A PALAZZO IN PALL MALL?

THE ORIGINS OF THE REFORM CLUB IN THE PALAZZO FARNESE, ROME

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Aqua minerale naturale	Bottled water
Allegro ma non troppo	Quick, but not too quick
Roma	Rome

Italy and England are different.

Even allowing for stereotyping, the Italians are excitable, enthusiastic romantics, passionate about their food, their art and their women while the English are a polite, reserved and private people who may be passionate about a whole range of things but would probably prefer not to show it.

These differences are reflected in the way people live and in the things they produce.

I don't think it will surprise you for a minute to learn that this is an Italian on his way to work,

* and that this is an Englishman on his way to work.

* That this is an Italian car,

* and that this is an English car.

* That this is an Italian building,

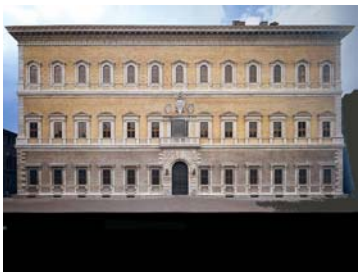
* and that this is an English building.

I'm sorry?

* That this is an Italian building,

*and that this is an English building.

No, no……

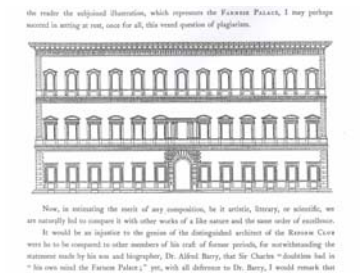


* The Italian building is the Palazzo Farnese, the palace of the Farnese family, built in Rome for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese who became Pope Paul III in 1534. He commissioned the best architects of the day to work on it, beginning with Antonio Da Sangallo the Younger. When Sangallo died in 1546, the palace was complete only to the top of the second floor windows. Michelangelo, painter, sculptor, architect, was asked to continue the work. It was he who added the massive cornice, projecting five feet out from the face of the wall. He also added the huge expanse of wall below the cornice, and the central window above the entrance.

The Palazzo Farnese wasn't finally completed until 1589 and by 1635 it had become the French Embassy, which it remains today.

* The English building is the Reform Club, built in London by supporters of the Reform Bill in only three years, 1838 to 1841. It was designed in 1837 by Charles Barry, later Sir Charles Barry and architect of the Houses of Parliament. It was the successful entrant in a competition involving many of the well-known architects of the day.

* The similarity between the Palazzo Farnese and the Reform Club has been often noted. Louis Fagan, in 1887, wrote: “It has been alleged that the Reform Club finds its prototype in the Farnese Palace, at Rome. There can be no doubt that we trace in Barry’s composition the influence of the Roman Florentine School. But that is all”. He proceeds, however, to include a drawn elevation of the Farnese



* and to write about it in some considerable detail. He then proposes ”setting at rest, once for all, this vexed question of plagiarism”, but I frankly doubt the picture has ever set any such question to rest. Look at it! It looks just like the Reform.

* In 1913, Stanley Ramsey, in the Architectural Review, refers again to the allegation concerning the two buildings and writes, “the one contains thirteen bays in width, the other nine; both are three storey buildings with large crowning cornices and there the resemblance ends”. I am not convinced.

Of course, San Gallo and Michelangelo were in Barry’s mind when he designed the Reform. But then so was Mozart in Beethoven’s mind and Rembrandt in Van Gogh’s mind. Utter originality is surely a very rare commodity indeed. What counts is how well the architect, composer or artist adapts and interprets his inspiration?

As we shall see, Barry was good at this.

