“The Preservation of Memories, Histories, Fellowships, Fraternities”: Thomas Hardy and the Victorian Restoration/Preservation Debate

by

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INTRODUCTION

Architecture is not a word that usually comes to mind when one hears the name “Thomas Hardy.” Some, of course, will think immediately of the contemporary British actor who has appeared in such blockbuster films as *Inception* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Those who think of the 19th century British author and poet, however, are inclined to remember him as someone who writes rather depressing stories. With such works in his oeuvre as *Jude the Obscure* (1895) and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), one might be forgiven for believing that Hardy’s sole desire in life was to make his readers cry.

Yet, Hardy pursued a career in architecture before he became an author. Born in 1840, he was apprenticed at age sixteen to Dorchester architect John Hicks and embarked on a career that focused on restoring Gothic churches. Even during his career as an architect, Hardy devoted much of his time to reading and writing. He was fully prepared to pursue architecture instead of writing, but his first wife Emma Gifford encouraged him to keep writing, since she considered it to be his “true vocation.”¹ Although his official career in architecture ended in 1872, architecture, particularly issues of restoration, would continue to play a crucial role in Hardy’s life.

The Victorian debate between restoration and preservation centered on the best way to maintain historical buildings. Hardy was a member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), a preservationist group, from 1881 until his death in 1928. This group, founded by William Morris in 1877, sought to preserve ancient churches in as close to their original condition as possible in order to maintain
their historical import. The preservation movement, in contrast to restoration, tried to leave as much of a historical building intact and without alteration as possible. On the other hand, restoration focused on function and order. Restorationists altered a historical building in order to improve its functionality and to establish unity throughout the building by restricting the building’s architectural style to one particular moment.

Architectural issues, particularly the maintenance of historical buildings, constituted an important passion of Hardy’s throughout his entire life. Indeed, these concerns seeped into and deeply impacted his writing. Sometimes architectural allusions are fairly direct, as in Hardy’s choice to make architects the heroes of novels such as A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873) and The Poor Man and the Lady (written 1867). Other architectural allusions are much more subtle, as in the struggle in Under the Greenwood Tree (1872) over whether the old-fashioned choir will be replaced by a new-fangled organ, which alludes to the many problems that stem from trying to alter a historical building.

Many scholars have examined the impact of Hardy’s architectural career on his literary output. Whether architecture was present in the content, style, or themes of his works, scholars seem to agree that Hardy did not forget his architectural background even as he was writing. Examining the connection between Hardy’s architectural career and his literary output is, therefore, not a new concept, and there is a wealth of scholarship on the topic. I have organized a selection of others scholars’ work below starting with the least thematically related to my thesis and

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1 Thomas Hardy, The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, ed. Michael Millgate (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 89.
ending with the most related work. My thesis analyzes how Hardy came to support preservation over restoration and how Hardy’s definition of preservation appears thematically in his novels. Sir John Betjeman discusses how particular moments or buildings from Hardy’s architectural career appear in his literary works without using a restoration/preservation framework. Sophie Gilmartin examines the impact of Hardy’s restoration work on his literary work, as I do, but unlike me, focuses mostly on his poetry. Timothy Hands understands that issues of restoration are crucial for Hardy’s works but does not examine the thematic impact of restoration or preservation upon his novels. Jan Jędrzejewski analyzes the thematic importance of restoration for Hardy’s novels but only evaluates it in relation to Hardy’s portrayal of churches. Claudius J.P. Beatty provides a thorough overview of how and when architecture appears in all of Hardy’s novels but does not always situate that inclusion of architecture within a restoration/preservation context. Alana Samantha Briggs contextualizes Hardy’s work within historical movements and within his architectural career but focuses only Jude the Obscure and how it thematizes issues of Gothic architecture as opposed to issues of restoration/preservation. Benjamin Cannon’s article is the closest to what I am trying to achieve with my thesis. He explains the restoration/preservation debate and explores how it is expressed thematically in Jude the Obscure, rather than the three novels I have chosen for my thesis.

In his chapter “Hardy and architecture” within The Genius of Thomas Hardy (1976), Sir John Betjeman gives an account of Hardy’s architectural career and how his works were related to architecture. According to Betjeman, it is obvious from Hardy’s Wessex Poems and Other Verses (1898) that “the poet was an architect or

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2 In the Victorian period, “ancient” referred to medieval buildings.
architectural draughtsman by profession” because “the illustrations are distinctly architectural.” Furthermore, certain moments in Hardy’s novels and poems allude to occurrences in his architectural career. For instance, as Betjeman sees it, a scene of a graveyard in Hardy’s *Satires of Circumstance* (1914) as well as his poem “The Levelled Churchyard” (1882) allude to Hardy’s time working for London architect Arthur Blomfield from 1862-7. During this period, Hardy supervised the digging up of the St. Pancras churchyard. Hardy witnessed a fair number of coffins and bodies as the various graves were excavated, but the most memorable instance was seeing a coffin with “a skeleton and two skulls.” Indeed, Blomfield’s first words upon meeting Hardy after fifteen years of separation were, “Do you remember how we found the man with two heads at St. Pancras?” According to Betjeman, Hardy’s architectural career generated subject matter that he would later use in his poetry, much as many writers draw on their life experiences for their works.

Similarly, in her “Geology, Genealogy and Church Restoration in Hardy’s Writing” (2000), Sophie Gilmartin links Hardy’s architectural career to the graves and churchyards in his poetry. Like Betjeman, Gilmartin concentrates on Hardy’s work for Blomfield, particularly his work in the St. Pancras churchyard. Gilmartin views the movement and upheaval of graves as similar to the “altering beyond identification” of restoration. Hardy’s poems about graves, such as “I Found Her

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4 Betjeman, “Hardy and architecture,” 151.
5 Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 47.
6 Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 47.
Out There” and “The Levelled Churchyard,” express how haunted he was by the “loss of the names of the buried, and the life-stories that went with their names.”

Gilmartin also analyzes the importance of restoration and graves in Hardy’s early novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). According to Gilmartin, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is Hardy’s “most autobiographical novel,” since the plot centers on a young architect, Stephen Smith, who is sent to the Cornish coast to restore an ancient village church, as the young Hardy did at the church of St. Juliot. For Gilmartin, like Betjeman, Hardy’s architectural career provided rich subject matter for his works. Moreover, the themes of upheaval and erasure that Hardy associated with his restoration work were then translated into his poetry, indicating a thematic connection between Hardy’s work as an architect and his literary production.

While Betjeman and Gilmartin emphasize the importance of Hardy’s architectural career for his poetry, Timothy Hands’s “Hardy’s Architecture: a General Perspective and a Personal View” (2000) examines the influence of Hardy’s architectural career, particularly his restoration work, on several of his novels. To Hands, “that Hardy’s career as an architect considerably influenced his writing…is evident in both content and style.” Novels such as *A Laodicean* (1881), *The Poor Man and the Lady*, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* center on characters who are architects, and architectural jargon appears throughout many of Hardy’s works, from *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* to *Jude the Obscure*. Like Betjeman and Gilmartin, Hands points out the recurrence of churchyards and declares that

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8 Gilmartin, “Geology, Genealogy and Church Restoration,” 33.
scenes set in churches or churchyards are “frequently portentous.” Furthermore, the “recurrent motif” of church restoration indicates the emotional toll of restoration’s “concern with buildings at the expense of people.” Since restoration was so deeply focused on a historical building’s function, restorationists often ignored the human association and connections of a building. Hardy himself was deeply affected by the restoration of his hometown church of Stinsford. In his novels and poetry about restoration, “new building work is associated with the dearth of historical and personal sentiment.” Ultimately, for Hardy, architecture and morality “remain deeply interfused.”

In his chapter “Architecture and Literature: Hardy’s Churches” from his book *Thomas Hardy and the Church* (1996), Jan Jędrzejewski analyzes the roles that churches play within Hardy’s novels. Jędrzejewski begins with a brief overview of Hardy’s architectural career, focusing particularly on his restoration work for John Hicks, including Turnworth Church and St. Juliots. According to Jędrzejewski, Hardy’s passion for churches led him to join the SPAB and fostered a continuous appreciation for churches and their architecture. This appreciation for church architecture created an emotional investment for Hardy in the “memories he believed were preserved in the various historical churches he visited.” Indeed, Jędrzejewski stresses that Hardy’s inclusion of churches in his novels is not for the sake of “Christian connotations, but rather as ordinary elements of their fictional worlds.”

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11 Hands, “Hardy’s Architecture,” 97.
14 Hands, “Hardy’s Architecture,” 101.
For instance, the churches in *Desperate Remedies*, rather than being portrayed as places of worship, are depicted as public locations to “facilitate[e] social contact.”\(^{17}\)

Similarly, Mellstock Church in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is a location where “the human rather than the spiritual associations” are important.\(^ {18}\) In *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, the church both relays Hardy’s views on restoration and provides a setting for characters’ social interaction. The plot of the novel revolves around the restoration of West Endelstow Church, and Hardy’s tone toward the restoration work is, according to Jędrzejewski, “highly critical.”\(^ {19}\) Furthermore, characters’ views of church restoration become “a test of the characters’ powers of intellectual and moral discernment.”\(^ {20}\) While Mr. Swancourt’s “enthusiasm for the modernization of the church” implies his “lack of historical sense and…poor aesthetic judgement,” Elfride and Knight regret “the destruction of the tower, which they see as an embodiment of local art, history, and memory.”\(^ {21}\)

The most important and thorough documentation of architecture’s impact on Hardy’s novels is Claudius J. P. Beatty’s *The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy (with particular reference to the novels)* (1963). According to Beatty, Hardy was never anything more than “the unwitting agent of ‘restoration.’”\(^ {22}\) For Beatty, Hardy joined the SPAB as an attempt to rectify his work in restoration. Hardy’s first published novel, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), contains at

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\(^{16}\) Jędrzejewski, “Architecture and Literature,” 70.


\(^{19}\) Jędrzejewski, “Architecture and Literature,” 76.


\(^{21}\) Jędrzejewski, “Architecture and Literature,” 76.

least five characters who are architects or who are associated with the profession. The novel also contains many descriptions of buildings, all of which are described in light of “one of Hardy’s favourite themes, namely the inevitability of change.”\textsuperscript{23} As Hardy describes ancient buildings, he recognizes that change, particularly when unchecked by preservation efforts, will ultimately alter these buildings and their connections to the past.

In \textit{Under the Greenwood Tree} (1872), Beatty argues, Hardy alludes to the restoration of his beloved Stinsford Church, which he attended during his childhood. The church was restored in 1842, two years after he was born. Through his portrayal of Mellstock Church, he reimagines the church as it would have looked before it was restored. Just as the alterations to Stinsford distressed Hardy, the transformations to the Mellstock Church upset the Mellstock inhabitants. Hardy demonstrates the emotional impact of restoration efforts.

Hardy’s \textit{A Pair of Blue Eyes} (1873) was based on his own experience of being sent to Cornwall in 1870 to survey the church of St. Juliot for its restoration. While there, he met Emma Gifford, the woman who would become his first wife. Thus, the novel’s story centers on a young architect sent to Cornwall to assist in the restoration of a parish church. In the process, he falls in love, just as Hardy did with Emma. Furthermore, the buildings in \textit{A Pair of Blue Eyes}, although perhaps not precise imitations of actual buildings Hardy visited, are based upon the many buildings and settings Hardy visited during his time in Cornwall.

Hardy’s relationship to architecture in \textit{Far From the Madding Crowd} (1874), as Beatty suggests, is a product of his giving up architecture in order to fully pursue

\textsuperscript{23} Beatty, \textit{The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy}, 57.
writing. He reduces “the number of buildings essential to the running of this small community to four,” honing in on only the most crucial buildings for the setting. These buildings include “the malthouse, the homestead, the great barn, and the church.” Additionally, Hardy focuses on the buildings’ functions in both practical and social contexts. Some buildings, such as the malthouse, serve a “strictly functional purpose,” while other buildings, such as the church, serve social as well as functional purposes.

Beatty considers Hardy’s The Hand Of Ethelberta (1876) to be “the richest of the Hardy canon in architectural variety,” due to the fact that eighteen different buildings “very varied in function and style” appear in the text. Furthermore, these various buildings seem to “exemplify the truth of Balzac’s statement” that “Architecture is the expression of morals,” indicating Hardy’s interest in the emotional and moral implications of architecture. Beatty admits that, at first glance, Hardy’s The Return of the Native (1878) “seems devoid of architectural interest.”

Certainly, Hardy keeps the presence of buildings “to a strict minimum, and importance of site outweighs any other consideration.” Yet, as Beatty asserts, this novel, with its varied and vivid topography, demonstrates Hardy’s notion of “select[ing] views and ideas and localities.” Hardy’s The Trumpet-Major (1870) centers around one vital building, the mill, where many of the characters’ most

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24 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 150.
25 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 150.
26 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 150.
27 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 179.
28 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 195.
29 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 201.
31 Beatty, The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, 201.
important social interactions take place. Hardy reveals the crucial role that a building can play as a center for social relations.

_A Laodicean_ (1881) revolves around issues of restoration. The novel is a “story about the problems raised by the restoration and enlargement of an old castle…with the added interest of two rival architects both anxious to be entrusted with such an important commission.” As Beatty terms it, Hardy explores the “clash between ancient and modern.” Ultimately, the issue of restoration is resolved when it is decided to leave the castle “in ruins,” which “reflects Hardy’s own indecision on problems of this kind.” _A Laodicean_ can be seen as an expression of Hardy’s own ongoing conflict over restoration.

As in _The Trumpet-Major_, the action in _Two On A Tower_ (1882) is concentrated around one particular building. In this case, it is the “classical column, called Rings-Hill Speer.” This particular architectural feature allows Hardy “to concentrate his plot in one place, whilst at the same time acting on the main characters like a magnet so that they are never far from its influence.” Although the characters of the novel do travel to other locales, the tower is the “only place where the drama can really unfold.” Architecture provides necessary meeting-places for social actions and interactions.

In _The Mayor of Casterbridge_ (1886), the town and its buildings are depicted as a “living organism.” Thus, the town and its buildings change and grow as

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32 Beatty, _The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy_, 244.
33 Beatty, _The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy_, 244.
34 Beatty, _The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy_, 244.
35 Beatty, _The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy_, 280.
36 Beatty, _The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy_, 280.
37 Beatty, _The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy_, 280.
the humans who inhabit the town change and grow with it. In *The Woodlanders* (1887), Hardy displays his preoccupation with the effects of time, nature, and change on buildings. For instance, the issue of land tenure could deprive many villagers of their homes but also “uproot…them from the family life and tradition” contained within the walls of their homes. Other alterations to buildings include the effects of nature and simply time itself, which brings decay into older buildings. Hardy thus evinces his concern for how buildings can change over time, as well as for how changes can eradicate emotional and historical connections.

Although Hardy gives very few architectural details in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), the few architectural details he provides are closely connected to plot points. For instance, when Tess visits the d’Urberville vault and sees the many tombs of her ancestors, she also re-encounters her cousin, Alec, who raped her and caused much of the tragedy and despair in her life. It is at this point and in this crucial location that Tess understands that “even here she cannot escape the spurious in the shape of Alec d’Urberville.” The architectural detail that Hardy does provide in the novel relates closely to the action of the plot and provides the setting for momentous occurrences.

Beatty argues that it is in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) that Hardy is “concerned with the portrayal of the uniqueness of the individual, the freaks of his soul, his idiosyncrasies.” In the character of Jude, Hardy depicts a “struggling stone-mason, the vicissitudes of his life and the architecture that means so much to him.”

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41 Beatty, *The Part Played By Architecture In The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 360.
Yet, Hardy also tackles the issue of whether restoration is the best course of action for the upkeep of decaying historical buildings. At the same time Hardy was writing *Jude the Obscure*, he was working on restoring the church of West Knighton, so such issues were foremost on his mind. Even though his primary architectural career had officially ended in 1872, he was still deeply invested and involved in issues of restoration. Ultimately, restoration is employed “as an extended metaphor for Jude’s struggles and ideals,” since “the ideal is…ever within his grasp” as he works on restoring church walls, but he “is never further from it than when he is working on the walls themselves.”43 Finally, Hardy shows that “the technique of architecture is not only related to the art of poetry…but also to life itself…in the creation of Sue Bridehead.”44 Sue is Jude’s cousin with whom Jude has an affair, and, in the process, she transforms from a free spirit into a deeply religious and conservative person. Hardy wrote in his autobiography about “‘Gothic art-principle in which he had been trained—the principle of spontaneity, found in mouldings, tracery, and such like—resulting in the ‘’unforeseen’’, which he related to his poetry.”45 Beatty extends this notion of the Gothic as spontaneous and unexpected to Sue, who undergoes “a great change” by the end of the novel.46 This change is momentous because “Sue the Pagan has become Sue the saint.”47

Beatty’s final examination is of Hardy’s *The Well Beloved* (1897). Beatty praises Hardy’s vivid descriptions of castles and landscapes within the novel.

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Overall, throughout his analysis, Beatty stresses the impact of Hardy’s restoration work upon his novels and provides theoretical and thematic connections to architecture within Hardy’s novels, rather than focusing purely on architectural description.

