which pours in from the full-height curtain wall of the entrance and from three circular skylights, and which takes on a superb and gentle softness as it reflects off the irregular curves.



The Gilder Center's library Photo: Alvaro Keding/AMNH

This ceremonial hall is not the only great space in the Gilder Center. The fourth-story reading room is a cozy tent of a space, its hefty central column carrying a great spread of structural ribs; one might as well be reading under a mighty oak tree, which feels continuous with the canopy outside the oversized window. Ms. Gang worked to make sure all her windows were treated to be visible to flying birds (she spoke movingly of her distress at “the small songbirds whose long journey of migration ends on a sheet of glass”).

Where necessary, the architecture recedes into invisibility, as in—appropriately enough—“Invisible Worlds,” an immersive and interactive experience that takes place in a 5,800-square-foot oval space. But this is a windowless exception in a building that is otherwise conspicuously, even extravagantly, lavish with sunlight.

It was not long ago that museums arranged their collections to depict a system of order, either an evolutionary sequence (as with natural history or art) or a structure of interrelationships (as with anthropology). To endorse any sort of systematic order has increasingly come to be seen as arrogantly elitist, and many exhibitions, in the U.S. and elsewhere, have been reconfigured to express a multiplicity of interpretations. The consequence is a distressing sense of uncertainty.

But there is nothing uncertain about the Gilder Center. Its structure and space celebrate nature, in all its splendor and complexity, and not—miracle of miracles—the architect who designed it.

—*Mr. Lewis teaches architectural history at Williams and reviews architecture for the Journal.*



The Heritage Society of the Alumni Association

The Heritage Society of the Alumni Association supports our efforts to provide scholarships to the Summer Schools in the future. Join this special group of Alumni by making a planned gift such as a bequest in your will or beneficiary designations of IRAs or retirement plans.

Hank Dunlop has joined the Society with an RMD designation from his IRA.

John C. Freed, a longtime VSA and Alumni Association supporter made provisions for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association in memory of his partner, **Paul Duchscherer**.

Paul Duchscherer very thoughtfully made provisions in his trust for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association as well as designating the Alumni Association as the beneficiary of all future royalties from his many books and other publications.

The **Bob and Carole Chapman Fund** very generously awarded a grant of \$10,000 to the Alumni Association Chapter in memory of **Carole Chapman**.

Darrell Lemke & Maryellen Trautman made provisions for a bequest to the Alumni Association. These gifts and designations help ensure that current and future generations of students will be able to attend the educational opportunities presented by the VSA Summer Schools.

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