The Architecture of Hurry

Richard Dennis
Department of Geography, UCL
r.dennis@geog.ucl.ac.uk
Tout à l'heure, comme je traversais le boulevard, en grande hâte, et que je sautillais dans la boue, à travers ce chaos mouvant où la mort arrive au galop de tous les côtés à la fois, mon auréole, dans un mouvement brusque, a glissé de ma tête dans la fange du macadam.

Baudelaire, ‘Perte d’Auréole’, Le Spleen de Paris

Just a little while ago, as I was crossing the boulevard very hastily and jumping about in the mud, through that moving chaos in which death comes galloping toward you from all sides at once, I moved abruptly and my halo slipped from my head into the mire on the pavement.

Baudelaire, ‘Loss of a Halo’, Paris Spleen
Piccadilly Circus 1912

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-5Ts_i164c&feature=player_detailpage#t=175s
At Third Avenue they took the Elevated, for which [Isabel] confessed an infatuation. She declared it the most ideal way of getting about in the world ...

‘They kill the streets and avenues, but at least they partially hide them, and that is some comfort; and they do triumph over their prostrate forms with a savage exultation that is intoxicating.’

W. D. Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*
People are born and married, and live and die in the midst of an uproar so frantic that you would think they would go mad of it; and I believe the physicians really attribute something of the growing prevalence of neurotic disorders to the wear and tear of the nerves from the rush of the trains passing almost momentarily, and the perpetual jarring of the earth and air from their swift transit.

Imagine a mother with a dying child in such a place; or a wife bending over the pillow of her husband to catch the last faint whisper of farewell, as a train of five or six cars goes roaring by the open window! What horror! What profanation!

WD Howells, *Through the Eye of the Needle*, 1907
Constructing the South Eastern Railway extension from London Bridge to Charing Cross, past Southwark Cathedral (1863)

Gustave Doré, ‘Over London By Rail’ (1872)
Leinster Gardens, Bayswater, Metropolitan Railway, under construction (1867) and 1990s
Claude Flight, ‘Speed’ (1922)
Claude Flight, ‘Paris Omnibus’ (1923); ‘Brooklands’ (1929)
And month by month the roads smelt more strongly of petrol, and were more difficult to cross, and human beings heard each other speak with greater difficulty, breathed less of the air, and saw less of the sky. ... In the streets of the city she [Margaret Schlegel] noted for the first time the architecture of hurry, and heard the language of hurry on the mouths of its inhabitants – clipped words, formless sentences, potted expressions of approval or disgust.

EM Forster, *Howards End* (1910)
‘Only Connect …’
‘Only Connect …’
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Even as the people in *Howards End* lose certainty about themselves, they become physically aroused by the world in which they live and they gain more awareness of one another. ... Displacement thus becomes something quite different in this novel from sheer movement, the detestable, meaningless movement epitomized for Forster by the automobile.

Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone*, pp. 349, 354
Charles Ginner, ‘Piccadilly Circus’, 1912
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Charles Ginner, ‘Piccadilly Circus’, 1912
1871

Piccadilly Circus
Underground Public Conveniences in Whitehall and Paddington
Wendela Boreel, ‘Piccadilly’ (1922)
Criterion Theatre, as recently restored
Piccadilly Circus Station, opened 1906
Stairwell (and subway) entrance to Piccadilly Circus Underground station, Piccadilly and Bakerloo lines. The ornate, cast-iron stairwell stands on the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue and Coventry Street. Photographed by Topical Press, 20 Oct 1931
Piccadilly Circus cutaway illustration artwork. 1928
Designer: Douglas MacPherson (1871-1951)
Charles Ginner: *The Sunlit Square, Victoria Station* (1913)
James Tissot, ‘The Departure Platform, Victoria Station’, early 1880s:
(left) oil sketch
(right) pencil, watercolour and gouache
The Workmen's Penny Train arriving at Victoria Station, London (Illustrated London News, 1865)
Charles Ginner: *The Sunlit Square, Victoria Station* (1913)
Charles Ginner: *The Sunlit Square, Victoria Station* (1913)
She went straight to the door of the refreshment room, and looked in through the glass. Two or three people were standing inside. She drew back, a tremor passing through her. ... With a hurried, nervous movement, she pushed the door open and went up to a part of the counter as far as possible from the two customers. Bending forward, she said to the barmaid in a voice just above a whisper, --

'Kindly give me a little brandy.' Beads of perspiration were on her face, which had turned to a ghastly pallor. The barmaid, concluding that she was ill, served her promptly and with a sympathetic look.

Virginia added to the spirit twice its quantity of water, standing, as she did so, half turned from the bar. Then she sipped hurriedly two or three times, and at length took a draught. Colour flowed to her cheeks; her eyes lost their frightened glare. Another draught finished the stimulant. She hastily wiped her lips, and walked away with firm step.