Alana Samantha Briggs’s unpublished master’s thesis “Thomas Hardy’s Architectural Survivals in Jude the Obscure” (2008) evaluates the impact of Gothic architecture on Hardy’s Jude the Obscure. Briggs argues that Hardy’s career as an architect enabled him to “witness the dichotomy between the two merging worlds” of the rural, traditional countryside and the industrialized, urban city. With industrialization came radical social changes, and as a product of this change, Victorians became interested in “a purer past, a past that never really existed.” This interest coincided with the emerging science of anthropology, which “constructed a continuum with industrial civilization occupying the ‘civilized’ end and traditional rural life lying closer to the ‘primitive’ end of the continuum.” In Jude the Obscure, Hardy “stages a conflict, often in architectural terms, between the ‘primitive’ and ‘civilized.’” Briggs sees Jude the Obscure as a novel “overrun with architectural survivals” and even considers Jude himself to be a survival. Yet, Jude is also “a product of modern life,” and this opposition creates conflict for him. Ultimately, according to Briggs, Jude the Obscure demonstrates that “while society appears to be

48 Alana Samantha Briggs, “Thomas Hardy’s Architectural Survivals in Jude the Obscure” (Masters diss., Arizona State University, 2008), 1.
in a state of progress it is actually in a state of continual decay.” Briggs contextualizes the themes and conflicts of *Jude the Obscure* within historical events and trends of Hardy’s Victorian period as well as within themes of Gothic architecture.

Benjamin Cannon’s article “‘The True Meaning of the Word Restoration’: Architecture and Obsolescence in *Jude the Obscure*” (2014) crucially explores the connection between the Victorian preservation/restoration debate and *Jude the Obscure*. Cannon examines the restoration/preservation debate through the lens of both *Jude the Obscure* and Hardy’s 1906 “Memories of Church Restoration,” an address to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. According to Cannon, Hardy argues that architecture is “the medium in which social life achieves not merely a spatial but also a temporal dimension; architecture becomes, over time, a repository of what he calls ‘human associations.’” The issue with restoration, for Hardy, is that it “threatens historical continuity by approaching history as a traumatic process that must be reversed.” Thus, for Hardy, the restoration/preservation debate represents a conflict between two different ways of viewing the past. While restoration prizes the function of a building, preservation “seeks to protect not only the building itself but also its unique object history.” Unfortunately, in *Jude the Obscure*, the restorationist view that history needs to be reversed is “disastrously triumphant,” leaving characters like Jude and Sue trapped “in cycles of meaningless

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53 Briggs, “Thomas Hardy’s Architectural Survivals,” 47.
54 Briggs, “Thomas Hardy’s Architectural Survivals,” iii.
repetition.”\textsuperscript{58} Yet, Hardy “also attempts to fold this failing ancient architecture back into narrative—to reignite, in fiction, its capacity for story.”\textsuperscript{59} He does this in three ways, the first being “memorial translation,” in which he transforms real locations and buildings into fictional locales “in order to preserve or memorialize them.”\textsuperscript{60} Secondly, Hardy demonstrates that, even if real buildings can no longer “accept real stories, they can still accept fictions.”\textsuperscript{61} Thus, even if actual buildings are decrepit and desolate, they can still form the settings upon which fictional characters can act. The third and final way is by using a “preservationist narrative technique,” since Hardy “tells his protagonist’s story partially through the marks and traces, both intentional and accidental, that Jude leaves on and around architecture.”\textsuperscript{62} Thus, Cannon analyzes the crucial impact of the historical preservation/restoration debate on the plot and structures of \textit{Jude the Obscure}.

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My thesis examines how Hardy might have come to renounce restoration and how this renunciation in favor of preservation appears thematically in three of his novels. I analyze Hardy’s “Memories of Church Restoration” (1906), his major statement on this issue, as a means of understanding how themes relating to preservation appear in three of his novels. Hardy stresses the importance of human and emotional connections to architecture and the past, and the three novels I have chosen exemplify this crucial aspect of Hardy’s declaration.

In my first chapter, I detail the history of Hardy’s architectural career and his

\textsuperscript{58} Cannon, “True Meaning of Restoration,” 201.
\textsuperscript{59} Cannon, “True Meaning of Restoration,” 216.
\textsuperscript{60} Cannon, “True Meaning of Restoration,” 216.
\textsuperscript{61} Cannon, “True Meaning of Restoration,” 218.
subsequent work with the SPAB. I examine in particular his restoration work in an attempt to discern how and why he became so staunchly preservationist. Although there is no clear, definitive answer, analyzing Hardy’s autobiography as well as his *Architectural Notebook* provides helpful clues and suggestions for why he turned against restoration. While this chapter follows the work of Claudius J. P. Beatty rather closely at some points, particularly in the sections on specific restoration projects of Hardy’s, I have expanded on Beatty’s work in several ways. Firstly, I begin by defining the Victorian debate between restoration and preservation and representing the two opposing sides, so that we have a fuller understanding of the context of Hardy’s architectural career. Secondly, while Beatty’s biography of Hardy’s life focuses on his architectural career and the projects he carried out with his employers, my biography of Hardy’s architectural career also traces how his literary career developed even as he was working as an architect. Finally, while Beatty simply evaluates Hardy’s restoration projects on an individual basis (and often approves of them quite heartily), I examine three individual projects and contextualize them within the changing and developing ideas Hardy possesses about restoration and preservation. In doing so, I attempt to understand how exactly Hardy came to reject restoration in favor of preservation, which other scholars, including Beatty, have, for the most part, overlooked.

In the second chapter, I examine the impact of the preservation/restoration debate on three of Hardy’s novels, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and *The Woodlanders*. Like Cannon, I use Hardy’s 1906 “Memories of Church Restoration” as a means of understanding Hardy’s conception...
of preservation. Moreover, I explore how Hardy’s notion of preservation as a moral duty that maintains the history, memories, and emotional connections contained within buildings appears thematically in these three novels. In my discussion of The Woodlanders, I stress that Hardy’s conception of the past as something that should remain unchanged is useful for buildings but not for humans, who must be free to work toward a future. I chose these three novels because I wanted to use the theoretical framework of Hardy’s preservationist ideals to examine novels that are not so clearly connected with architecture and that have not been viewed through this lens by previous scholars. By focusing on Hardy’s definition of the most important aspects of preservation and examining how these facets of preservation can be seen thematically in three of his novels, I move beyond an architectural analysis of Hardy’s novels that is centered around physical representations of architecture. Instead, I relate the themes of preservation to themes in his novels to suggest that Hardy’s novels support and indicate the development of his preservationist ideals.
CHAPTER ONE: Thomas Hardy’s Architectural Career and His Turn From Restoration to Preservation

Thomas Hardy is best known as the 19th century author of such emotionally powerful novels as *Tess of the D’Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure, and Far From the Madding Crowd*. However, his career as an author was neither linear nor inevitable. In fact, prior to his literary career, Hardy’s profession was architecture, where he specialized mainly in church restoration. In addition to his restoration work, he produced some designs of his own, a particularly well-known example being his Max Gate home (finished in 1885). Although Hardy’s fervor for literature and writing may have overcome his interest in an architectural career, his passion for restoring church architecture continued throughout his entire life. As a member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) from 1881 until his death in 1928, Hardy employed his architectural training and appreciation for historical buildings to advise the SPAB on how best to preserve historical churches. Hardy’s support of preservation and his understanding of historical buildings as replete with history, human associations, and memories appears thematically, I will argue, in three of his novels: *Far From the Madding Crowd, Under The Greenwood Tree, and The Woodlanders*. Before I analyze his literary work, however, some background on Hardy’s work as an architect and his later contributions to the SPAB would be helpful in contextualizing his preservationist outlook.

Although Hardy eventually adopted a preservationist approach to maintaining historical buildings, he participated in many restorations during his architectural career. These restorations seem to be what turned him against the practice of
restoration, yet his consistent use of restoration techniques suggests that it was more
difficult for him to relinquish restoration than he admitted. At the very least, Hardy’s
relationship with restoration and preservation is complicated. He seems to have
struggled between the two sides before ultimately settling on preservation as the
morally correct choice.

Hardy’s involvement with architecture extended far beyond his brief career as an architect. He was deeply invested in the outcomes of historical buildings. For instance, in 1881, he served as a consultant for repairs on a church located in the village of Stratton and attended a meeting of the SPAB Committee to discuss the best means of rebuilding. Hardy insisted that “almost every stone could be put up again in its old place.” His wishes were carried out, and the restoration project was largely successful. Indeed, most of his work with the SPAB involved being assigned to visit certain churches and then serve as a consultant for the Society on them. His role was particularly crucial because, at this point in time, a debate raged on what exactly was the best course of action when conserving older buildings.

Restorationists believed old, historical buildings serve practical purposes. As it ages, therefore, an old building should be remade in new materials in order to “continue to discharge its original function.” For instance, James Wyatt approached his restoration work in Salisbury Cathedral (originally built from 1220-1258), begun in 1791, as an opportunity to make the architectural style of the cathedral more.

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coherent and improve some of the functions of the church.\textsuperscript{68} He demolished the Galilee Chapel and reopened the main entrance from the west, demolished the north porch; and built a spire over the central tower.\textsuperscript{69} As a restorationist, he prioritized the building’s ongoing function and its stylistic coherence. Wyatt’s alterations of Salisbury Cathedral were the first to elicit a debate about conservation principles.\textsuperscript{70}

The Ecclesiological Society, an important restorationist group founded in 1845, sought to restore churches to their “best and purest style.”\textsuperscript{71} This usually meant restoring only one privileged moment of a church’s many periods. In order to achieve this goal, the society often resorted to demolishing and then reconstructing buildings.\textsuperscript{72} In other cases they removed pews and galleries and replaced them with new designs; rebuilt roofs with fresh tiles, gutters, and drainage; strengthened weaker sections of the building with new technologies such as iron ties; removed layers of whitewash and plaster to expose the surface of masonry; modified the churches’ ground plans; and eliminated any elements that clashed stylistically with the chosen period in the building’s past or were considered out of fashion.\textsuperscript{73} The restorationist agenda could be comprehensive and merciless in its willingness to sacrifice existing features of a building in the name of a particular style and function.

The issue of restoration extended beyond England into the rest of Europe as well. For instance, the French architect Viollet-le-Duc restored the Cathedral of

\textsuperscript{68} Jukka Jokilehto, \textit{A History of Architectural Conservation} (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999), 104.
\textsuperscript{69} Jokilehto, \textit{History of Conservation}, 104-5.
\textsuperscript{70} Jokilehto, \textit{History of Conservation}, 106.
\textsuperscript{71} Jokilehto, \textit{History of Conservation}, 156.
\textsuperscript{72} Jokilehto, \textit{History of Conservation}, 157.
\textsuperscript{73} Jokilehto, \textit{History of Conservation}, 157.
Notre Dame in Paris from 1845 to 1864.\textsuperscript{74} In 1854, in the \textit{Dictionary of French Architecture from 11\textsuperscript{th} to 16\textsuperscript{th} Century}, Viollet-le-Duc would define restoration as follows:

To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair, or rebuild it; it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness that could never have existed at any given time…in restorations there is an essential condition that must always be kept in mind. It is that every portion removed should be replaced with better materials, and in a stronger and more perfect way. As a result of the operation to which it has been subjected, the restored edifice should have a renewed ease of existence, longer than that which has already elapsed.\textsuperscript{75}

Viollet-le-Duc thereby demonstrates restoration’s prizing of the strength and function of a building over any other concerns. Viollet-le-Duc’s definition of restoration situates the restored building outside of history, since the building “could never have existed at any given time.”

Preservationists such as John Ruskin and Hardy, on the other hand, believed that a building, by nature of having existed for many years, possessed a unique history that should be protected. Thus, the building should remain in its “functionally deficient but association-rich…original state.”\textsuperscript{76} In \textit{Seven Lamps of Architecture} (1849), John Ruskin decries restoration as:

the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a

\textsuperscript{76} Cannon, “True Meaning of Restoration,” 205.
destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture...And as for direct and simple copying, it is palpably impossible...Do not let us talk then of restoration. The thing is a Lie from beginning to end.

You may make a model of a building as you may of a corpse, and your model may have the shell of the old walls within it as your cast might have the skeleton, with what advantage I neither see nor care: but the old building is destroyed, and that more totally and mercilessly than if it had sunk into a heap of dust, or melted into a mass of clay.77

Thus, to preservationists, efforts to remake portions of a historically rich building destroyed rather than restored it. The preservationists’ ultimate goal was to preserve as much of a building as possible, including different parts from different periods of its history, in order to leave its historic and emotional associations intact. Indeed, William Morris defined preservation as “the maintenance of an artifact or building in its present, or natural, state.”78 As Hardy said in a 1906 lecture that was delivered to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, “the essence and soul of an architectural monument does not lie in the particular blocks of stone or timber that compose it, but in the mere forms to which these materials have been shaped.”79

These forms that shape a monument include “human association,” and preserving

historic architecture represents the “preservation of memories, history, fellowships, fraternities.” To restore, and thereby replace, elements of a building meant destroying those historical and human associations.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was founded in 1877 under the driving force of William Morris, who was utterly opposed to restoration. Morris, who had apprenticed in architecture with the prominent Gothic Revival architect George Edmond Street in the 1850s before he began his career as a designer and architect, was spurred on to create the Society after noticing two restoration projects, Burford Church in Oxfordshire and Abbey Church at Tewkesbury, which deeply disturbed him. After founding the society, he, along with others, drafted a manifesto for the SPAB, reprinted in its annual publications. According to this manifesto, ancient buildings require constant, daily care and should be conserved for the benefit of future generations. For Morris, a building could only accurately represent the historical period to which it pertained if it remained in its authentic condition, with all of the original materials intact. A copied or restored building was not an authentic building and was thereby diminished in its historical significance.

Hardy’s speech “Memories of Church Restoration,” which was presented at a meeting of SPAB in 1906, clarifies the difference between restoration and preservation. To Hardy, who echoes Ruskin, restoration is “active destruction under

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80 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
81 Jokilehto, History of Conservation, 184.
82 Donovan, William Morris, 9-10.
83 Jokilehto, History of Conservation, 185.
84 Jokilehto, History of Conservation, 185.
85 Jokilehto, History of Conservation, 185.
saving names.”86 He further illuminates the distinction between preservation and reservation when he discusses the “two contradictory lights” in which a building is considered.87 According to Hardy, “to the incumbent the church is a workshop; to the antiquary it is a relic. To the parish it is a utility; to the outsider a luxury.”88 Ultimately, the conflict between restoration and preservation is a moral conflict “between the purely aesthetic sense and the memorial or associative.”89 Hardy thinks that “the protection of an ancient edifice against renewal in fresh materials is…a…humane duty.”90 He thus distinguishes between what he considers the superficial, emotionless claims for restoration and the thoughtful, emotional vision of preservation.

Where did Hardy develop his passionate support for preservation? In order to understand this viewpoint, it is helpful to examine Hardy’s career as an architect. As he writes ruefully in his autobiography91, “much beautiful ancient Gothic, and particularly also Jacobean and Georgian work, he was passively instrumental in destroying or in altering beyond identification—a matter for his deep regret in later years.”92

86 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 73.
87 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 73.
88 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 73.
89 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 77.
90 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
91 The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, begun in 1917 and published posthumously, was originally attributed to Hardy’s second wife, Florence, but according to Michael Millgate, Hardy wrote much of the work himself, while Florence did the typing. Even the portions that were not directly written by Hardy were subject to his revision and final approval. The work was published under Florence’s name because Hardy had sworn never to write an autobiography and declared that he would destroy all of his notes if the work were ever called such. (Millgate, Introduction to The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy, x-xix).
92 Hardy, “The Life,” 35.
Hardy’s architectural career and training began when he was apprenticed to Dorchester architect John Hicks in 1856 for a three-year term. Hardy’s father, Thomas senior, was a builder who had worked several jobs for Hicks. As he thought of his son’s professional future, Thomas senior settled on apprenticing his son to Hicks. Hicks was even convinced to accept a much lower premium than was usually paid for apprentices. As Hardy put it, Thomas senior was a “ready-money man,” while Hicks “was not,” meaning that Hicks was very willing to accept a cash down-payment right away instead of waiting for full payment at the mid-term of Hardy’s apprenticeship. Hardy had previously dreamed of continuing his education at university and eventually being ordained, but he soon realized that his insufficient grasp of Latin and Greek, which were imperative for university admission, excluded the possibility of higher education. Thus, as Hardy himself declares, he “cheerfully agreed to go to Mr. Hicks’s.”

John Hicks, although he lived and worked in Dorchester, originally hailed from Devonshire, where he was born in 1815. He was the second son of the Reverend James Champion Hicks. Because his father was a classical scholar, Hicks was fairly well educated himself. Hardy would later benefit from this classical education when Hicks gave him free time to read everything from Horace and Ovid to the *Iliad*. Indeed, Hardy emphasizes in his autobiography that his interest in literature consistently competed with his architectural work. During the three years he worked for Hicks, he admits that he “would often [give] more time to books than to

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According to Hardy, Hicks specialized in the rebuilding and restoration of Gothic churches, leading Hardy to become well versed in the Gothic architectural style. There are no known sources on Hicks’s education or professional training. However, it is known that he lived in Bristol between 1838 and 1848, and that he was one half of “Hicks and Edgar, architects” between 1840 and 1842. It is unclear when exactly Hicks relocated to Dorchester, but once there, his work focused on rebuilding and restoring churches. At first, business was slow, since he had to compete with such London architects as Benjamin Ferrey, who built Dorchester’s All Saints’ Church in 1845, as well as the town hall and hospital, and A.W. N. Pugin, who did some restoration work at a church in Rampisham from 1845-7. Despite this competition, Hicks restored his brother’s church, Piddletrenthide, in 1852. Then, three years later, he worked on the Powerstock church, an important commission that helped establish his reputation as an architect.

