

Dressing Down Parliament

OMMX

The Palace of Westminster, home to the UK Parliament and designed by Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin, has often been referred to as a classical building in disguise. Cloaked in the prevailing contemporary ornament of Gothic Revival, the building is seemingly able to contain multiple identities. But there are problems. The original choice of poor quality Anston limestone, simple enough to carve elaborately into, has condemned the structure and its cladding to a lifetime of perpetual renewal. London's polluting tendencies has seen the relatively thin overcoat of the building patched, removed and replaced since its construction. At a time of acute crisis in the individual and collective representation by our institutions of state, perhaps there is a different course of action for the building's inevitable maintenance, one in which the expensive need to maintain its appearance in its totality can be questioned.

Dressing Down Parliament is a drawing of the building, stripped of its ornamental veneer to reveal the structural brickwork behind. It proposes an alternative future for an edifice that is admired and castigated in equal measure for its position as a symbol of centralised power. The drawing suggests a more open-ended resolution, one where the spaces and surfaces of the building

are deliberately dismantled to make way for more diverse forms of representation.



Palace of Westminster, Jan 2020



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OMMX build, draw and write about architecture. They believe that architecture gives form to our collective desire to understand and express who we all are. It can construct intimate portraits of different communities, from individuals and families, to companies, landscapes, cities and nations. OMMX is committed to this biographical process, to creating spaces that we can relate to and that help us relate to one another.

They have served a broad mix of private, social and public sector institutions, working on housing, private residences, galleries, offices, public spaces, festivals, exhibitions and shops. Selected clients include the V&A, the Royal Academy of Arts, the Design Museum, English Heritage, the Wellcome Collection, the British Library, Clerkenwell Design Week, Naked House and Marian Goodman Gallery.

They have been nominated for the EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture, Lisbon Triennale Début Award and have also had recent successes in competitions organised by the American Institute of Architects, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the National Infrastructure Commission and the British Council. The office were shortlisted to represent the UK at the Venice Biennale in two of the last three national competitions.