George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (1893)
The Leicester, Coventry Street (Leicester Square, 1895-96)
Charles Ginner: *The Sunlit Square, Victoria Station* (1913)
[Mrs Munt] was so interested in the flats, that she watched their every mutation with unwearying care. In theory she despised them--they took away that old-world look--they cut off the sun--flats house a flashy type of person. But if the truth had been known, she found her visits to Wickham Place twice as amusing since Wickham Mansions had arisen, and would in a couple of days learn more about them than her nieces in a couple of months, or her nephew in a couple of years. … The passenger lifts, the provision lifts, the arrangement for coals (a great temptation for a dishonest porter), were all familiar matters to her …

EM Forster, Howards End
Wickham Place and Wickham Mansions as depicted in the Merchant Ivory film of *Howards End*
Wickham Place and Wickham Mansions as depicted in the Merchant Ivory film of *Howards End*
Who lived in flats?

In North America: new arrivals, just off the boat or train – before they moved on to build their own home in the suburbs; or to a homestead in the Prairies.

In London: new arrivals from the continent or the colonies, on furlough, or retired, visiting dignitaries, diplomats, businessmen, who needed a home for a few months.

 Everywhere, households whose circumstances were ‘unresolved’
  • Bachelors
  • Professional women
  • ‘Active’ widows
  • Childless couples
  • Affluent retired
  • Commercial travellers + others who travelled, who needed a janitor or concierge, not their own personal domestics, to look after their flat in their absence
  • Members of Parliament + others who needed a city ‘pied à terre’
An alternative to a Flat with Kitchen

PARTICULARS OF
RESIDENTIAL FLATS AND CHAMBERS
At Nos. 83, 87 & 91 VICTORIA STREET
WESTMINSTER, S.W.
(Now under the Management of Mr. LEONARD T. SNELL, Manager 1884-98)

Situated close to the Houses of Parliament, Army and Navy Stores, and In. Cab Pari from all principal Theatres and Places of Amusement.

The advantage of excellent attendance, waiting, and a bright and charmingly decorated Coffee Room, where Breakfasts, Luncheons and Dinners, arranged by an experienced Chef, are served at moderate rates.

Passenger Lifts. Day and Night Porters.
Suites from 1 to 3 Rooms, and Bath Room. Above Bed and Sitting Room.
Rents, £50 to £150 per annum. Great quiet and privacy.

To Members of Parliament and those requiring a Pied à Terre, or Town Chambers; these Mansions are unrivalled, as, from the numerous applications received, Tenants’ Chambers can be let at good rents during absence, either for long or short periods, so that those requiring only partial use during the year can rely upon paying only a nominal rent.

For particulars and to View, apply to the Agents,
ROBINS, SNELL & TERRY, 95 Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.
Or, after Six o’clock in the evening, to the Manageress, at 87 Victoria Street, S.W.

Order to View, 1904

Marlborough Mansions
St Ermin’s, advertised shortly after conversion from luxury flats to luxury hotel
Luxurious fashion … distinguished Mrs Luke’s drawing-room. Costly and beautiful things superabounded; perfume soothed the air. Only since her bereavement had Mrs Widdowson been able to indulge this taste for modern exuberance in domestic adornment. [Mr Widdowson] left her an income of four thousand pounds. Thereupon began for Mrs Luke a life of feverish aspiration … a handsome widow only eight-and-thirty, she resolved that her wealth should pave the way to a titled alliance. her flat in Victoria Street attracted a heterogeneous cluster of pleasure-seekers and fortune-hunters, among them one or two vagrant members of the younger aristocracy. She lived at the utmost pace compatible with technical virtue.

George Gissing (1893), *The Odd Women*, Chapter XII
I should like to add to the Litany a new petition: ‘For all inhabitants of great towns, and especially for all such as dwell in lodgings, boarding-houses, flats, or any other sordid substitute for Home which need or foolishness may have contrived.’

There can be no home without the sense of permanence, and without home there is no civilization – as England will discover when the greater part of her population have become flat-inhabiting nomads.

*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903)
CRITERION THEATRE
Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to Messrs. Sievers & Pond,
222, Piccadilly.

Lessee and Manager ... Mr CHARLES WYNDHAM.

THIS EVENING,
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th,
And Following Evenings, at 8.45,

FLATS
IN FOUR STORIES.
Adapted from the French of MM. CHIVOT and DARU
by
G. R. SIMS.

Acting Manager & Treasurer - Mr T. E. SMALE

PRICES OF ADMISSION:
Private Boxes from £1 1s. to £3 3s.
Stalls, 10s. and 7s. 6d.
Dress Circle, 5s.
Boxes, (bonnets allowed), 4s.
Gallery, 1s.

Entrance to Pit and Gallery in Jermyn Street, to all other parts of the Theatre in Piccadilly.