At this point in time, there was a craze, not only in Dorset but nationwide, for remodeling and restoration. Some of this stemmed from homeowners’ desire to keep up with “new designs, fashions and aspirations.” Large country homes that had belonged to families for centuries were enlarged or rebuilt in keeping with the moment’s trends. In Dorset, in particular, several of these country homes were

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95 Hardy, *The Life*, 32.
99 Pite, *Thomas Hardy*, 76.
rebuilt or remodeled more than once. Remodeling and rebuilding was also made possible through new sources of income. The growing number of middle class folk was supported by the booming industries and institutions of the Industrial Revolution. Thus, many newly rich middle class families invested in land as well as bought and built houses. In Dorset, this meant that many existing country houses were enhanced or enlarged. Even the more established landed families increased their incomes, contributing to their ability and desire to remodel their homes. Although this trend did not necessarily influence the church restoration movement, it contributed to a nationwide desire for architectural alterations.

The Church of England provided the impetus for the increased interest in restoration. At the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, church construction in England was practically negligible. The growing population could hardly be accommodated, and in 1814, only one-tenth of the Church of England worshippers could fit into their churches. In response, in 1818, Parliament passed the “Church Building Act,” and the Church Building Society, or Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement, Building and Repairing of Churches and Chapels, was founded, also in 1818. The Gothic

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102 Taylor, Dorset, 157.
104 Girouard, English Country House, 268.
105 Girouard, English Country House, 268.
107 Girouard, English Country House, 268.
109 Madsen, Restoration, 24.
110 Madsen, Restoration, 24.
111 Madsen, Restoration, 24.
Revival became an instrument of the Church’s restoration project because the Gothic style was associated with Christianity and truthfulness. It followed, therefore, that Gothic architecture must be restored across the country in order to restore faith and revive worship. Another element that contributed to an increased desire for restoration was the contemporary interest in the architecture and history of the Middle Ages. Through both of these historical aspects, Dorset acquired “for better or worse a fine array of new, rebuilt and ‘restored’ churches during this period,” from 1750-1900, including Hicks’s work.

Despite Hardy’s later opposition to restoration as a technique for maintaining historical buildings, Hicks’s restoration work was by no means the most destructive or offensive of its kind. Hardy biographer Ralph Pite offers his view on Hicks’s restoration work:

Hicks was an unusual architect in his day because his restorations exhibited such restraint and sensitivity. Though, like all his contemporaries, Hicks did destroy many features of the original buildings that people would now want to preserve, he was nothing like the worst in this regard, rather the opposite. He was not a dogmatic architect, so he did not insist upon the purity of a single style (as Pugin did), nor did he impose one style inflexibly, indifferent to local conditions. Wherever he worked, Hicks would not use anything except materials locally available, and he preserved as many as he could of the existing elements…with him, improvements seemed genuinely to be improvements as his buildings helped bring education and spiritual

115 Taylor, *Dorset*, 163.
Claudius J. P. Beatty echoes Pite’s analysis of Hicks’s restoration work in his 1980 “Biography of Thomas Hardy as Architect” when he writes, “it seems more appropriate to judge him [Hicks] and other restorers by the buildings they bequeathed to posterity rather than to condemn their work for the disappearance of features which might in any case have crumbled away through the inevitable passing of time.”

Initially, Hardy was only a pupil under Hicks, so he generally performed only the most basic and routine tasks in Hicks’ office. Hardy’s talent for draftsmanship meant that he spent most of his time copying or tracing existing plans. One of Hardy’s first tasks under Hicks was to draw, or perhaps copy, a ground plan of St. Peter’s church in Dorchester, which had been worked on by Hicks but was due to undergo “further minor ‘improvements.’” As part of his work for St. Peter’s, Hardy also had to number the stones of the church’s Easter Sepulchre so that, after its relocation, the sepulchre could be rebuilt exactly. Perhaps Hardy, in accordance with Ruskin’s views, remained unconvinced that remaking a part of historical architecture, no matter how exactly, could be anything other than a hollow, meaningless model.

In 1860, Hicks elevated Hardy to the position of paid assistant, earning fifteen shillings a week. Given this higher position, Hardy acquired considerably more responsibility. This responsibility included preparing surveys, sketches, and measurements for churches, particularly Gothic ones, that were in need of restoration.

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116 Pite, *Thomas Hardy*, 77.
119 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 56.
120 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 70.
In Hardy’s own words:

a time had arrived at which it became necessary that he should give more attention to practical architecture than he had hitherto done. Church ‘restoration’ was at this time in full cry in Dorsetshire and the neighbouring counties, and young Hardy found himself making many surveys, measurements, and sketches of old churches with a view to such changes. Much beautiful ancient Gothic, and particularly also Jacobean and Georgian work, he was passively instrumental in destroying or altering beyond identification—a matter for deep regret in later years.\textsuperscript{121}

Harold Orel points out, “it is not quite clear why Hardy should have felt so personally culpable…strictly speaking, Hardy…was not an architect but an intelligent and hard-working architect’s assistant.”\textsuperscript{122} The fact that Hardy was a mere assistant probably explains why he describes himself as only “passively instrumental” as opposed to directly responsible for this supposedly destructive restoration work.

Much of the work that Hicks’s office undertook while Hardy was an assistant involved rebuilding churches completely. Claudius J. P. Beatty has compiled a list of the projects undertaken by Hicks’s office while Hardy worked for him, and of the twelve projects listed, eight of the churches were partially or almost completely rebuilt.\textsuperscript{123} Although Hardy may not have visited all of the churches in a professional capacity\textsuperscript{124}, his experience with the destruction of older features in order to create new ones may have contributed to his subsequent adoption of a

\textsuperscript{121} Hardy, \textit{The Life}, 35.
\textsuperscript{122} Orel, “Architect’s Eye,” 24.
\textsuperscript{124} Beatty, \textit{Part Played by Architecture}, 469.
preservationist outlook.

For instance, one project Hicks undertook was Hawkchurch. According to Beatty, this church was “probably the most important village church restoration for which Hicks was entirely responsible.”\(^{125}\) The church possessed many impressive medieval features which John Hicks tried to keep as he restored and enlarged the church from 1860-2.\(^{126}\) Hardy may have been the draughtsman for this particular project and would therefore have noticed Hicks’s alterations to the church.\(^{127}\) One particular feature of the church that Hardy may have felt was restored improperly was the church’s clerestory. The clerestory was described as follows by contemporary John Hutchins:

\begin{quote}
The series of clerestory windows on each side exteriorly have mouldings round the circular heads and pillars, with foliated capitals in the jambs, alternating with blank recesses under pointed arches similarly ornamented. Above is a corbel table, which was originally inside the nave, and no doubt was there erected to carry the Norman roof.\(^{128}\)
\end{quote}

According to Beatty, Hicks’s work here is the “perfect example of the church restorer’s art.”\(^{129}\) The church’s nave was lengthened slightly but retained its Norman style, while the roof was heightened.\(^{130}\) The Norman corbel-table still functioned as the roof’s support, but Hicks modified the decorative line of heads and placed it outside.\(^{131}\) Even with these slight alterations, he still maintained a consistent stylistic

\(^{128}\) qtd. in Beatty, *Part Played by Architecture*, 471.
\(^{130}\) Beatty, *Part Played by Architecture*, 471.
\(^{131}\) Beatty, *Part Played by Architecture*, 471.
choice: in this case, Norman. Since one of restoration’s goals was to create a consistency in a building’s aesthetic program, Hicks was thus far successful in conforming to restorationist principles. Indeed, Beatty gives him “full marks” for his restoration of the corbel-table and the roof.132

Where Beatty takes issue and, indeed, where Hicks deviates from restorationist principles, are the clerestory windows. The nine windows, in order to conform to Norman style, needed round heads.133 On the exterior, Hicks added moldings, pillars, and foliated capitals to stimulate visual interest.134 However, he also added pointed arches between the rounded windows.135 These extra arches certainly add a sense of unity to the exterior, since all the windows seem to be connected in an unbroken line by these small arches. Additionally, the arches and the windows are made out of the same stone, augmenting the sense of visual unity throughout this portion of the exterior. As Beatty points out, however:

The result may be unique, but it should have been taboo! One ought not to mix styles in this way. It is inconceivable that a medieval craftsman would have created such a pattern of round arches alternating with pointed ones…as a restoration it must be roundly condemned for its total inappropriateness…Hardy…could not have failed to notice this complete break with tradition and perhaps to store up the Hawkchurch clerestory in his mind for future use.136

The issue Beatty clearly indicates is that of improper restoration. Hicks, by

132 Beatty, Part Played by Architecture, 471.
133 Beatty, Part Played by Architecture, 471.
134 Beatty, Part Played by Architecture, 471.
135 Beatty, Part Played by Architecture, 471.
136 Beatty, Part Played by Architecture, 471.
embellishing and adding elements that do not conform with the chosen Norman style, violated the concept that restoration could create order in a historic building by constraining all of the architecture to one particular, privileged moment. Indeed, a hallmark of Norman style windows is that they are widely spaced\textsuperscript{137}, which Hicks utterly disregarded with the addition of pointed arches. When Hardy refers to the destruction in which he participated as an employee of Hicks, he may have been referring to a moment such as this, where Hicks defied clearly defined principles to impose his own vision. Hardy’s disillusionment with his work under Hicks and his eventual opposition to restoration might have stemmed from the fact that Hicks was not merely returning the church to a particular historical moment but was instead adding elements according to his own sensibilities. Considering the preservationist viewpoint that Hardy would eventually adopt, which suggests that even copying and rebuilding part of a building is destructive and dishonest, Hardy must have been horrified by what he might have perceived as Hicks’s audacity. Indeed, the SPAB’s manifesto, “The Principles of The Society for The Protection of Ancient Buildings As Set Forth Upon Its Founding In 1877,” which was crafted by William Morris and other founding members, reads:

\begin{quote}
But those who make the changes wrought in our day under the name of restoration, while professing to bring back a building to the best time of its history, have no guide but each his own individual whim to point out to them what is admirable and what contemptible.\textsuperscript{138}
\end{quote}

Hicks’ restoration of Hawkchurch represents both a violation of restorationist

principles and a prime example of the problems preservationists found with restoration.

In April 1862, Hardy left Hicks’ employ to set out for London. In his autobiography, Hardy never states precisely why he decided to leave Hicks and go to London. Michael Millgate, in his biography of Hardy, offers several potential reasons that he may have left Hicks. Hicks had already been generous enough to maintain Hardy as an apprentice for an extra year and then as a paid assistant, but perhaps Hicks was not willing or able to grant him the higher salary he believed he needed and deserved.¹³⁹ There was not much more that Hardy could learn from Hicks, and there were few positions available in Dorchester outside of Hicks’ office.¹⁴⁰ Hardy lacked the experience, financial means, and social standing to be able to open his own architectural practice.¹⁴¹ For all of these reasons, London seemed the best option to further his burgeoning architectural career, since, at this point, “architecture remained his only visible means of employment and advancement.”¹⁴²

When Hardy arrived in London in 1862, he found a job with Mr. Arthur Blomfield, who was seeking a “young Gothic draughtsman who could restore and design churches and rectory-houses.”¹⁴³ Hardy did so little work for Blomfield (verifiable contributions to five churches in five years) that a brief overview of his

¹³⁹ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 71.
¹⁴⁰ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 71.
¹⁴¹ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 71.
¹⁴² Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 72.
¹⁴³ Hardy, *The Life*, 41.
employment at Blomfield’s should suffice before proceeding to some of Hardy’s more important involvements in restoration work.144

Blomfield was “a successful architect with a large ecclesiastical practice.”145 Hardy quite liked him and would maintain his friendship with Blomfield for “near on forty years” by Hardy’s own account.146 Blomfield was equally appreciative of his new employee, enough to propose him as a new member of the Architectural Association, of which Blomfield himself was president.147

The year 1863 was one of change and achievement for Hardy in his architectural career. In February of that year, he won a competition to design a country mansion and received a prize of William Nesfield’s *Specimens of Medieval Architecture* and Norman Shaw’s *Architectural Sketches from the Continent*.148 Another achievement came on May 18, 1863, when he was presented with a Silver Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects for his essay “On The Application of Colored Bricks and Terra Cotta to Modern Architecture.”

Yet, much of Hardy’s work for Blomfield was routine and mainly consisted of preparing working drawings for Blomfield’s own designs.149 Hardy was probably never responsible for any actual design work under Blomfield, except for some minor details.150 Blomfield had too many responsibilities as a busy and successful architect to spend much time instructing and supervising assistants like Hardy.151

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145 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 74.
146 Hardy, *The Life*, 41.
147 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 74.
148 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 77.
150 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 79.
151 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 79.
therefore grew increasingly discontented with his work and felt that “architectural
drawing in which the actual designing had no great part was monotonous and
mechanical.”¹⁵² He was again attracted by the pull of literature, as he had been
during his employment by Hicks, and “recommenced to read a great deal—with a
growing tendency toward poetry.”¹⁵³

While he worked for Blomfield, Hardy sent some pieces that he had written to
various magazines, but most were rejected. The only writing of his published during
this time was “How I Built Myself a House,” which appeared in *Chambers’s Journal*
in 1865. The piece had originally been written to entertain Hardy’s coworkers in
Blomfield’s office and was a satire about the relationship between architects and their
clients.¹⁵⁴ In spite of the minimal publications, Hardy kept writing and focused
mainly on writing poetry.

Hardy fell ill in 1867, and Blomfield realized that Hardy’s health was
diminishing, so he allowed him to return home so that he could recover his health.
At the same time, Hardy’s old master Hicks asked Hardy for a recommendation for
an assistant to help him with church restoration. Since he was returning home, Hardy
simply took the position himself. The time at home restored him to his original
health. His schedule was not too strenuous, as Hicks allowed him to work “on a
basis of mutual convenience.”¹⁵⁵ This schedule meant that he had plenty of free time
to visit family and friends, as well as to write more seriously.¹⁵⁶ In one of his free
moments, he began drafting a novel entitled *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which

¹⁵² Hardy, *The Life*, 49.
¹⁵³ Hardy, *The Life*, 49.
¹⁵⁴ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 84.
¹⁵⁵ Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 97.
would remain unpublished.

While in London in April 1869, Hardy received news that his former master Hicks had died. G.R. Crickmay, who had taken over Hicks’ practice, subsequently offered Hardy a position so that Crickmay could have help finishing the church restorations that Hicks had begun. Hardy accepted Crickmay’s offer and traveled to Weymouth to begin work. This new employment with Crickmay was both “a promotion and an opportunity” for Hardy. Hardy was considered a senior member of Crickmay’s staff, and with that seniority came “special duties and a recognized specialism” in Gothic restoration. According to Hardy, Crickmay “appeared not to have specially studied Gothic architecture,” making Hardy’s contributions to the practice even more valuable.

In February 1870, Crickmay asked Hardy to get a plan of a church in Cornwall called St. Juliot. This church was to become of special import for Hardy since it was where he met his first wife, Emma Gifford. It was also yet another instance where he would be involved in restoration work. Claudius Beatty names St. Juliot as one of three important church restorations in Hardy’s life.

The church of St. Juliot was quite in ruins at the time. By Emma’s account, “the tower went on cracking from year to year, and the bells remained in the little north transept, their mouths open upward. The carved bench-ends rotted more and more, the ivy hung gaily from the roof timbers, and the birds and the bats had a good

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156 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 97.
159 Hardy, *The Life*, 65.
time up there unmolested.’”¹⁶¹ Hicks had been meant to attend to the church’s dilapidated state for at least three years, and he was supposed to have inspected it not long before his death.¹⁶² Instead, it was Hardy’s responsibility to complete his former employer’s long-delayed work.

Hardy’s work for the restoration of St. Juliot is very well-documented and is, in fact, the most thoroughly documented restoration work with which he was involved.¹⁶³ He would help with work on the church for two years, until it was completed in 1872. Four pages in his architectural notebook show various aspects of the church. Indeed, most of the working drawings in Hardy’s architectural notebook are from his time in Crickmay’s employment.¹⁶⁴

The first two pages concerning St. Juliot are pages thirty-eight and –nine. At the top of page thirty-eight, Hardy has inscribed “Seat Ends- St. Juliot Church-Cornwall. 1870” (Figure 1). Since Hardy began his work on St. Juliot in 1870, these drawings presumably come from one of his visits to the church, either in March or in August of that year. The seat end depicted on page thirty-eight seems somewhat unfinished, due to the fact that most of the sketch seems to be in dark ink, but there are a few spots not in this darker ink. Two sides of the square outline of the seat end seem to have only been drawn lightly in pencil, and certain spaces of the drawing are completely devoid of decoration. This seemingly unfinished quality may be because Hardy was sketching quickly or only trying to capture the most important details of the seat ends. The left and top borders of the seat are without decoration, while the

¹⁶¹ Hardy, The Life, 71.
¹⁶² Martin Seymour-Smith, Hardy (London: Bloomsbury, 1994), 106.
right border of the seat contains a sinewy border of leaves. Within the border are several elements, which mimic the tracery of a Gothic window. Two ogee arches with cusping are separated by a quatrefoil between them. Over the two arch shapes are four mouchettes, two of which are carefully drawn with cusping inside them. The other two mouchettes are not as carefully drawn and do not contain cusping in them; Hardy may have assumed that the clear symmetry of the sketch made drawing these two mouchettes in detail superfluous. In the middle of the ogee arch shapes are two shield-shaped banners with fringe along the bottom. The banner on the left has a three-pronged element in the middle, while the banner on the right contains either an “R,” a “D,” or a harp. Beneath the sills of these two arches are two squares. The left square is empty, and the lines of the sill above it are faded to the point where they almost cannot be seen. The right square includes a large quatrefoil.