* Charles Barry knew the Farnese at first hand. In June 1817, aged only 23 but having been articled for six years to Messrs Middleton & Bailey, Surveyors, of Lambeth, he left London to make a tour of Europe. Once across the channel, he travelled, by carriage, through Lyons, Geneva, and over the Simplon Pass to Milan. Stopping at Florence and Parma,

* he finally reached the outskirts of Rome in the middle of November.
Barry stayed in Rome for only four months during that winter, as well as stopping again briefly on his return journey in the spring of 1820. He used his time energetically, filling five small notebooks with comments and tiny sketches, as well as covering some dozens of folio sheets with more detailed drawings and measured surveys of the buildings he saw and liked.

Travel to Rome was not unusual for the English, especially for those aspiring to be architects. Frankly, everyone who was anyone had been. During the winter of 1817 alone, Barry shared the city with some half dozen English architects, including Cockerell and Basevi who were later to be his competitors for the Reform Club.

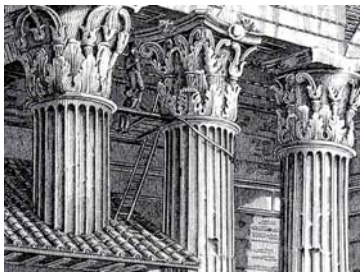
The architects tended to stay near the Spanish steps and to make daily sorties into the city.

* The French, under Napoleon's direction, had only recently cleared away quantities of rubbish and dilapidation, leaving much of Rome very similar to how it is today. This a view from 1814.

Everyone went armed with a sketchpad and a measuring rod.

* This print of 1785 shows at least twelve men directly involved in measuring the Temple of Juno. Notice the extensive scaffolding on the right and the heavy level in the foreground.

* Here, George Ledwell-Taylor and Edward Cresy measure the Arch of Titus, a view published in 1821.

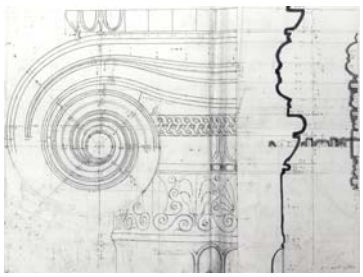


* And here the same pair prepare to make a cast of part of the Temple of *Mars Ultor*. This was no tourist trip, it was a serious and time consuming business.

* And some of the results were breathtaking.

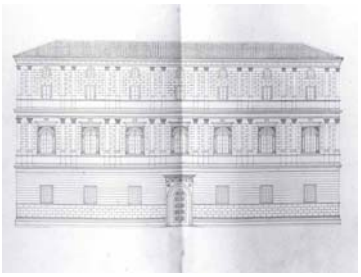
It wasn't that the architecture had never been measured before; on the contrary, much of it had, but the very act of measuring was an essential part of learning the art, encouraging a deep intuitive understanding of the relative proportions of the different architectural details and of their relation to the whole.

Charles Barry was no exception. He visited, measured and drew dozens of buildings, both ancient and Renaissance during those few winter months. You can see the original drawings at the RIBA drawings collection.

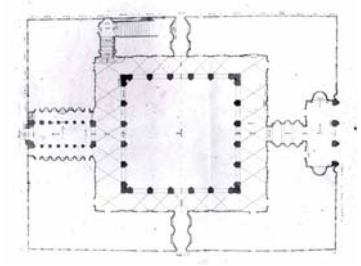


* It is by no means easy to measure and to set out on paper the spiralling curves of an ionic volute such as this. As you can see on the left hand side, even Charles Barry got a bit fed up before he'd finished it.

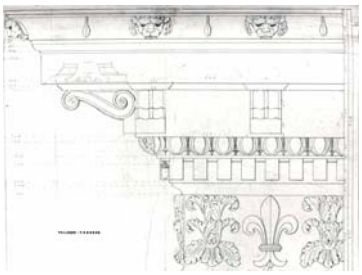
* What an exquisitely beautiful watercolour sketch of a broken capital. Look at the way he controls the form of the thing by subtly modulated shadows.