Box-office open from 11 to 5 daily.
Doors open at 7.30. To commence at 8 o'clock.

THIS EVENING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th,
And Following Evenings, at 8.45,

FLATS
IN FOUR STORIES.
by
G. R. SIMS.

Mr Gigglethorpe (Proprietor of Gigglethorpe House)
Mr W. J. HILL
Signor Smithereen (an Italian Tenor)
Mr H. STANDING
Plantaganet Wiggles (in love with Anna)
Mr GEO. GIDDENS
Auguestus de Vere (a Crutch and Toothpick of 4s)
Mr A. KALLBY
Jeremiah Deeds, Esq. (a Solicitor)
Mr W. BLAKELEY
Professor Martin (a Hair-dresser)
Mr J. BANNISTER
Count Bodega (a Spanish Colonel)
Mr OWEN DOVE
Varnish (a Painter)
Mr H. SAKER
Mrs Gigglethorpe (Mrs Gigglethorpe's Daughter)
Mrs A. MELLON
Countess Bodega (Mrs Gigglethorpe's Daughter)
Miss DORA VIVIAN
Mrs Deeds (Mrs Gigglethorpe's Daughter)
Miss L. DENMAN
Anna Gigglethorpe (Mrs Gigglethorpe's Daughter)
Miss F. HARRINGTON
Polly (Mr Gigglethorpe's Servant) (a Mysterious Lady)
Miss H. KINGSLEY
Bianca (Servant to the Count Bodega) (Miss M. MORTIMER)
Miss C. EWELL

Scene
Gigglethorpe's House, 20, Queen Anne's Mansions.

GROUND FLOOR - MR. GIGGLETHORPE'S APARTMENTS,
FIRST FLOOR - THE COUNT BODEGA'S APARTMENTS,
SECOND FLOOR - MR. JEREMIAH DEED'S APARTMENTS,
THIRD FLOOR - SIGOR SMITHEREEN'S APARTMENTS.

Time
The Present.
Les Locataires de Monsieur Blondeau, with Pierre Montbars as M. Blondeau
First performed 12 June 1879
Joseph Pennell, ‘Queen Anne’s Mansions’, c.1904
Adverts in *The Times*: from left to right: 17 Jan 1903; 27 Jan 1906; 22 Sep 1906
Derry & Toms, as rebuilt, but before completion of roof garden
Uniformed lift attendants standing smartly to attention at the doors to their lifts at Selfridge's. The store was completed in 1928 although the first stage had been completed in 1909.
Selfridges Lift (1928)
Selfridge’s in 1909: Cross-Section based on contemporary advertisement
Advertisement for the Central London Railway (now the Central Line), 1903
Hurry off please, George Morrow, 1918
Underground Electric Railway Company Ltd

The train service cannot be hurried unless passengers are hurried. Every unnecessary moment that a train stands at a platform means just as many moments delay to all the trains following it.

Train delays mean overcrowding.
Hurry off please, George Morrow, 1918

Shop between 10 and 4,
Edward McKnight Kauffer, 1930

Collection of London Transport Museum
First escalator on the London Underground, Earl’s Court, 1911
Cyril E. Power, ‘The Tube Staircase’ (1929)
Cyril Power, ‘The Tube Station’, c.1932

Cyril Power, ‘The Tube Train’, c.1934
Cyril Power, ‘The Escalator’ (1929)

Cyril Power, ‘Whence & Whither?’ (The Cascade) (1930)
Bloomsbury Service Station, Store Street, 1926-2008
The Angloco Petrol Service Station at 155 Euston Road. Petrol pumps were introduced into England in 1919, with fuel delivered here by uniformed attendants.
• The speeding-up of everyday life: the bustle of commuting; the clipped words of everyday exchanges
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• The ladder of life: progress through the life cycle in terms of residential and social mobility – moving house and changing jobs
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• The acceleration of advanced capitalism – speeding-up the circulation of capital; the dissemination and circulation of information; the destruction and reconstruction of the built environment
• The speeding-up of everyday life: the bustle of commuting; the clipped words of everyday exchanges

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1. Time-space compression

2. Creative destruction
The Architecture of Hurry

Richard Dennis, Department of Geography, UCL, r.dennis@geog.ucl.ac.uk
Buses swooped, settled, were off – garish caravans, glistening with red and yellow varnish. ... Suddenly Elizabeth stepped forward and most competently boarded the omnibus, in front of everybody. She took a seat on top. The impetuous creature – a pirate – started forward, sprang away; she had to hold the rail to steady herself, for a pirate it was, reckless, unscrupulous, bearing down ruthlessly, circumventing dangerously, boldly snatching a passenger, or ignoring a passenger, squeezing eel-like and arrogant in between, and then rushing insolently all sails spread up Whitehall.

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)
Maxwell Armfield, Oxford Circus (1905)