Page thirty-nine consists of another drawing of a seat end (Figure 2). Like the sketch on page thirty-eight, this drawing seems to be unfinished. Only the right half of the drawing is fully detailed and drawn in heavy lines; the rest of the sketch is lightly outlined and barely visible. Like the other seat end, this seat end is a rectangular shape with a border around its edges. The right edge of the border has a cascading vine pattern similar to the border pattern of the seat end on page thirty-eight. Inside the border, the general layout is almost exactly same as the seat end on page thirty-eight. On the right is an ogee arch with cusping and a shield-shaped banner in the middle of it. Above the arch are the same mouchettes with cusping; only in this case, there are circular shapes beneath the mouchettes. The main difference between the two seat ends is that beneath the sill of the ogee arch there is the top of a pointed arch with cusping, as opposed to the quatrefoil.
Why Hardy chose to sketch these particular seat ends is unclear. Perhaps he admired the carving and wanted to preserve a physical representation of it. On the other hand, he may have wanted to record the carved seats before they were destroyed or given away during the restoration work. In his 1906 “Memories of Church Restoration,” Hardy declares that:

the parts of a church that have suffered the most complete obliteration are those of the closest personal relation—the woodwork, especially that of the oak pews of various Georgian dates, with their skilful \(\text{sic}\) panellings, of which not a joint had started, and mouldings become so hard as to turn the edge of a knife. The deal benches with which these cunningly mitred and morticed framings have been largely replaced have already, in many cases, fallen into decay.\(^{165}\)

Hardy’s later lamentation that such intricate woodwork had been destroyed and replaced by lesser benches may have been generated by his viewing of such seat ends. Indeed, Hardy’s autobiography confirms that these seat-ends disappeared during the church’s restoration.\(^{166}\) His sketch of the seat ends indicates his appreciation for finely carved woodwork. Furthermore, the fact that he alludes to the destruction of woodworking in his speech against restoration suggests that he might have returned to his drawings in later years as he decried his contributions to church restorations. The drawing of these seat ends seems to imply a potentially vital moment in the development of Hardy’s preservationist views.

The top half of page forty-three of Hardy’s architectural notebook shows the

\(^{165}\) Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.

\(^{166}\) Hardy, The Life, 82.
plan of St. Juliot’s Rectory (Figure 3). (The bottom half is a plan of Syward Lodge, a home neighboring Max Gate.) Hardy probably included this drawing because the rectory was where he met his future wife, Emma. When Hardy first arrived to survey St. Juliot, it was Emma who received him into the rector’s home, which was unusual. Emma lived with her sister, Helen, and her brother-in-law, the Reverend Caddell Holder, who was the rector of St. Juliot. On the day Hardy arrived, Reverend Holder was confined to his bed by a bout of gout, while Helen was duly nursing her husband. Thus, it fell to Emma to receive the visitor. Hardy writes a glowing description of his future wife as he first saw her, claiming that he “was soon, if not, immediately, struck by the nature and appearance of the lady who received him…her complexion…was perfect in hue, her figure and movement graceful.”\(^\text{167}\) While this drawing does not relate directly to Hardy’s restoration of the church, it demonstrates the emotional meaning he connected with the place.

The final drawing related to St. Juliot is on page 74 or page 75 of Hardy’s architectural notebook (Figure 4).\(^\text{168}\) This sketch is labeled “St. Juliot Church Cornwall (before alteration in 1871-2),” meaning that this is what the church would have looked like before Hardy and Crickmay completed their restoration of it. Hardy also includes a note that reads “N. B. The old Nave was rebuilt as an aisle & the old S. Aisle made the Nave—the Transept being pulled down.” Hardy provides rather detailed documentation of the alterations made to St. Juliot under Crickmay. The plan before alterations shows a mostly traditional church plan. In the center is the nave, labeled as such, and beneath that is a label reading “S. Aisle” for the church’s

\(^{167}\) Hardy, *The Life*, 76.
“South Aisle.” On the left side of the drawing, a labeled “Tower” protrudes from behind the nave. At the top of the drawing, a “Transept” comes off the left side of the nave. On the right side of the drawing, a “Chancel” proceeds out of the nave. Beneath the chancel is a small label that is difficult to read. It seems to say “sulen,” but whether that is a misreading or not, it is unclear what this label means. Finally, at the bottom of the drawing, is an entrance to the church.

Hardy’s documentation of the changes that occurred in this church is extremely important because it reveals just how drastically St. Juliot was altered. The tower in the sketch was completely rebuilt during Crickmay’s restoration of the church but remained in its original position. Meanwhile, as Hardy notes in his drawing, the old nave was transformed into an aisle, and the south aisle became the nave, with the transept being completely destroyed. The drastic changes made in this restoration to the church may have prompted this reaction from Hardy in his 1928 autobiography when he referred to August 1870:

It was at this time, too, that he saw the last of St. Juliot Church in its original condition of picturesque neglect, the local builder laying hands on it shortly after, and razing to the ground the tower and the north aisle (which had hitherto been the nave), and the transept. Hardy much regretted the obliteration in this manner of the church’s history, and, too, that he should be instrumental in such obliteration, the building as he had first set eyes on it having been so associated with what was romantic in his life. Yet his instrumentality was involuntary, the decision to alter and diminish its area having been come to before

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168 The numbering is unclear. The page before the St. Juliot drawing is numbered page 73, but the page after is numbered page 76. The page with the St. Juliot drawing is not numbered at all, meaning that it could either be page 74 or 75. Either way, Hardy seems to have miscounted his pages.
he arrived on the scene. What else could be done with the dilapidated structure was difficult to say if it had to be retained for use. The old walls of the former nave, dating from Norman or even earlier times, might possibly have been preserved. A north door, much like a Saxon one, was inadvertently destroyed, but Hardy made a drawing of it which is preserved in the present church, with his drawings of the highly carved seat-ends and other details that have disappeared. Fortunately the old south aisle was kept intact, with its arcade, the aisle now being adapted for a nave.\textsuperscript{170}

As he did for his work under Hicks, Hardy regrets and laments his contributions to the restoration, or, in his mind, destruction, of St. Juliot. This restoration is particularly meaningful and regrettable for him because it is of such deep emotional import, since the church was the means of meeting his beloved first wife. When Hardy wrote of the “memories, history, fellowships, fraternities” contained in historical buildings in his “Memories of Church Restoration,” he may have been referring to a moment such as this. The St. Juliot building in its original state would have contained the memories, history, and development of a fellowship between Hardy and Emma. Altering the building from that state would mean, for Hardy, removing his emotional ties to the church in the process. His emotional investment in the church’s condition may have helped him to realize the importance of preservation as well as the extent of restoration’s potential destruction. The emotional ramifications of the restoration of St. Juliot point toward Hardy’s turning away from restoration in favor of preservation.

Yet, as Claudius Beatty suggests, the main factor that necessitated the

\textsuperscript{170} Hardy, The Life, 82.
essential rebuilding of St. Juliot was its extreme disrepair. For one, by the time work began on the church, it was far too late for basic alterations and repairs to be useful.\textsuperscript{171} The patron of the church, Bishop Rawle, had written in an 1854 letter on the church’s condition, “It is so thoroughly time-worn and done up by old age that no partial restoration will avail. The Tower bulges out dropsically, the pillars lean, the mortar in the works has perished, the churchyard on the North side nearly buries the poor building.”\textsuperscript{172} The fact that this letter was written sixteen years before restoration work was even started on the church evinces how overdue Hardy’s visit was in 1870. As much as Hardy may have wanted to keep the church in its original condition, it would perhaps have collapsed and then have had to be rebuilt from nothing. Even though Hardy’s emotional attachment to the church may have been his governing principle and may have been what drove him to support preservation over restoration, restoration was most likely the best choice for St. Juliot.

Having completed his duties at St. Juliot, in April 1870, Hardy returned to his work under Crickmay, although only for a very brief period, since in May, he left Crickmay’s employ to return to London. He did some work for Blomfield once again, as well as some work for another Gothic architect, Raphael Brandon, who was the author of an 1847 treatise on Gothic architecture.

Throughout his architectural work, Hardy frequently returned to Cornwall to court Emma. Additionally, he was writing a novel entitled \textit{Desperate Remedies}, which was ultimately published in 1871 to mixed reviews. Feeling relatively

\textsuperscript{172} qtd. in Beatty, “Introduction to the Notebook,” 26.
encouraged, he wrote another work called *Under the Greenwood Tree*, which, in his mind, received an unenthusiastic reaction from the publisher. Feeling disillusioned, he was fully prepared to abandon writing and continue his career in architecture. However, Emma encouraged him to keep at novel writing, which she considered to be his “true vocation.”

Even though Hardy now felt encouraged enough to keep writing, he still needed to make money, so he continued his architectural work until 1872. During this time, he worked for London architect T. Roger Smith and assisted Smith with designing schools for the London School Board. Hardy did not carry out any restoration work during this time. *Under the Greenwood Tree* was published in May 1872, and its positive reception led to an offer from *Tinsley’s Magazine* for Hardy to write a three-volume novel that would be published serially. Although Hardy tried to maintain a balance between his work for Smith and his writing, ultimately, the writing won out, and Hardy’s initial career as an architect was ended.

Although Hardy’s professional career as an architect ended in 1872, his commitment to saving historical buildings would continue for most of the rest of his life. His involvement in the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings from 1881 until his death in 1928 demonstrates his sustained interest in the futures of important historical buildings, particularly churches. Of the sixteen documented buildings on which he worked as a member of the SPAB, all but three of them were churches.

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173 Hardy, *The Life*, 89.
174 Hardy, *The Life*, 89-94.
The first case in which Hardy was involved as a member of the SPAB was the Wimborne Minster church. This church was brought to the attention of the SPAB in 1880. C. Kegan Paul, the English author and publisher who published some of Hardy’s works, essentially wrote Hardy’s introduction to the SPAB. Paul had joined the SPAB in 1879 and formed a part of its Committee in 1882. In a letter dated July 15th, 1881, Paul addresses the secretary of the SPAB:

> …will you write to Thomas Hardy, Esq., The Avenue, Wimborne, telling him that you do so at my request, sending him all the papers about the Society, and asking him to communicate with you? Mr. Hardy has only just settled at Wimborne, but his name will be well known to you as the author of “Far from the Madding Crowd” and other very striking novels. He is an architect by profession though not now practising, and is I think a man who would be thoroughly in sympathy with our Society.

Clearly, Hardy’s main reputation is as a novelist, which has overshadowed his professional background in architecture. Yet, his opposition to restoration must have been well known enough that he could be recommended as a supporter of an institution that sought to preserve historical buildings.

Kegan Paul and Hardy had a close relationship that was both professional and personal. Prior to his work in the publishing world, Paul was a clergyman in Dorset. Paul then became manager of Henry King’s London publishing firm in 1874 before he took over the publishing firm in 1877. King had published Hardy’s

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A Pair of Blue Eyes in 1877, although it was first published by Tinsley in 1873. Paul appreciated this novel immensely, admiring both Hardy’s characterization and his literary style. Since he hailed from Dorset, just as Hardy did, Paul was able to accurately gauge and critique Hardy’s portrayal of Dorset’s customs and dialect. Paul wrote of Hardy, “A new genius has arisen in the intellectual sky.” The relationship between the two men developed even further when Hardy joined the Savile Club in June 1878. This was the principal literary club of the day in London, and since Paul was also a member, the club allowed the two to foster a friendship. Indeed, the Hardys would often visit the Pauls’ home. In 1879, when Hardy was writing The Trumpet-Major, his “friendship with Charles Kegan Paul had developed into a kind of working partnership useful and profitable to both.” Paul was editing for the New Quarterly Magazine at this time, and it was under him that the magazine published two of Hardy’s “earliest and finest short stories,” according to Michael Millgate: “The Distracted Young Preacher” in April 1879, and “Fellow-Townsmen” in April 1880. Paul also wrote a glowing review of Hardy’s work for the British Quarterly Review in April 1881, followed by an article on Hardy in Merry England in May 1883. According to Michael Millgate, Paul was “after Leslie Stephen, the literary figure who did most to advance Hardy’s

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181 Howsam, Kegan Paul, 15, 73.
182 Howsam, Kegan Paul, 82.
183 Howsam, Kegan Paul, 82.
184 Howsam, Kegan Paul, 82.
185 Howsam, Kegan Paul, 82.
186 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 182.
187 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 182.
188 Howsam, Kegan Paul, 184.
189 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 193.
190 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 193.
reputation at this still early period.”192 During Hardy’s long-term illness in the fall and winter of 1880-1, Paul recommended a doctor to examine Hardy and even brought Hardy information that he might need for his novel writing.193 These close personal and professional ties between the two men suggest that Paul would have been the perfect candidate to write Hardy a recommendation letter to the SPAB.

Indeed, as early as 1878, Hardy expressed his regret at having been complicit in restoration projects. In May 1878, he wrote a short biographical sketch of himself which he sent to Edward Abbott, editor of the Boston Literary World. The sketch was published in August 1878 as “World Biographies. Thomas Hardy” and includes that Hardy “under color of restoring and renovating for a good cause was instrumental in obliterating many valuable records in stone of the history of quiet rural parishes, much to his regret in later years.”194 This is most likely one of the earliest expressions of Hardy’s chagrin for having participated in church restoration, since it was written only six years after he had terminated his architectural career and three years before he joined the SPAB. When Hardy wrote to the SPAB’s secretary, C.G. Vinall, in October 1881, he declared, “anything I can do to assist the Society in the matter of the Minster I will attend to with the greatest pleasure—for I am entirely in sympathy with its movements.”195 Indeed, Hardy even volunteered to help the surveyor of Wimborne Minster make his plans for the church’s conservation work.196

191 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 194.
192 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 194.
193 Millgate, Thomas Hardy, 200-4.
195 qtd. in Beatty, Thomas Hardy: Conservation Architect, 9.
With such a clear opposition to restoration, it is unclear why Hardy led the restoration of the West Knighton Church from 1893-4. Indeed, he was completely responsible for the direction of the church’s restoration work. A section entitled “Repair of West Knighton Church, Dorsetshire” from May 26th, 1894 copy of The Builder reads:

The ancient church at West Knighton, which was closed for repairs in August last, has just been re-opened. The chancel roof, which was decayed, has been removed and a new roof with stone tiles erected. The inner walls have all had the old plaster cleaned off and been cemented throughout. Mullions and tracery have been added to the windows on the north side, and both windows have been made uniform. This restoration was carried out under the direction of Mr. Thomas Hardy. A little window has been re-opened in the chancel. All the windows have been reglazed except two that contain painted glass. An irregular little window with a wooden frame in the upper part of the south wall has been built up, and a skylight has been opened to light the gallery. When removing the plaster from the south wall of the nave an old arch with pillar and a portion of a second arch were discovered. These have been restored. Traces of old frescoes were discovered on the wall of the south transept and over the church door, and inscriptions on the south wall of the nave. The gallery has been removed, and a new gallery has been put in its place. The font, which was under the gallery, has been placed near the church door. The floor has been laid throughout with encaustic tiles.

198 qtd. in Beatty, Part Played by Architecture, 380.
On pages 109 and 110 of his *Architectural Notebook*, Hardy has drawn the aforementioned West Knighton windows. The drawing on page 109 is labeled “West Knighton Church Dorset,” and beneath a sketch of the outside view of a window on the north side, he has written “Jamb good to springing—above, the inner member is inserted roughly—evidently when tracery was taken out” (Figure 5).\(^{199}\) He includes some numerical notations inside the window, presumably to indicate its dimensions. Clearly, this sketch is meant to illustrate the process of restoration. He lightly pencils in his proposed tracery but has not yet drawn the mullions, since it had not yet been decided whether the window would be 2-light or 3-light.\(^{200}\) Thus, this window is at the midpoint between its original state and its eventual outcome.

The drawing on page 110 of the *Notebook* is labeled “West Knighton” and contains several numerical notations, as well as a list of elements at the bottom with some numerical calculations (Figure 6). Here, Hardy depicts a section of a window’s base and shows where the glass meets the wall in relation to the inner splay and the outer molding.\(^{201}\) Of the two lists of calculations at the bottom of the page, one is trying to find the width of each of the three pieces of glass if the window is a 3-light one. The other list is to find the width of two pieces of glass if the window were to be a 2-light one.\(^{202}\)

Pages 111 and 112 of the *Notebook* also contain drawings related to West Knighton. Page 111 shows the new window that was inserted into the tower wall

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west, for which Hardy was also responsible (Figure 7). Underneath the sketches of the proposed window Hardy has written “N.B. The Early English window west of transept is 21 ½ inches between splays outside…and 4 ft sill to springing.” Page 112 is a further sketch of the tower (Figure 8). Underneath Hardy wrote “E. E. Ww in W. wall of Transept. New window in Tower west wall to be 3ft from springing to sill –clear of jambs to be 1-3”

Unlike the drawings for St. Juliot, which preserved some aspects of the church prior to its restoration, all of these West Knighton drawings focus on the alterations that will be made to the building. If Hardy so regretted his earlier involvement in restoration, and he had such complete control over the West Knighton project, what could have possibly possessed him to restore the church? Furthermore, why was he not more interested in preserving the original state of the church, at least in his drawings, as opposed to focusing completely on its alterations? Claudius Beatty acknowledges that Hardy violated the principles of the SPAB by restoring West Knighton, but believes that “West Knighton Church emerged enriched rather than ruined.” Furthermore, Beatty claims, “no one…will deny that West Knighton benefited…from Hardy’s restoration.” Hardy biographer Ralph Pite concurs with Beatty and states that Hardy “at West Knighton did create more orderliness in the building than had been present before.” Pite goes even further than Beatty to

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207 Beatty, “Introduction to the Notebook,” 32.  
208 Pite, *Thomas Hardy*, 369.
suggest that Hardy’s work shows “more than anything else, the influence of the training Hicks gave him as an apprentice architect.”