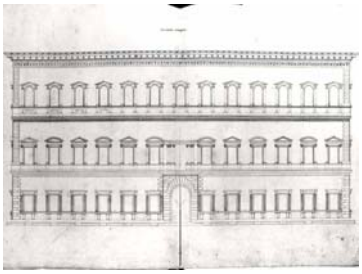
* And of course Barry was as interested in the appearance of whole buildings as he was in the details. This is his drawing of the Palazzo della Cancelleria, the chancellery.



* His plan of the Palazzo Farnese is interesting. Notice that he didn't draw the detail of individual rooms but concentrated on the central courtyard, or cortile, and the entrances to it. You can see at the top left the staircase going up out of the corner of the cortile, not like here, where it rises from the centre of one side.



* And this is his detail of the famous cornice. It's quite clear from the measurements on it that Barry hung a plumb bob off the outermost edge, far top left, and, from that, measured back to the various mouldings below. He must have arranged for scaffolding to be erected in order to take these measurements and would have been very high up and very precarious. I measured the Reform Club's cornice one very snowy January day and from the top of a very tall and narrow scaffold tower. I can tell you that Barry was keen.



* And this is Barry's elevation of the Palazzo Farnese. This is a big drawing, some thirty inches wide. This one drawing probably represents several days' hard work.

Barry also wrote copious notes about the buildings he saw.

Of the Farnese he writes, "It has an imposing effect from its vastness, and the unbroken lines of the entablature and stringing courses". He is talking about the horizontal stone projections which run across the width of the building.

But he also writes, "The door, and window above it, interferes too much with the symmetry of the design", By symmetry he did not mean bi-lateral symmetry as we know it but the harmony of parts and their relation to the whole.

Again, Barry writes that the elevation is "spoilt by the centre which does not unite well and harmonise with the rest – a most unaccountable wickedness".

* And, referring to the cortile inside, Barry writes, “The courtyard by Michelangelo supposed to be his chef d’oeuvre…

* nothing can be more ugly than the double imposts in the lower order, the archivolts much too narrow, paltry pateras in spandrels”… and so on. The imposts are the bits sticking out either side of the columns. The archivolts are the semicircular parts we would just call arches. The ‘paltry pateras’ are those little round things in the corners above the archivolts.

Even at the tender age of twenty three, Barry’s critical faculties were clearly highly tuned.

* By the time he returned to England in August 1820, his mind was filled with enough architectural ideas for a whole career. He set up in practice in London, gaining ecclesiastical projects almost at once before, in 1829, winning a competition to design the Travellers’ Club. This was his first major commission.

By the time he came to the Reform, in 1837, he had already won the competition for the new Palace of Westminster and was approaching the height of his powers.

* But what was it of the Farnese that came to mind as he prepared his competition entry? Which elements of *that* building did he adopt for *this*, and which did he reject?

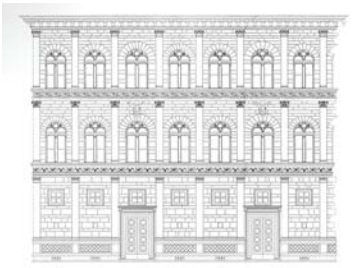
* And of the ones which he adopted, how did he adapt them to suit a different climate…….. a different culture……..a different site…….. and a different use?

And why indeed did he select the Farnese as his model at all. Why build a Palazzo in Pall Mall?

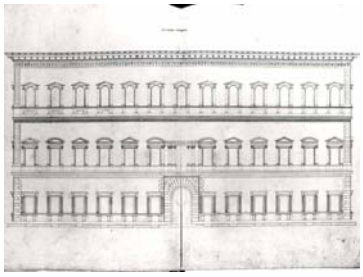
The simple answer to this last question is that Barry’s clients were, by and large, wealthy men. Many of them were MP’s whose money had been made in trade and Barry sensed that they would respond favourably to a type of building which had been put up by men whose money had been made similarly. These men were merchants made princes and their palaces were splendid;

* the Strozzi,

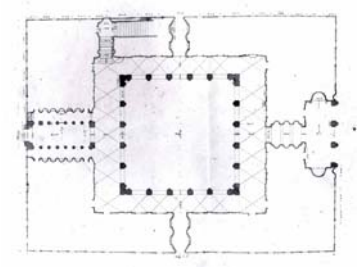
* the Medici,



* the Rucellai,



* the Farnese.