Why Hardy would emulate a man in whose employ he rued his architectural contributions remains a mystery that Pite does not answer, particularly since Hardy first renounced his work with Hicks in 1878, far before the West Knighton restoration. Finally, Hardy biographer Michael Millgate points out that Hardy’s work at West Knighton overlapped with his writing *Jude the Obscure*, a novel in which the issues of restoration are central. The eponymous protagonist of the novel is a stonemason who mainly works on church restorations and is “compelled to duplicate, without being able to match, the decorative work of the original ‘ancient craftsman.’” In Jude’s world, restoration seems to have won out in the struggle for how to deal with history.

Clearly, Hardy was grappling with the stakes of restoration at this point in his life. The coinciding of his West Knighton restoration work with his writing of *Jude the Obscure* indicates how important and consuming this issue was to Hardy. According to Jan Jędrzejewski, many of the issues of church restoration, “historical accuracy versus modern taste, authenticity versus pretence, individual truth versus external obligations and expectations” appear in *Jude the Obscure*. If, as Ralph Pite suggests, Hardy was demonstrating Hicks’s influence upon his work, perhaps Hardy may have been trying to rectify Hicks’s mistakes and come as close as possible to an ideal restoration that followed all of the practice’s principles. Indeed, as Jan Jędrzejewski suggests, the job at West Knighton could have been “an attempt on the

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209 Pite, *Thomas Hardy*, 369.
part of Hardy to put in practice the theoretical principles of church restoration that he had over the years come to believe in,” despite the fact that all of Hardy’s statements regarding restoration denounce it.214 Perhaps, as with St. Juliot, West Knighton was simply too dilapidated to maintain very much of its original condition. Whatever the case, Hardy makes no mention of the West Knighton restoration in his autobiography. This omission may indicate shame or embarrassment, or may simply be part of a larger trend of simply not mentioning his work with the SPAB.

In any case, Hardy’s relationship to restoration and preservation is certainly nonlinear and complex. His vehement rejection of his restoration work under Hicks and others was perhaps initially not a rejection of restoration entirely but rather those specific restoration projects. In 1893, Hardy may have desired the chance to attempt his own restoration project independent of others’ wishes and to explore his own restorational techniques and abilities. Interestingly, he did no more restoring between 1893 and 1906. By the time of his 1906 “Memories of Church Restoration,” however, he seems to have fully spurned restoration, although the fact that he needed to be coerced to write the speech perhaps complicates the matter. Although Hardy did no more restoring between 1893 and 1906, ultimately, the West Knighton restoration reveals his complicated and inconsistent relationship with restoration, suggesting that, as absolute as he tried to make his position seem in his 1906 speech, he struggled to forego restoration completely.

Despite his clear deviation from the SPAB’s principles, Hardy would continue to be involved with the group until his death in 1928. In July 1901, he was

elected to the SPAB’s Restoration Committee. The Reverend Sidney Boulter, the vicar of Saint George’s church, Fordington, upon which the SPAB started preservation work that was never finished, commended the appointment. According to Boulter:

his [Hardy’s] views were listened to throughout the length and breadth of the country…he was a member of the Society for the Preservation [sic] of Ancient Buildings, and he was not unfrequently [sic] asked to give his opinion on such matters [architectural preservation issues]…his opinion on the subject…was one that had much weight.\textsuperscript{215}

Evidently, Hardy was well-regarded and well-respected in terms of issues of architectural preservation. Logically, therefore, his “Memories of Church Restoration” (1906) was written, albeit hesitantly, after “‘repeated requests.’”\textsuperscript{216} As Beatty suggests, one should not read Hardy’s “Memories” as a “rational argument” but instead view the speech as “an emotional mea culpa,” in which Hardy attempts to atone for his sins of restoration even as he presents staunch preservationist beliefs.\textsuperscript{217}

Hardy’s speech “Memories of Church Restoration,” which was presented at a meeting of SPAB in 1906, is an especially staunch declaration of his preservationist views. Hardy presents the destruction of restoration as far-reaching and practically total, declaring, “that architects, incumbents, church-wardens, and all concerned, are zealous to act conservatively by such few of these buildings as still remain

\textsuperscript{215} qtd. in Beatty, \textit{Thomas Hardy: Conservation Architect}, 27.
\textsuperscript{216} qtd. in Beatty, \textit{Thomas Hardy: Conservation Architect}, 72.
\textsuperscript{217} Beatty, \textit{Thomas Hardy: Conservation Architect}, 72.
untinkered, that they desire at last to repair as far as is possible the errors of their predecessors, and to do anything but repeat them.”218 This group of concerned people includes, of course, the SPAB. One quality of historical buildings is that their “essence and soul…does not lie in the particular blocks of stone or timber that compose it, but in the mere forms to which those materials have been shaped.”219 Thus, part of what characterizes a building is the natural forces to which it has been exposed. Another aspect that distinguishes a building is its “human association.”220 Because of the human connections contained within architectural spaces, “the protection of an ancient edifice against renewal in fresh materials is, in fact, even more of a social—I may say a humane—duty than an aesthetic one.”221 Ultimately, preserving a historical building is “the preservation of memories, history, fellowships, fraternities.”222 Hardy therefore defines preservation as a moral responsibility to maintain the many elements that, both literally and figuratively, shape a building, particularly human connections.

This complex relationship with preservation and restoration can be seen in three of Hardy’s novels, all of which will be examined in the next chapter. While *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Under the Greenwood Tree* seem to straightforwardly support preservation, *The Woodlanders* complicates the notion of preservation, revealing the concept’s limitations and perhaps alluding to Hardy’s struggle to wholeheartedly embrace it.

218 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 73.
219 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
220 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
221 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
222 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
CHAPTER TWO: Themes of Preservation in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and *The Woodlanders*

Three of Hardy’s novels, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Woodlanders*, and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, clarify and exemplify Hardy’s conception of preservation as a moral duty to uphold both the past and the emotional, human connections in historical buildings. *Far From the Madding Crowd* demonstrates prime instances of the emotional connections and memories forged by old buildings. Hardy’s descriptions of architecture occur at moments where history, fraternity, and memories are kept alive and newly created. In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, replacing traditional architectural elements with modern ones creates emotional distress, while the modern elements that serve as replacements lack the history and cannot be integrated into their environment. These novels conform to preservationist ideals in a relatively simple and straightforward way. *The Woodlanders*, by contrast, reveals the limits of preservationist ideology. Hardy depicts the past as something that, when too highly valued, prevents humans from progressing towards their present and future. Thus, Hardy shows that preservation’s conception of the past as something that should remain untouched is useful for architecture but poses limitations for individuals. Together, these three novels clarify Hardy’s notion of what preservation is and what it can accomplish.

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*Far From the Madding Crowd* follows the story of the strongly independent Bathsheba Everdene and her various suitors. Bathsheba inherits and runs a farm, so
scenes of chores and farm life, such as sheep shearing, figure prominently in the novel. Bathsheba’s three suitors are Gabriel Oak, a hardworking and loyal man who works on her farm; Mr. Boldwood, her middle-aged, stoic neighbor; and Sergeant Troy, a dashing, womanizing army man. Bathsheba flirts with Boldwood but ends up marrying Troy, who has recently left his pregnant fiancée, Fanny Robin. Troy wrestles with his feelings for both women and eventually leaves Bathsheba heartbroken. In spite of this jilting, she ultimately finds happiness with the ever-loyal Gabriel.

Throughout *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy’s lengthy descriptions of buildings anticipate the forms of human interaction that take place within the building described. According to Hardy, the “human associations” of “memories, history, fellowships, fraternities” contained in historic buildings are a primary reason for keeping a building as much in its original state as possible. Three buildings described at length in *Far From the Madding Crowd* are the great barn, the Buck’s Head inn, and Weatherbury Church. Each building is associated with a different one of the human relationships Hardy names in his conception of preservation. The great barn is where history is relayed, the Buck’s Head inn fosters fraternity, and Weatherbury Church contains memories.

The great barn’s continuity with its past history and usage represents the ideal application of preservation principles to architecture. The great barn is described as follows:

They sheared in the great barn…which on ground-plan resembled a church with transepts. It not only emulated

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223 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 76.
the form of the neighbouring church of the parish, but vied
with it in antiquity…One could say about this barn, what
could hardly be said of either the church or the castle, akin
to it in age and style, that the purpose which had dictated
its original erection was the same with that to which it was
still applied. Unlike and superior to either of those two
typical remnants of mediaevalism, the old barn embodied
practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of
time. Here at least the spirit of the ancient builders was at
one with the spirit of the modern beholder. Standing before
this abraded pile, the eye regarded its present usage, the
mind dwelt upon its past history, with a satisfied sense of
functional continuity throughout—a feeling almost of
gratitude, and quite of pride, at the permanence of the
idea which had heaped it up.224

Here, history is preserved by continuing the practices of the past in the present.

The barn seamlessly combines past history with the present. It does not need
restoration because it maintains the same functions for which it was originally built,
including sheep shearing. The building is clearly still capable of fulfilling those
functions, since shearing still occurs in the space. True to the preservationist ideal,
the “practices” enacted in the building have not experienced any “mutilation at the
hands of time.” Likewise, Hardy stresses that the “spirit” of the ancient
architects is united with that of the modern viewer, meaning that the historical
building can foster human connections unbounded by time. The building contains
human associations not only between the people of the present and the building, but
also between humans in the present and in the past. This relation between the past
and present hinges upon the “functional continuity” by which Hardy is “satisfied.” If
the current occupants were not shearing just as their ancestors did, they would not experience the strong connection that they do by living out history. Ultimately, what is most important about the barn, and about preservation in general, is that the building achieves “permanence.” Mutability, the restorationist’s ally, destroys a building’s history and severs those human connections that exist not only in the present but also between the present and the past. The great barn is the ideal representation of preservation in action.

In the Buck’s Head inn, fraternity is actively renewed. Like the great barn, the Buck’s Head inn is an ancient fixture of the architectural landscape:

At the roadside hamlet called Roy-Town…was the old inn Buck’s Head…in the meridian times of stage-coach travelling had been the place where many coaches changed and kept their relays of horses. All the old stabling was now pulled down, and little remained besides the habitable inn itself…the manners of the inn were of the old-established type. Indeed, in the minds of its frequenters they existed as unalterable formulae.225

Yet, unlike the great barn, the Buck’s Head no longer completely fulfills its original function. It is no longer a stop for stage-coaches, which has resulted in parts of the inn being altered. Yet, the inn itself remains relatively unaltered. The “manners” in the inn are still the manners that have been long-established, and, like the great barn, possess a permanence that indicates their longevity. Although parts of the inn have been altered from their original condition, the heart of the inn remains immutable.

It is in this unalterable heart of the inn, where human interactions remain

224 Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005), 153.
much the same, that fraternity is maintained. Joseph Poorgrass has been conveying
the body of the dead Fanny Robin for miles when he decides to stop at the “friendly
signboard” of the Buck’s Head Inn.\textsuperscript{226} There, he meets two of his drinking
acquaintances, Jan Coggan and Mark Clark. As Joseph relays his story of carting
Fanny’s body for several miles, Jan offers Joseph a drink and declares that “drink is a
pleasant delight…a truism so familiar to his brain that he hardly noticed its passage
over his tongue.”\textsuperscript{227} Consequently, even though Joseph’s story is an unusual
occurrence, his friend’s response is a typical and expected one. Clearly, there
is an established form of interaction that must take place when the men meet at the
Buck’s Head.

This fraternity fosters loyalty, as becomes evident when Jan and Mark defend
Joseph’s drinking to Gabriel Oak. Gabriel enters the inn and is shocked to find
Joseph drinking there, which, to him, is “disgraceful.”\textsuperscript{228} Yet, Mark and Jan loyally
defend Joseph. Mark tells Gabriel not to “take on so,” while Jan cries that “nobody
can hurt a dead woman…the woman’s past us…drink, shepherd, and be friends, for
to-morrow we may be like her.”\textsuperscript{229} When Joseph insists that the only thing wrong
with him is a “multiplying eye,” Mark acquiesces and states that “a multiplying eye is
a very bad thing.”\textsuperscript{230} Bonds of loyalty are thus formed by drinking together at the
Buck’s Head inn. Jan and Mark are so devoted to Joseph that they will defend him
out of a loyalty based upon the “old-established” types of interaction they have with

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\item[\textsuperscript{225}] Hardy, \textit{Madding Crowd}, 295.
\item[\textsuperscript{226}] Hardy, \textit{Madding Crowd}, 296.
\item[\textsuperscript{227}] Hardy, \textit{Madding Crowd}, 296.
\item[\textsuperscript{228}] Hardy, \textit{Madding Crowd}, 299.
\item[\textsuperscript{229}] Hardy, \textit{Madding Crowd}, 300.
\item[\textsuperscript{230}] Hardy, \textit{Madding Crowd}, 300.
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each other: drinking together, sharing stories, and repeating certain phrases. The Buck’s Head therefore produces unbreakable bonds of fraternity and loyalty among its frequenters. This consistency in human relations mirrors the continuity of a preserved historical building. As Hardy has expressed with his description of the great barn, the ideal situation for a historical building is that the past and present achieve a seamlessly connected consistency. The “old-established manners” of the inn are tied to its history as a building, since the power of those manners comes from their longevity and consistency. This moment at the Buck’s Head inn reveals the crucial parallel between loyal human connection and an unchanged architectural space.

The architectural features of Weatherbury Church crucially preserve memories of Fanny Robin. Weatherbury Church, like the great barn and the Buck’s Head inn, is an ancient building “of fourteenth century date” with two “stone gargoyles on each of the four faces of its parapet.”231 Only two of the gargoyles continue to “serve the purpose of their erection—that of spouting the water from the lead roof within,” but “the two mouths which still remained open and active were gaping enough to do all the work” except in a torrential downpour, which sends a “persistent torrent” onto Fanny Robin’s grave.232 The “flowers so carefully planted by Fanny’s repentant lover,” Sergeant Troy, are washed away, and the rest of the tomb is splattered with “stain…of the brown mud.”233 Troy, who has been sleeping by the grave, awakes to this scene of chaos, and quickly becomes angry that “Providence, far from helping him into a new course, or showing any wish that he

231 Hardy, Madding Crowd, 326.
232 Hardy, Madding Crowd, 326-7.
might adopt one, actually jeered his first trembling and critical attempt in that kind.”

234 He decides to “[throw] up his cards and [forswear] his game for that time and always.”

235 Troy’s efforts to maintain a beautiful tribute to Fanny’s memory are thwarted by the architecture that is meant to preserve those memories. Had the gurgoyles still been functioning and thus fulfilling their original purpose, they would not have concentrated all of the rainwater into the one particular gurgoyle that destroys Fanny’s grave. Architecture, particularly useful, practical architectural features like the gurgoyles, must be allowed to maintain its original function, or else the memories meant to be associated with the building will be destroyed. This direct link between architecture and memory demonstrates the importance of maintaining architecture’s original function to preserve the memories associated with that architecture.

This connection between function and human emotion contrasts sharply with restoration’s focus on function devoid of human emotion. For restorationists, the most pressing need for a building was its ability to “discharge its original function.”

236 Although Hardy wants the gurgoyle to fulfill its function, he does not blame the structure of the gurgoyle itself for its inability to accomplish its function. The reason that four of the eight gurgoyles no longer do what they were meant for is because “bygone churchwardens” closed their “superfluous” mouth channels.

237 Hardy thereby argues against the alteration of the gurgoyle, since its original structure, were it left untouched, would be sufficient to fulfill its original function.

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236 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 73.
Additionally, Hardy focuses on Troy’s distress that Fanny’s grave has been destroyed rather than that the church’s drainage system malfunctioned. Since the architecture of the church has been altered, this alteration results in an imperfect preservation of Fanny’s memory. Hardy thereby creates a clear connection between architecture and memory. Memory can be altered without changing the architecture, but if the architecture changes, the memories must transform with it as well.

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Preservation’s emphasis on historical buildings’ history and emotional value is central to understanding the conflict between the choir and Mr. Maybold in Hardy’s *Under the Greenwood Tree*. The story takes place in the small town of Mellstock, where life is still very much dictated by long-standing tradition.

*Under the Greenwood Tree* follows two interrelated stories: that of the choir and that of suitor Dick Dewy. Young Dick Dewy is a member of the Mellstock choir who becomes infatuated with the beautiful schoolmistress Fancy Day. Unfortunately, he must compete for her attentions with the town’s new vicar, Mr. Maybold, and a rich farmer, Mr. Shiner. Meanwhile, the choir carries out its usual traditions of carol singing at Christmastime and leading the church in song on holidays and Sundays. The choir comprises a rich cast of characters from many different generations, including Dick’s jolly father, Reuben, Dick’s pious grandfather, William, and Thomas Leaf, a much-indulged young man with mental difficulties. Unfortunately, Mr. Maybold disrupts both Dick’s plans to marry Fancy and those of the choir to continue their singing when he decides to replace the choir with an organ so that Fancy can show off her organ playing. The ramifications of Maybold’s choice

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237 Hardy, *Madding Crowd*, 326.
are both personal and political, since Maybold is both bringing the parish into modern times and attempting to cement himself as Fancy’s main suitor. While Dick ultimately perseveres in capturing Fancy, the choir is, unfortunately, relegated to joining the rest of the congregation while Fancy plays the organ.

In the opening chapters, the reader meets the members of Mellstock’s choir as they embark on their yearly tradition of singing Christmas carols in front of every home in town. Yet, there are signs that this choral tradition may be in danger. One of the choir members declares, “Times have changed from the times they used to be…People don’t care much about us now. I’ve been thinking we must be almost the last left in the country of the old string players.” Clearly, in the past, the townspeople used to appreciate the choir, and there used to be many other choirs spread across the country, which have since dwindled down to the Mellstock choir. Indeed, the Tractarian Movement of the 1840s, which emphasized beauty and ceremony in Anglican church services, displaced rural musician choirs like the Mellstock choir in favor of organs. Furthermore, Hardy wrote in his preface to the 1896 edition of the novel that the story of the Mellstock choir was meant to be “a fairly true picture, at first hand, of the personages, ways, and customs which were common among such orchestral bodies in the villages of fifty or sixty years ago.”

Signs of the tradition’s growing unpopularity continue, since as the choir makes its rounds, several of the townspeople react badly. Farmer Shiner hurls insults at the choir and demands that they be quiet, prompting William, one of the

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choir’s oldest members, to declare that he has “never” seen “such a dreadful scene.”\textsuperscript{241} Afterwards, when they reach the house of the new parson, Mr. Maybold, he initially makes no response to their carol singing, which, according to William, is a “bad sign.”\textsuperscript{242}

This scene of the choir making its rounds both shows a town tradition in action and offers portents that this tradition may be dying. The choir expects respectful listeners who will thank them for their music and acknowledge their contribution to the community. Their task is especially strenuous considering that the choir must walk the several miles through the entire town very late at night in freezing cold, snowy weather. Instead of the choir’s toils being appreciated, the men are berated and ignored. This scene is thereby a portrait of a small-town tradition waning in popularity.

Additionally, the choir’s authority becomes even more undermined when they return to their usual church setting. For instance, on Christmas morning, the choir resumes its usual place in the gallery and leads the congregation in song. Although the choir’s performance is “below the standard of church-performances at other times” due to the choir’s exhaustion from the caroling of the night before, they still expect to fulfill their duty of providing the church’s music.\textsuperscript{243} Yet, “strong and shrill reinforcement” from the “school-girls’ aisle” proves “as mighty as” the singing from the choir.\textsuperscript{244} This threatens the choir’s control of the church’s music, since nothing

\textsuperscript{241} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 33.
\textsuperscript{242} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 36.
\textsuperscript{243} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 40.
\textsuperscript{244} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 40.
like this has ever “happened before within the memory of man.”\textsuperscript{245} These school-
girls, “like the rest of the congregation, had always been humble and respectful
followers of the gallery…never interfering with the ordinances of these practised
artists- having no will, union, power, or proclivity except it was given them from the
established choir enthroned above them.”\textsuperscript{246}

The choir, therefore, possesses absolute authority over the congregation, at
least, according to their own understanding. The members give orders that are
presumed to be duly followed by the parishioners. Furthermore, they dictate their
wishes from both a literally and figuratively elevated position above the rest of the
congregation. The choir thereby believes its authority to be total, absolute, and
utterly unquestionable.

The congregation’s betrayal of the choir’s authority marks the beginning of
the end for the choir tradition. The congregation’s undermining understandably
perturbs the choir immensely, considering how greatly its members used to be
respected and obeyed. As the members assert, “‘tis the gallery have got to sing, all
the world knows.”\textsuperscript{247} Even though this fact may be well known by everyone in
Mellstock, the school-girls’ brazen participation in singing demonstrates a blatant
disregard for the choir’s power, thereby implying that the choir’s authority is
weakening. Now that the choir’s absolute authority over the congregation has been
utterly destroyed, the choir jokes, with “the horrible bitterness of irony,” that its
members are now “useless ones.”\textsuperscript{248} Such an obvious affront to the choir’s

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{245} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 40. \\
\textsuperscript{246} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 41. \\
\textsuperscript{247} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 41. \\
\textsuperscript{248} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 41.
\end{center}
authority has destroyed even the choir’s own impression of their total control over the congregation. The mention of irony suggests the choir members’ knowledge that their traditional way of life may be in danger. Without the choir’s former power to dictate the congregation’s behavior, the congregation can behave exactly as it wishes, as the school-girls do, and sing along to the church’s music. This singing along renders the choir useless because singing is the sole job of the choir’s members. Without that particular, specialized authority over the music, the choir members can be reduced to average members of the congregation, which, indeed, they eventually are.

The pastor, Mr. Maybold, campaigns to reform many of the church’s establishments, which culminates in his decision to do away with the choir. When the choir discuss what they think of the new vicar, all of their remarks center on the changes the vicar has made in church life. “The first thing” Mr. Maybold does as a vicar is “to be hot and strong about church business.”249 The use of exaggerated vocabulary such as “hot” and “strong” reveals the choir members’ impression that the vicar exhibits equally exaggerated interest in church business. Maybold’s next course of action is to “think about altering the church” until he realizes it’s “a matter o’ cost”and then “think[s] no more about it.”250 This line foreshadows the choir’s eventual replacement, since Maybold will forsake the choir for an organ. Finally, Maybold completely shirks prior tradition and visits his parishioners to converse with them, which the choir members consider “well-intending” but “unbearable.”251 Indeed, the members consider Maybold “far below” the vicar that came before

249 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 63.
250 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 63.
Maybold’s lack of respect for long-established tradition and his desire to do things the way that he wants to do them results in the choir being pushed aside.

Ultimately, as part of his reforms, Mr. Maybold decides to do away with the choir in favor of a modern organ. When the choir meets with him to discuss this change, he tells them, “when we introduce the organ, it will not be that fiddles were bad, but that an organ was better.” Maybold thereby states diplomatically that he finds the choir’s music insufficient for completing its duty of providing a melodic backdrop to religious proceedings.

This tension between long-standing tradition and modern update parallels the conflict between preservation and restoration. The choir, like ancient historical buildings for preservationists, contains a long history that spans many years. Because of this rich history and tradition, the choir, its members argue, should be preserved. Yet, like restorationists’ view of old buildings, Mr. Maybold sees the choir as deficient in completing its function of providing music for the congregation. For instance, during the Christmas morning mass, Mr. Maybold seems “cross” because the choir’s voices are “husky” and its instruments “twang.” Thus, the choir completes its job but not very well, and it is the choir’s functionality that is most important, not its ties to historic tradition. Instead, new, more modern technology, i.e. the organ, must replace the historically important choir in making music for the church.

When the choir finally relinquishes its role to Fancy and the organ, they are

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251 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 64.
252 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 64.
253 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 77.
254 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 40.
dissatisfied and cannot “help thinking that the simpler notes they had been wont to bring forth were more in keeping with the simplicity of their old church than the crowded chords and interludes it was her [Fancy’s] pleasure to produce.”

Hardy thereby connects the tradition of the choir singing with the preservation of the Mellstock church itself. Like restoration work that jars with a church’s original architectural style, Fancy and her modern organ do not fit with the humble space of the ancient church. She and her organ are anachronistic and incongruous, while the choir not only blends into the church space but also forms a part of that church’s long history.

The choir members feel so “awkward” and “out of place” when they are no longer seated in the gallery because they have been displaced from the space where they belong. Since the choir has been a tradition for so long, the seating of the choir members in the gallery has become yet another physical and crucial feature of the church, just as its windows and arches are. Indeed, the gallery contains much of the church’s knowledge and history. According to Hardy, “the gallery…looked down upon and knew the habits of the nave [where the rest of the congregation is seated] to its remotest peculiarity.”

The choir members in the gallery thereby record information on the people who populate and have populated the space, as well as the actions they perform. Moving the choir members to different parts of the church is a restorationist technique that destroys and confuses a part of the church’s features that are replete with history and tradition. The dissolution of the choir not only changes the church music, but also removes a crucial part of the church and its

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255 Hardy, *Greenwood Tree*, 150.
256 Hardy, *Greenwood Tree*, 150.
Hardy’s own restoration work exposed him to various instances of moving and moveable historical architecture. For instance, in his 1906 “Memories of Church Restoration,” Hardy recalls seeing a church’s wooden seats in a hotel tea-garden and a Ten Commandments plaque in a stonemason’s shed.\textsuperscript{258} The repurposing of these historical objects removes them from their relevant context and transforms them, as Hardy asserts, into materials that are “useless when once unfixed.”\textsuperscript{259} Once the historical objects are no longer enmeshed within the historically rich church that surrounded them, the loss of context converts the objects into novelties that merely serve to enhance a space’s decoration. As soon as the objects become novelties, they are no longer valued because they are now old-fashioned and obsolete, much like Mellstock’s increasingly under-valued choir.

Hardy especially stresses that moving a building deprives it of its profound emotional meaning. In his “Memories of Church Restoration,” Hardy relays the story of a pair of brothers who return to their childhood church after a long absence, only to argue over where their family pew is now located. One swears that it was located by an arch with “zigzag moulding,” located in the church’s north aisle, which he had studied every Sunday as a child.\textsuperscript{260} The other brother insists that the pew was located in the church’s nave.\textsuperscript{261} Unfortunately, neither brother is correct, since, as Hardy realizes, the arch with zigzag molding had been moved into the church’s north aisle.

\textsuperscript{257} Hardy, \textit{Greenwood Tree}, 39.
\textsuperscript{258} Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 74.
\textsuperscript{259} Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 74.
\textsuperscript{260} Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 74.
\textsuperscript{261} Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 74.
in order to make room for a new chancel-arch. This relocation clearly perturbs one of the brothers, who Hardy quotes as remarking, “Then I’m drowned if I’ll ever come into the paltry church again, after having such a trick played upon me.”

This seemingly quaint anecdote expresses the preservationist view of architecture as emotionally meaningful. Restoration is more than simply reworking a building’s older architecture into more modern, useful architecture or erasing part of a building’s rich historic past. It also involves destroying a building’s emotional associations. In moving the arch, the church restorer created a seismic change for the man expecting to be able to relive an important portion of his childhood. Instead, the misplaced arch renders the church space unendurable to the brother. His insistence that the movement of the arch is a “trick” emphasizes the notion that this transportation of the arch is dishonest and false. Thus, restoration presents more than a counterpoint to preservation arguments. Restoration, at least as Hardy portrays it, is a moral issue that causes emotional distress when it is carried out.

Similarly, the movement of the Mellstock choir members from the gallery into the pews of the church renders the members both useless and emotionally distressed. Not only are the members “awkward” and “out of place,” but they are also “abashed” and “inconvenienced by their hands.” Had the members still been singing in the choir, they would be using their hands to hold their music books or to play their instruments. Yet, now that their hands have been “unfixed” from their former musical role, they no longer serve a purpose. Therefore, the choir members’ bodies have become disposable and dispersible. The choir members have become the

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262 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 74.
263 Hardy, “Memories of Church Restoration,” 74.
“useless ones” that they were once so wary of becoming. Additionally, like the brother who is emotionally perturbed that the arch was moved, the choir members suffer emotional discomfort now that they have been displaced from the gallery. The members are ashamed and embarrassed that they are no longer in their proper place, just as the arch with zigzag molding is no longer in its correct location.

The choir members should thereby become speaking, personified architecture capable of expressing its distress at being relocated. Unlike the arch, which has no way to express how it feels about being moved to the north aisle, the choir members should be able to voice their unease at no longer being located in the gallery. Unfortunately, since Hardy never returns to the issue of the choir after this point in the novel, the choir members are never able to fully express how they feel about their transformation. Even though the choir members are not the physical, non-speaking architecture of arches and windows, they are equally deprived of their opportunity to express, in their own words, how transformation has emotionally impacted them. Ultimately, the choir members can only have their discomfort portrayed through a narrator. Hardy thereby uses the displacement of the choir members to relay just how perturbing relocation, and, by extension, restoration, of architecture can be.

Although Under the Greenwood Tree may not seem to relate to Hardy’s architectural interests, the tension between restoration and preservation appears thematically in the conflict between the old, traditional choir and the modern organ. In keeping the choir, Mr. Maybold would have preserved the historical integrity of a long-standing institution as well as preserved an important physical aspect of the church. By choosing to replace the choir with the organ, however, Maybold

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264 Hardy, Greenwood Tree, 150.
embraces the restorationist principle that an object’s history is not what is most important. Instead, the object must discharge a particular function, and, in that case, the organ presents the better option. Maybold thereby selects superficiality and aesthetic over deep meaning and emotion. The organ may look and sound better, thus discharging its function better, but, as Hardy would argue, function is not the most important consideration when dealing with history and tradition.

Instead, the priceless emotions and human connections associated with the choir should be valued above all else. The church’s music does not just accompany a religious ritual. When the choir performs the music, the oft-sung hymns convey Mellstock’s rich history and tradition, however imperfectly the voices that produce the music may be singing. Contrastingly, when the organ produces the music, the music may be melodious and more correct in a musical sense, but it lacks the emotion and history that the choir brings to its every performance.

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One of the most crucial distinctions between preservation and restoration for Hardy is the issue of continuity between the past and the present. Whereas preservation establishes a direct continuation from the past to the present, such that the past history of a building becomes a part of its present, restoration’s relationship to the past and present is much more complicated. In restoration, the past no longer connects directly to the present because the past has been replaced by the present, thereby reorienting a building’s focus to its present. While the value preservationists find in the past is imperative for maintaining historical buildings’ integrity, for humans like Hardy’s characters in The Woodlanders, valuing the past is only useful if it does not impede one’s present and future.
*The Woodlanders* relays the story of Grace Melbury and her struggle between two very different suitors. Grace’s father pays for an expensive education that he presumes will elevate her above the country lifestyle of her childhood. Yet, Grace has been promised for years to Giles Winterbourne, a kind, honest woodsman, in order to redress Mr. Melbury’s wronging of Giles’s father. At the same time, Edred Fitzpiers is a well-educated, worldly young doctor who has just moved into the neighborhood. Grace and Fitzpiers become infatuated and marry, but when Fitzpiers commits repeated infidelities towards Grace, Grace turns to Giles for comfort and conducts an emotional affair with him. However, once Giles dies, Grace returns to Fitzpiers, since she cannot resist her attraction to him.

Hardy’s description of the Melbury home explores the coexistence of past and present. The home is described as follows:

> It was a dwelling-house of respectable, roomy, almost dignified aspect, which, taken with the fact that there were the remains of other such buildings hereabout, indicated that Little Hintock had at some time or other been of greater importance than now, as its old name of Hintock St. Osmond also testified. The house was of no marked antiquity; yet of well-advanced age; older than a stale novelty, but no canonized antique; faded, not hoary; looking at you from the still distinct middle-distance of the early Georgian time, and awakening on that account the instincts of reminiscence more decidedly than the remoter, and far grander, memorials which have to speak from the misty reaches of mediaevalism. The faces, dress, passions, gratitudes, and revenges of the great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers who had been the first to gaze from those rectangular windows, and had stood under that keystoned doorway, could be divined and measured by homely standards of to-day. It was a house in whose
reverberations queer old personal tales were yet audible if properly listened for; and not, as with those of the castle and cloister, silent beyond the possibility of echo.265

The Melbury home is a souvenir of the past, yet this is a past that is not yet too distant. Whereas medieval buildings are “silent” and no longer capable of sharing their histories, this home, which is from the Georgian period, can still share the “personal tales” of the “great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers” who once lived within its walls. Thus, the Melbury home is haunted by and full of the stories of its past. More than that, the home’s history can be made visible and audible to its current occupants, thereby turning the building into a living being capable of actively relaying its past. Like the church in Under the Greenwood Tree, the Melbury home not only records more sober historical facts like “dress” but also retains the emotions, such as “passions,” “gratitudes,” and “revenges,” that have been associated with the building. The Melbury home is so replete with reminders of the past that it has transported that past into the present, where the two time periods coexist. The Melbury home combines the past and present in a prime example of preservationist ideology.

On the other hand, human characters value the past over the present, leading them into difficult moral issues that challenge the usefulness of valuing the past too highly. Arguably the novel’s most moral character, Giles Winterbourne represents the only main character who consistently values the past. The other three main characters, Edred Fitzpiers, Mr. Melbury, and Grace Melbury, all vacillate. Yet, for all four characters, the moments where they value the past too much lead them into

moral quandaries which cause them to commit questionably moral deeds. Hardy criticizes humans’ overvaluing of the past in their own lives as an impediment for the present and the future.

Giles Winterbourne’s blind devotion to Grace Melbury leads him to overlook Marty South’s love for him and results in his death, suggesting that valuing the past too much creates negative consequences. Giles loves Grace so much that “he adores the very ground she walks on.”266 Indeed, when Mr. Melbury sees how “attached” Giles is to Grace, he plans to right a wrong toward Giles’s father by having Giles marry Grace.267 This worship of Grace has continued from a very young age and causes Giles to overlook the affections of Marty South. When Marty speaks of Giles and Grace, “a redness” comes into her face that tells how Grace had been “the wreck of poor Marty’s hopes.”268 Even after Giles dies, Marty continues to visit his grave, and the novel ends with her whispering to Giles’s tomb that she “never can forget” Giles, as he is her “own own love.”269 Ultimately, Marty is Giles’s “true complement in the other sex.”270 Giles’s blind devotion to Grace causes him to ignore the pure, faithful love of Marty. Even when Grace marries Fitzpiers, Giles keeps pining for her and still does not acknowledge Marty’s love for him. Giles’s overvaluing of his past love for Grace that allows it to continue into the present results in a lost opportunity for happiness with Marty. Whereas with buildings the past is an unavoidable and necessary part of the present, here, the past prevents Giles from achieving present and future happiness.