* Of course, such a model was entirely appropriate. The Reform Club is, after all, in terms of its basic typology, a house. Palaces and Clubs are both types of house. Consider the rooms they need in comparison with, say, a factory or a church.

Turning to the two buildings in a little more detail, let's find out how similar or different the two buildings really are. First a word about their general shape: Both the Palazzo Farnese and the Reform Club are squarish in plan

*

* and present to view tall, largely flat walls, broken by rows of equally spaced windows. One can only really describe them as blocks

* The word block is perhaps not normally regarded as the most complimentary of epithets for a building, being too readily reminiscent of blocks of flats, cell blocks, or lavatory blocks. It implies a dull regularity, a lack of imagination even.

As a word it may fail to inspire. As an architectural concept, however, the block is vital to the quality of all our cities.

Rome abounds with such blocks, straight sided four square buildings with regularly spaced rows of windows,

* both plain,

* less plain,

* and positively fancy.

Why are blocks important?

While it will always be appropriate for a few special buildings to stand out from the crowd

*

*, a city where every building is trying to stand out becomes a visual cacophany. These kinds of buildings, what architects like to call ‘object buildings’ do not make places between themselves and the buildings next to them ……. and, of course, it is the quality of the places between buildings rather than the buildings themselves that really makes a city a pleasant place to be in. Think of the awkward spaces (they cannot be called places) around the new Greater London Authority building by Tower Bridge or, for a nineteenth century example, of the spaces around the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, designed by none other than Barry’s unsuccessful competitor, Basevi.

Blocks on the other hand do make places between them. They fit neatly together, whether in orthogonal rows or not,

* making clearly defined streets and,

* where a block is omitted, squares. And, blocks can accommodate both terraces of small buildings and large single buildings, such as the Farnese and the Reform.

*The Palazzo Farnese and its high walled garden together form one whole block. You can walk right round the thing in less than five minutes.

* To the west and east, the projecting windowsills and supporting console brackets create comfortable streets,

* cleverly enclosing the passer-by at his own scale.

* To the north, the Palazzo Farnese and the Piazza Farnese in front of it create a much more imposing ensemble

* but still a delightful place to eat gelati, or to have a quick word with head office.

Barry appreciated what a simple block could do for the city.

It was unfortunate that the site on which he was later to build the Reform didn't quite allow him to reproduce the whole block.

* The Travellers Club, on the far right, abutted the Reform's site, allowing it only three exposed sides. I am sure that Barry would have preferred a fourth as well, in other words for the building to be freestanding.

If so, it seems to me that he channelled that desire skilfully into subduing the connection between the two clubs,

*gaining as much visual separation as he could without losing any accommodation. The lower section between the two clubs is part of the Reform, housing the Study Room and the Cabinet Room and,

* at the front of the building, lower left in the picture, the Exhibition Room.

Barry may not have been the first to transport the idea of a single Palazzo block out of Italy.

* Leo von Klenze had done something very similar in Munich ten years earlier, but he, Barry, was the first to bring the idea to England. He grasped the essential merits of the block and transposed it to a different situation, accommodating skilfully the restrictions of the site.

* And how appropriate that a block, something solid and concentrated, a gathering together in stone should be the form for a club. The origin of the word club as we understand it here, is precisely the same as that of the club which cavemen wielded, a gathering together, a concentration, in that case of gnarled roots at the end of a stick, in this case of members. 'Gather into a clublike mass', says the OED's definition of 'to club together'.

Before we move from the generalities of the exterior form to the particulars of the interior detail, I just want to look at those elevations again.

* The Farnese's front was clearly very important to Barry and it is that, more than anything, which has been responsible for the association between the two buildings. What can we learn about Barry's talents by looking at the two?