266 Hardy, *Woodlanders*, 18.
Additionally, Giles’s undying devotion to Grace results in his death, suggesting the folly of humanity’s treasuring the past too much. Grace at last decides to return Giles’s affections and attempts to extricate herself from her marriage to Fitzpiers. When Giles and Grace attempt to run away together, they spend the night at Giles’s hut. Giles, however, surrenders his house to Grace, declaring, “this house from this moment is yours, and not mine… I have a place near by where I can stay very well.”

Unfortunately, Giles has had a “feverish indisposition” for some time, and the place where he sleeps apart from Grace is a “wretched little shelter of the roughest kind, formed of four hurdles thatched with brake-fern.” This weakness in Giles’s immune system, coupled with the cruelty of the elements, leads Giles to become even more ill, which eventually results in his death. Giles’s faith in the past and his love for Grace is so powerful that it eradicates his common sense and causes his demise. By relying too much on the past, Giles ignores the potential for a faithful, loving partner in Marty South and abandons rationality so completely that he causes his own death. Focusing on the past ruins Giles’s future, since he loses a possible marriage with Marty, and his present, since he wrecks his health and causes his death.

The past also negatively impacts the present in Mr. Melbury’s fixation on righting the past. Initially, after she has returned from receiving her cosmopolitan education, Grace and her family reject Giles’s suit because he is not sophisticated enough to meet her now more worldly standards. Mr. Melbury originally

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273 Hardy, *Woodlanders*, 304.
orchestrated a potential match between Grace and Giles as recompense for having wronged Giles’s father. Yet, since he knows that he has lavished so much money upon Grace’s education, Melbury feels torn about giving Grace away to Giles. Just before Grace returns home, Melbury remarks to his wife, “since I have educated her so well, and so long, and so far above the level of the daughters hereabout, it is wasting her to give her to a man of no higher standing than he…I feel I am sacrificing her for my own sin…why should she be sacrificed to a poor man?”274 Then, after meeting with Giles to enlist him to meet Grace and bring her home, Melbury laments as he watches Giles walk away, “‘tis a pity to let such a girl throw herself away upon him…and yet ‘tis my duty, for his father’s sake.”275

Melbury feels bound to his past history, which manifests itself in guilt when he must use his own daughter to satisfy past wrongs. Even though, as Melbury’s wife remarks, Giles “is in love” with Grace and is “honest and upright,” these qualities cannot supplant the snobbery that has come with Grace’s more elevated education.276 Before Grace’s education, Melbury was perfectly content to give his daughter away to a good man of the country, but because Grace has been socially elevated, Giles is no longer good enough for her. Melbury worries that his desire to rectify his past mistakes will derail the progress Grace has made, and his guilt stems from the strangeness of having the children correct their fathers’ sins. Melbury exemplifies how over-fixation on the past leads to wrong notions about the present and future.

Melbury wrongly prizes the past over the present in his emphasis on Fitzpiers’s family pedigree. Fitzpiers belongs to a “very old family…the Fitzpierses

274 Hardy, Woodlanders, 18-9.
275 Hardy, Woodlanders, 33.
of Buckbury-Fitzpiers. Yet, this connection to an aristocratic family is only in name. When Fitzpiers speaks to Melbury about potentially marrying Grace, Melbury reflects that the “smallness of [Fitzpiers’s] practice was more than compensated by the former greatness of his family.” Melbury bases his elevated impression of Fitzpiers upon blood alone and wrongly values a distant and irrelevant past over a more concrete present. Furthermore, Melbury’s choice to prioritize the past over the present results in his daughter’s marriage to an unfaithful man, while the man who has always loved her continues to be faithful. Ultimately, Melbury not only overvalues Fitzpiers’s past, but he also values the wrong kind of past, since he appreciates Fitzpiers’s noble pedigree over Giles’s consistent devotion to Grace. Even though Melbury eventually encourages Grace to return Giles’s affections, it is only after she has already married Fitzpiers. Melbury’s vacillations among valuing different pasts reflect his moral instability and imply that over-valuing the past can destroy present and future prospects.

Similarly, Fitzpiers prioritizes rekindling his past relationship with Mrs. Charmond over cultivating his marriage to Grace, which destroys his present and future. Although married to Grace, Fitzpiers begins an affair with Mrs. Charmond when he realizes that she is a woman from his past. At first, Fitzpiers does not recognize her, but when she mentions that they met briefly when he was “studying in Heidelberg,” Fitzpiers remembers her as “the young lady who wore a long tail of rare-coloured hair” with whom he spoke for “very long” and whose lost gloves he

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“kissed” upon finding. Fitzpiers describes his feelings about the encounter as a “colossal passion in embryo,” indicating his impression that the romance was prematurely terminated. Mrs. Charmond and Fitzpiers’s flirtation would have become more than mere young love had he been provided with the opportunity to continue it. Indeed, Fitzpiers muses that “the intersection of his temporal orbit with Mrs. Charmond’s for a day or two in the past had created a sentimental interest in her at the time…to find her here, however, in these somewhat romantic circumstances, magnified that bygone and transitory tenderness to indescribable proportions.”

Returning to the past after a long absence from it reignites and augments Fitzpiers’s passion for Mrs. Charmond. After Fitzpiers visits Mrs. Charmond a few more times, “the two or three days that they had spent in tender acquaintance on the romantic slope above the Neckar were stretched out in retrospect to the length and importance of years; made to form a canvas for infinite fancies, idle dreams.” The more Fitzpiers interacts with elements of the past, the more the past’s importance expands for him and the more it seems to bear upon his present. The reignition of Fitzpiers’s and Mrs. Charmond’s relationship is hyper-preservationist because not only do the past and present coexist, but the past also controls the present. Mrs. Charmond, a part of Fitzpiers’s past, draws Fitzpiers away from Grace, his present, in order to become Fitzpiers’s present once again. Fitzpiers’s revival of the past ultimately jeopardizes the present and future of his marriage.

Finally, Grace’s shifting values between past and present destroy her past and

279 Hardy, *Woodlanders*, 188.
280 Hardy, *Woodlanders*, 189.
negatively impact her present and future. Giles is frequently referred to as Grace’s “old friend” throughout the text. When Giles and Grace argue as he is conveying her home to her parents, she states that “she would not argue with an old friend she valued so highly as she valued him.”283 Later on in the text, an interaction with Giles is described as “her encounter with her old friend.”284 While Grace clearly appreciates her past with Giles, she misunderstands it as a platonic relationship. This initial misunderstanding about her relationship with Giles leads her to marry Fitzpiers. When she realizes her romantic feelings for Giles, it is too late, and his love for her leads him to sacrifice himself for her reputation, which results in his death. Grace’s vacillation between the past and present destroys her past, that is, Giles, as well as creates an unhappy present, in which she is wed to an unfaithful Fitzpiers.

Grace’s overvaluing of what has now become her past with Fitzpiers ultimately distracts her from her past with Giles, resulting in a precarious future for her and her marriage. After Giles dies, Grace is reconciled with Fitzpiers when she is caught in a man-trap and Fitzpiers rescues her. When her father discovers her at the hotel where she has been staying with Fitzpiers, he asks if she is “coming home with” him, to which Grace responds by “blushing” and responding in the negative.285 Later, one of the villagers remarks that Grace has “got Fitzpiers] quite tame. But how long t’will last” is unclear.”286 Based on Fitzpiers’s past dalliances and this ominous

283 Hardy, *Woodlanders*, 43.
284 Hardy, *Woodlanders*, 178.
prediction, Grace will not experience a happy marriage in her future. Yet, Grace values her recent past with Fitzpiers over a future apart from him where she could be free and happy.

This reconciliation with Fitzpiers leads Grace to forget her affection for Giles. Marty waits for Grace on the day “which Grace and herself had been accustomed to privately deposit flowers on Giles’s grave,” but this week, there is “no Grace” and Marty concludes that “she has forgot” Giles. Like her father, Grace values the wrong part of her past. Instead of appreciating the love and loyalty she obtained from Giles, Grace chooses her past marriage, even though it is based on deceit and disloyalty. Her marriage will continue to be marred by disloyalty, which is mirrored by her own disloyalty to Giles’s memory. One part of the past ultimately destroys another part, as well as the future.

This portrayal of the past as limiting may also point to Hardy’s struggle between restoration and preservation. Even though he had joined the SPAB in 1881, Hardy embarked on the restoration of West Knighton church in 1893, complicating his many public denouncements of the restoration technique. Perhaps Hardy’s earliest public statement against restoration came in 1878 in a biographical sketch of his life, in which he wrote that he “under color of restoring and renovating for a good cause was instrumental in obliterating many valuable records in stone of the history of quiet rural parishes, much to his regret in later years.” Under the Greenwood Tree was published in 1872, the year Hardy’s architectural career officially ended. The destructiveness of restoration would have been fresh in Hardy’s mind, suggesting

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287 Hardy, Woodlanders, 366-7.
288 qtd. in Millgate, Hardy’s Public Voice, 12.
why the novel seems to advocate preservation so strongly. Similarly, *Far from the Madding Crowd* was published in 1874, also relatively close to the end of Hardy’s architectural career. *The Woodlanders*, on the other hand, was published in 1887, some years after the end of Hardy’s architectural career and a few years before he would complete the West Knighton restoration. Additionally, as a member of the SPAB at the time, Hardy would have constantly considered issues of the relationship between the past and present. Perhaps this intermediary stage of Hardy’s work with architecture explains why Hardy does not unequivocally support the past over the present.

Unlike in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, where the past is related to buildings, *The Woodlanders*’ portrayal of humanity’s experience with the past transforms the past into something that limits. In *Under The Greenwood Tree*, the choir’s past involves history, memories, and emotions that all relate to the physical church building. Even though the choir is comprised of humans, the past that relates to them is centered around the church building. In *The Woodlanders*, there is no singular building around which the past is centered. Each character is left to deal with his or her individual past, and none of them can move beyond it. Instead of growing and progressing, each character is trapped in a cycle of repeating or relying on their past. In these ways, *The Woodlanders* evinces the limits of preservationist ideology. While emphasis on the past may be valuable for buildings, it is destructive for humans.

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All three of these Hardy novels grapple with some particular aspect of preservationist ideology. Whether it is the human connections that are attached to and created within an architectural space or the limits of prizing the past, particularly
regarding humans, all three novels support Hardy’s definition of preservation in his speech to the SPAB. Preservation’s import reaches beyond the physical building and into the realm of human emotions, memories, ideas, and relationships. It is no wonder then, that Hardy’s exploration of human stories in his novels also supports the use of preservation in architecture.
CONCLUSION

In the Victorian debate between restoration and preservation, Thomas Hardy ultimately chose preservation. Why? Perhaps it was the restoration of his beloved Stinsford Church, which he could never see in its original state but could only recreate fictively as Mellstock Church in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, which drove him away from what he considered a destructive technique. The restoration of St. Juliot, the church where he met his first wife, may have perturbed him with its many alterations to the place that held so many memories. Maybe the various restorations of which he was part in his work for John Hicks, Arthur Blomfield, and G.R.Crickmay revealed the limitations of a practice that, as Hardy eventually concluded, undervalued history, emotional connections, and memories attached to an architectural space. If Hardy was so against preservation, as he declares in his 1906 “Memories of Church Restoration and in his previous accounts of his work for Hicks, why, then, did he restore the church of West Knighton? Although we may never gain a definitive answer, Hardy’s relationship to restoration and preservation was certainly complicated. Much like his path from architecture to literature, his shift from restoration to preservation was nonlinear and complex.

Yet, in Hardy’s *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *Under the Greenwood Tree*, he upholds the virtues of preservation. In *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *Under the Greenwood Tree*, architectural spaces are linked closely to human interactions, particularly history, friendships, emotions, and memories. Yet, *The Woodlanders* complicates the notion of preservation. Without a central architectural space, the characters’ focus on the past becomes a limitation rather than an asset. While the details of Hardy’s life may belie a straightforwardly preservationist
viewpoint, *Far from the Madding Crowd, Under the Greenwood Tree*, and *The Woodlanders* showcase clearly preservationist themes. In a way, Hardy’s career was in architecture after all.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

Thomas Hardy’s “Memories of Church Restoration” (1906)

A melancholy reflection may have occurred to many people whose interests lie in the study of Gothic architecture. The passion for restoration first became vigorously operative, say, three-quarters of a century ago; and if all the mediaeval buildings in England had been left as they stood at that date, to incur whatever dilapidations might have befallen them at the hands of time, weather, and general neglect, this country would be richer in specimens to-day than it finds itself to be after the expenditure of millions in a nominal preservation during that period.

Active destruction under saving names has been effected upon so gigantic a scale that the concurrent protection of old structures, or portions of structures, by their being kept wind- and water-proof amid such operations counts as nothing in the balance. Its enormous magnitude is realized by few who have not gone personally from parish to parish through a considerable district, and compared existing churches there with records, traditions, and memories of what they formerly were.

But the unhappy fact is nowadays generally admitted, and it would hardly be worth advertising to on this occasion if what is additionally assumed were also true, or approximately true: that we are wiser with experience, that architects, incumbents, churchwardens, and all concerned, are zealous to act conservatively by such few of these buildings as still remain untinkered, that they desire at last to repair as far as possible the errors of their predecessors, and to do anything but repeat them.

Such an assumption is not borne out by events. As it was in the days of Scott the First and Scott the Second—Sir Walter and Sir Gilbert—so it is at this day on a
smaller scale. True it may be that our more intelligent architects now know the better way, and that damage is largely limited to minor buildings and to obscure places. But continue as it does, despite the efforts of this Society; nor does it seem ever likely to stop till all tampering with chronicles in stone be forbidden by law, and all operations bearing on their repair be permitted only under the eyes of properly qualified inspectors.

At first sight it seems an easy matter to preserve an old building without hurting its character. Let nobody form an opinion on that point who has never had an old building to preserve.

In respect of an ancient church, the difficulty we encounter on the threshold, and one which besets us at every turn, is the fact that the building is beheld in two contradictory lights, and required for two incompatible purposes. To the incumbent the church is a workshop; to the antiquary it is a relic. To the parish it is a utility; to the outsider a luxury. How unite these incompatibilities? A utilitarian machine has naturally to be kept going, so that it may continue to discharge its original functions; an antiquarian specimen has to be preserved without making good even its worst deficiencies. The quaintly carved seat that a touch will damage has to be sat in, the frameless doors with the queer old locks and hinges will have to keep out draughts, the bells whose shaking endangers the graceful steeple have to be rung.

If the ruinous church could be enclosed in a crystal palace, covering it to the weathercock from rain and wind, and a new church be built alongside for services (assuming the parish to retain sufficient earnest-mindedness to desire them), the method would be an ideal one. But even a parish composed of opulent members of
this society would be staggered by such an undertaking. No: all that can be done is of
the nature of compromise. It is not within the scope of this paper to inquire how such
compromises between users and musers may best be carried out, and how
supervision, by those who really know, can best be ensured when wear and tear and
the attacks of weather make interference unhappily unavoidable. Those who are
better acquainted than I am with the possibilities of such cases can write thereon, and
have, indeed, already done so for many years past. All that I am able to do is to look
back in a contrite spirit at my own brief experience as a church-restorer, and, by
recalling instances of the drastic treatment we then dealt out with light hearts to the
unlucky fanes that fell into our hands, possibly help to prevent its repetition on the
few yet left untouched.

The policy of thorough in these proceedings was always, of course, that in
which the old church was boldly pulled down from no genuine necessity, but from a
wanton wish to erect a more modish one. Instances of such I pass over in sad silence.
Akin thereto was the case in which a church exhibiting two or three styles was made
uniform by removing the features of all but one style, and imitating that throughout in
new work. Such devastations need hardly be dwelt on now. Except in the most
barbarous recesses of our counties they are past. Their name alone is their
condemnation.

The shifting of old windows, and other details irregularly spaced, and spacing
them at exact distances, was an analogous process. The deportation of the original
chancel-arch to an obscure nook, and the insertion of a wider new one to throw open
the view of the choir, was also a practice much favored, and is by no means now
extinct. In passing through a village less than five years ago the present writer paused a few minutes to look at the church, and on reaching the door heard quarrelling within. The voices were discovered to be those of two men—brothers, I regret to state—who after an absence of many years had just returned to their native place to attend their father’s funeral. The dispute was as to where the family pew had stood in their younger days. One swore that it was in the north aisle, adducing as proof his positive recollection of studying Sunday after Sunday the zigzag moulding of the arch before his eyes, which now visibly led from that aisle into the north transept. The other was equally positive that the pew had been in the nave. As the altercation grew sharper an explanation of the puzzle occurred to me, and I suggested that the old Norman arch we were looking at might have been the original chancel-arch, banished into the aisle to make room for the straddling new object in its place. Then one of the pair of natives remembered that a report of such a restoration had reached his ears afar, and the family peace was preserved, though not till the other had said, “Then I’m drowned if I’ll ever come into the paltry church again, after having such a trick played upon me.”

Many puzzling questions are to be explained by these shiftings, and particularly in the case of monuments, whose transposition sometimes led to quaint results. The chancel of a church not a hundred and fifty miles from London has, I am told, in one corner a vault containing a fashionable actor and his wife, in another corner a vault inclosing the remains of a former venerable vicar who abjured women and died a bachelor. The mural tablets, each over its own vault, were taken down at the refurbishing of the building, and refixed reversely, the stone of the theatrical
couple over the solitary divine, and that of the latter over the pair from the stage. Should disinterment ever take place, which is not unlikely nowadays, the excavators will be surprised to find a lady beside the supposed reverend bachelor, and the supposed actor without his wife. As the latter was a comedian he would probably enjoy the situation if he could know it, though the vicar’s feelings might be somewhat different.

Such facetious carelessness is not peculiar to our own country. It may be remembered that when Mrs. Shelley wished to exhume her little boy William, who had been buried in the English cemetery at Rome, with the view of placing his body beside his father’s ashes, no coffin was found beneath the boy’s headstone, and she could not carry out her affectionate wish.

This game of Monumental Puss-in-the-Corner, even when the outcome of no blundering, and where reasons can be pleaded on artistic or other grounds, is, indeed, an unpleasant subject of contemplation by those who maintain the inviolability of records. Instances of such in London churches will occur to everybody. One would like to know if any note has been kept of the original position of Milton’s monument in Cripplegate Church, which has been moved more than once, I believe, and if the position of his rifled grave is now known. When I first saw the monument it stood near the east and of the south aisle.

Sherborne Abbey affords an example on a large scale of the banishment of memorials of the dead, to the doubtful advantage of the living. To many of us the human interest in an edifice ranks before its architectural interest, however great the latter may be; and to find that the innumerable monuments erected in that long-
suffering building are all huddled away into the vestry is, at least from my point of view, a heavy mental payment for the clear nave and aisles. If the inscriptions could be read the harm would perhaps be less, but to read them is impossible without ladders, so that these plaintive records are lost to human notice. Many of the recorded ones, perhaps, deserve to be forgotten; but who shall judge?

And unhappily it was oftenest of all the headstones of the poorer inhabitants—purchased and erected in many cases out of scanty means—that suffered most in these ravages. It is scarcely necessary to particularize among the innumerable instances in which headstones have been removed from their positions, the churchyard levelled, and the stones used for paving the churchyard walks, with the result that the inscriptions have been trodden out in a few years.

Next in harm to the re-designing of old buildings and parts of them came the devastations caused by letting restorations by contract, with a clause in the specification requesting the builder to give a price for “old materials”—the most important of these being the lead of the roofs, which was to be replaced by tiles or slate, and the oak of the pews, pulpit, altar-rails, &c., to be replaced by deal. This terrible custom is, I should suppose, discontinued in these days. Under it the builder was directly incited to destroy as much as possible of the old fabric as had intrinsic value, that he might increase the spoil which was to come to him for a fixed deduction from his contract. Brasses have marvelously disappeared at such times, heavy brass chandeliers, marble tablets, oak carving of all sorts, leadwork above all.

But apart from irregularities it was always a principle that anything later than Henry VIII was Anathema, and to be cast out. At Wimborne Minster fine Jacobean
canopies were removed from Tudor stalls for the offence only of being Jacobean. At an hotel in Cornwall, a tea-garden was, and possibly is still, ornamented with seats constructed of the carved oak from a neighboring church—no doubt the restorer’s honest perquisite. Church relics turned up in unexpected places. I remember once going into the stonemason’s shed of a builder’s yard, where, on looking round, I started to see the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in gilt letters, staring emphatically from the sides of the shed. “Oh, yes,” said the builder, a highly respectable man, “I took ’em as old materials under my contract when I gutted St. Michaels and All Angels’, and I put ‘em here to keep out the weather: they might keep my blackguard hands serious at the same time; but they don’t.” A fair lady with a past was once heard to say that she could not go to morning service at a particular church because the parson read one of the Commandments with such accusatory emphasis: whether these that had become degraded to the condition of old materials were taken down owing to kindred objections one cannot know.

But many such old materials were, naturally, useless when once unfixed. Another churchwright whom I knew in early days was greatly incommoded by the quantity of rubbish that had accumulated during a restoration he had in hand, there being no place in the churchyard to which it could be wheeled. In the middle of the church was the huge vault of an ancient family supposed to be extinct, which had been broken into at one corner by the pickaxe of the restorers, and this vault was found to be a convenient receptacle for the troublesome refuse from the Ages. When a large number of barrow-loads had been tipped through the hole the laborer lifted his eyes to behold a tall figure standing between him and the light. “What are you doing,
my man?” said the figure blandly. “A getting rid of the rubbage, sir,” replied the laborer. “But why do you put it there?” “Because all the folks have died out, so it don’t matter what we do with their old bone cellar.” “Don’t you be too sure about the folks having died out. I am one of that family, and as I am very much alive, and that vault is my freehold, I’ll just ask you to take all the rubbish out again.” It was said that the speaker had by chance returned from America, where he had made a fortune, in the nick of time to witness this performance, and that the vault was duly cleared and sealed up as he ordered.

The “munificent contributor” to the expense of restoration was often the most fearful instigator of mischief. I may instance the case of a Transition-Norman pier with a group of shafts, the capitals of which showed signs of crushing under the weight of the arches. By taking great care it was found possible to retain the abacus and projecting parts supporting it, sculptured with the vigorous curled leaves of the period, only the diminishing parts, or the bell of each capital, being renewed. The day after the re-opening of the church the lady who had defrayed much of the expense complained to the contractor of his mean treatment of her in leaving half the old capitals when he should have behaved handsomely, and renewed the whole. To oblige her the carver chipped over the surface of the old carving, not only in that pier, but in all the piers, and made it look as good as new.

Poor forlorn parishes, which could not afford to pay a clerk of works to superintend the alterations, suffered badly in these ecclesiastical convulsions. During the years they were raging at their height I journeyed to a distant place to supervise a case, in the enforced absence of an older eye. The careful repair of an interesting
Early English window had been specified; but it was gone. The contractor, who had met me on the spot, replied genially to my gaze of concern: “Well now, I said to myself when I looked at the old thing, ‘I won’t stand upon a pound or two: I’ll give ‘em a new winder now I am about it, and make a good job of it, howsoever.’” A caricature in new stone of the old window had taken its place.

In the same church was an old oak rood-screen of debased Perpendicular workmanship, but valuable, the original coloring and gilding, though much faded, still remaining on the cusps and mouldings. The repairs deemed necessary had been duly specified, but I beheld in its place a new screen of deal, varnished to a mirror-like brilliancy. “Well,” replied the builder, more genially than ever, “I said to myself, ‘Please God, now I am about it, I’ll do the thing well, cost what it will!’” “Where’s the old screen?” I said, appalled. “Used up to boil the workmen’s kittles; though ‘a were not much at that!”

The reason for consternation lay in the fact that the bishop—a strict Protestant—had promulgated a decree concerning rood-screens—viz., that though those in existence might be repaired, no new one would be suffered in his diocese for doctrinal reasons. This the builder knew nothing of. What was to be done at the reopening, when the bishop was to be present, and would notice the forbidden thing? I had to decide there and then, and resolved to trust to chance and see what happened. On the day of the opening we anxiously watched the bishop’s approach, and I fancied I detected a lurid glare in his eye as it fell upon the illicit rood-screen. But he walked quite innocently under it without noticing that it was not the original. If he noticed it during the service he was politic enough to say nothing.
I might dwell upon the mistakes of architects as well as of builders if there were time. That architects the most experienced could be cheated to regard an accident of churchwardenry as high artistic purpose, was revealed to a body of architectural students, of which the present writer was one, when they were taken over Westminster Abbey in a peripatetic lecture by Sir Gilbert Scott. He, at the top of the ladder, was bringing to our notice a feature which had, he said, perplexed him for a long time: why the surface of diapered stone before him should suddenly be discontinued at the spot he pointed out, when there was every reason for carrying it on. Possibly the artist had decided that to break the surface was a mistake; possibly he had died; possibly anything; but there the mystery was. “Perhaps it is only plastered over!” broke forth in the reedy voice of the youngest pupil in our group.

“Well, that’s what I never thought of,” replied Sir Gilbert, and taking from his pocket a clasp knife which he carried for such purposes, he prodded the plain surface with it. “Yes, it is plastered over, and all my theories are wasted,” he continued, descending the ladder not without humility.

My knowledge at first hand of the conditions of church-repair at the present moment is very limited. But one or two prevalent abuses have come by accident under my notice. The first concerns the rehanging of church bells. A barbarous practice is, I believe, very general, that of cutting off the cannon of each bell—namely, the loop on the crown by which it has been strapped to the stock—and restrapping it by means of holes cut through the crown itself. The mutilation is sanctioned on the ground that, by so fixing it, the centre of the bell’s gravity is brought nearer to the axis on which it swings, with advantage and ease to the ringing.
I do not question the truth of this; yet the resources of mechanics are not so exhausted but that the same result may be obtained by leaving the bell unmutilated and increasing the camber of the stock, which, for that matter, might be so great as nearly to reach a right angle. I was recently passing through a churchyard where I saw standing on the grass a peal of bells just taken down from the adjacent tower and subjected to this treatment. A sight more piteous than that presented by these fine bells, standing disfigured in a row in the sunshine, like cropped criminals in the pillory, as it were ashamed of their degradation, I have never witnessed among inanimate things.

Speaking of bells, I should like to ask cursorily why the old sets of chimes have been removed from nearly all our country churches. The midnight wayfarer, in passing along the sleeping village or town, was cheered by the outburst of a stumbling tune, which possessed the added charm of being probably heeded by no ear but his own. Or, when lying awake in sickness, the denizen would catch the same notes, persuading him that all was right with the world. But one may go half across England and hear no chimes at midnight now.

I may here mention a singular incident in respect of a new peal of bells, at a church whose rebuilding I was privy to, which occurred on the opening day many years ago. It being a popular and fashionable occasion, the church was packed with its congregation long before the bells rang out for service. When the ringers seized the ropes, a noise more deafening than thunder resounded from the tower in the ears of the sitters. Terrified at the idea that the tower was falling they rushed out at the door, ringers included, into the arms of the astonished bishop and clergy, advancing,
so it was said, in procession up the churchyard path, some of the ladies being in a fainting state. When calmness was restored by the sight of the tower standing unmoved as usual, it was discovered that the six bells had been placed “in stay”—that is, in an inverted position ready for the ringing, but in the hurry of preparation the clappers had been laid inside though not fastened on, and at the first swing of the bells they had fallen out upon the belfry floor.

After this digression I return to one other abuse of ecclesiastical fabrics, that arising from the fixing of Christmas decorations. The battalion of young ladies to whom the decking with holly and ivy is usually entrusted, seem to be possessed with a fixed idea that nails may be driven not only into old oak and into the joints of the masonry, but into the freestone itself if you only hit hard enough. Many observers must have noticed the mischief wrought by these nails. I lately found a fifteenth-century arch to have suffered more damage during the last twenty years from this cause than during the previous five hundred of its existence. The pock-marked surface of many old oak pulpits is entirely the effect of the numberless tin-tacks driven into them for the same purpose.

Such abuses as these, however, are gross, open, palpable, and easy to be checked. Far more subtle and elusive ones await our concluding consideration, which I will rapidly enter on now. Persons who have mused upon the safeguarding of our old architecture must have indulged in a reflection which, at first sight, seems altogether to give away the argument for its material preservation. The reflection is that, abstractly, there is everything to be said in favor of church renovation—if that really means the honest reproduction of old shapes in substituted materials. And this
too, not merely when the old materials are perishing, but when they are only approaching decay.

It is easy to show that the essence and soul of an architectural monument does not lie in the particular blocks of stone or timber that compose it, but in the mere form to which those materials have been shaped. We discern in a moment that it is in the boundary of a solid—its insubstantial superficies or mould—and in the solid itself, that its right lies to exist as art. The whole quality of Gothic or other architecture—let it be a cathedral, a spire, a window, or what not—attaches to this, and not to the substantial erection which it appears exclusively to consist in. Those limstones or sandstones have passed into its form; yet it is an idea independent of them—an aesthetic phantom without solidity, which might just as suitably have chosen millions of other stones from the quarry thereon to display its beauties. Such perfect results of art as the aspect of Salisbury Cathedral from the northeast corner of the Close, the interior of Henry VII’s Chapel at Westminster, the East Window of Merton Chapel, Oxford, would be no less perfect if at this moment, by the wand of some magician, other similar materials could be conjured into their shapes, and the old substance be made to vanish for ever.

This is, indeed, the actual process of organic nature herself, which is one continuous substitution. She is always discarding the matter, while retaining the form.

Why this reasoning does not hold good for a dead art, why the existence and efforts of this Society are so amply justifiable, lies in two other attributes of bygone Gothic artistry—a material and a spiritual one. The first is uniqueness; such a
duplicate as we have been considering can never be executed. No man can make two pieces of matter exactly alike. But not to shelter the argument behind microscopic niceties, or to imagine what approximation might be effected by processes so costly as to be prohibitive, it is found in practice that even such an easily copied shape as, say, a traceried widow does not get truly reproduced. The old form inherits, or has acquired, an indefinable quality—possibly some deviation from exact geometry (curves were often struck by hand in mediaeval work)—which never reappears in the copy, especially in the vast majority of cases where no nice approximation is attempted.

The second, or spiritual, attribute which stultifies the would-be reproducer is perhaps more important still, and is not artistic at all. It lies in human association. The influence that a building like Lincoln or Winchester exercises on a person of average impressionableness and culture is a compound influence, and though it would be a fanciful attempt to define how many fractions of that compound are aesthetic, and how many associative, there can be no doubt that the latter influence is more valuable than the former. Some may be of a different opinion, but I think the damage done to this sentiment of association by replacement, by the rupture of continuity, is mainly what makes the enormous loss this country has sustained from its seventy years of church restoration so tragic and deplorable. The protection of an ancient edifice against renewal in fresh materials is, in fact, even more of a social—I may say a humane—duty than an aesthetic one. It is the preservation of memories, history, fellowships, fraternities. Life, after all, is more than art, and that which appealed to us in the (maybe) clumsy outlines of some structure which had been looked at and
entered by a dozen generations of ancestors outweighs the more subtle recognition, if any, of architectural qualities. The renewed stones at Hereford, Peterborough, Salisbury, St. Albans, Wells, and so many other places, are not the stones that witnessed the scenes in English Chronicle associated with those piles. They are the stones over whose face the organ notes of centuries “lingered and wandered on as loth to die,” and the fact that they are not, too often results in spreading abroad the feeling I instanced in the anecdote of the two brothers.

Moreover, by a curious irony, the parts of a church that have suffered the most complete obliteration are those of the closest personal relation—the woodwork, especially that of the oak pews of various Georgian dates, with their skillful panellings, of which not a joint had started, and mouldings become so hard as to turn the edge of a knife. The deal benches with which these cunningly mitred and morticed framings have been largely replaced have already, in many cases, fallen into decay.

But not all pewing was of oak, not all stonework and roof timbers were sound, when the renovstors of the late century laid hands on them; and this leads back again to the standing practical question of bewildering difficulty which faces the protectors of Ancient Buildings—what is to be done in instances of rapid decay to prevent the entire disappearance of such as yet exists? Shall we allow it to remain untouched for the brief years of its durability, to have the luxury of the original a little while, or sacrifice the rotting original to install, at least, a reminder of its design? The first impulse of those who are not architects is to keep, ever so little longer, what they can of the very substance itself at all costs to the future. But let us reflect a little. Those
designers of the Middle Ages who were concerned with that original cared nothing for the individual stone or stick—would not even have cared for it had it acquired that history that it now possesses; their minds were centered on the aforesaid form, with, possibly, its color and endurance, all which qualities it is now rapidly losing. Why then should we prize what they neglected, and neglect what they prized?

This is rather a large question for the end of a lecture. Out of it arises a conflict between the purely aesthetic sense and the memorial or associative. The artist instinct and the caretaking instinct part company over the disappearing creation. The true architect, who is first of all an artist and not an antiquary, is naturally most influenced by the aesthetic sense, his desire being, like Nature’s, to retain, recover, or recreate the idea which has become damaged, without much concern about the associations of the material that idea may have been displayed in. Few occupations are more pleasant than that of endeavoring to re-capture an old design from the elusive hand of annihilation.

Thus if the architect have also an antiquarian bias he is pulled in two directions—in one by his wish to hand on or modify the abstract form, in the other by his reverence for the antiquity of its embodiment.

Architects have been much blamed for their doings in respect of old churches, and no doubt they have much to answer for. Yet one cannot logically blame an architect for being an architect—a chief craftsman, constructor, creator of forms—not their preserver.

If I were practising in that profession I would not, I think, undertake a church restoration in any circumstances. I should reply if asked to do so, that a retired tinker
or rivetter of old china, or some “Old Mortality” from the almshouse, would superintend the business better. In short, the opposing tendencies excited in an architect by the distracting situation can find no satisfactory reconciliation.

Fortunately cases of imminent disappearance are the most numerous of those on which the Society has to pronounce an opinion. The bulk of the work of preservation lies in organizing resistance to the enthusiasm for newness in those parishes, priests, and churchwardens who regard a church as a sort of villa to be made convenient and fashionable for the occupiers of the moment; who say, “Give me a wide chancel arch—they are ‘in’ at present”; who pull down the west gallery to show the new west window, and pull out old irregular pews to fix mathematically spaced benches for a congregation that never comes.

Those who are sufficiently in touch with these proceedings may be able to formulate some practical and comprehensive rules for the salvation of such few—very few—old churches, diminishing in number every day, as chance to be left intact owing to the heathen apathy of their parson and parishioners in the last century. The happy accident of indifferentism in those worthies has preserved their churches to be a rarity and a delight to pilgrims of the present day. The policy of “masterly inaction”—often the greatest of all policies—was never practised to higher gain than by these, who simply left their historical buildings alone. To do nothing, where to act on little knowledge is a dangerous thing, is to do most and best.