* Firstly, notice that the elevations of both buildings are defined at their corners. I'm hoping you're beginning to recognise which building is which by now.

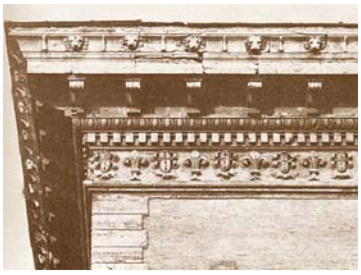
* Quoins, the heavy projecting stones at the corners, prevent the walls from drifting, visually, and, to a lesser extent, physically out into their respective cities.

* Seen from St James's Square, the quoins in raking afternoon light make a dramatic edge to the club.

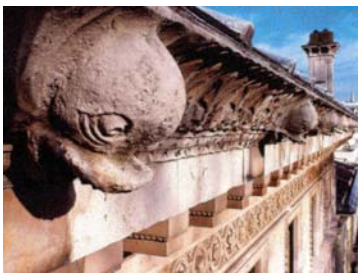
* Next, at the top of the walls, a cornice holds both buildings down, emphasising and celebrating the protective function of the roof

*…….. Of course the roof here at the Reform isn't currently nearly as protective as it should be…….. Ask me afterwards!

And, in both buildings, the cornices carry explicit messages.



* At the Farnese, the symbolic rafter ends are marked by modillion brackets, the big widely spaced scroll shaped stones, and by lions' heads. The brackets demonstrate the strength of the construction, and the lions, power. In the frieze below, acanthus leaves hold hands with fleurs de lys, each some two feet high. A badge of the Farnese family but also appropriate for the French Embassy?



* At the Reform, the lions' heads are replaced by dolphins (well perhaps not dolphins; maybe some mythical sea creature) Whatever they are, they symbolise our island status.

* Meanwhile the frieze here carries emblems of the constituent countries of these islands,

* roses,

* thistles and

* shamrocks.

No leeks…. Remember that in the mid nineteenth century, the United Kingdom was thought of, in London anyway, as consisting of three kingdoms, Ireland, Scotland, and England (including the principality of Wales).

Wherever precisely they come from, the vision of members gathering, clubbing together, from all corners of these islands, is powerfully evoked.

* As the cornice emphasises the top of the wall so, at the Palazzo Farnese, the base of the wall is marked by a projecting stone bench. These two, the cornice and the bench, emphasise, or celebrate, the top and the bottom of the wall,

* in just the same way that the serifs in the Roman alphabet celebrate the top and bottom of the upright stroke.

* The bench also says much about how the Palazzo Farnese, and the Farnese family itself, related to the city of Rome around them. For, in addition to its formal function, the bench served to support the limbs of those employees and other dependants of the family within. The loyalty of those dependants was fundamental to the structure of sixteenth century Italian society. They sat at the feet of their masters.

* In nineteenth century London society, things were rather different. The employees and other dependants did not loiter around the outside but, as tonight, were hard at work inside. In Pall Mall, the bench was neither needed nor wanted.

More than that, a smaller site encouraged Barry to place two more floors below the ground floor, and of course those floors needed light and therefore needed a gap through which light could enter.

* Hence the “area”, so familiar a feature of London architecture…..

* Writing in 1985, Dr John Olley suggested that a combination of the area, the balustrade necessary to stop pedestrians from falling into the area, and the raising of the ground floor some five feet above the pavement, all contributed to the building, and by inference, its occupants, its nineteenth century occupants, being somewhat aloof from the street.

* Certainly, the junction between building and ground is very different here from that at the Farnese. It is another example of Barry’s skill in adapting the model for a different culture.

* And, of course, it was the appropriateness or otherwise of the club remaining aloof from its garden which so occupied us all in obtaining a consent for the new steps.

* Between the cornice, and the bench, or, in the case of the Reform, the area, the walls in both buildings are punctuated by rows of windows.

* Each window is enclosed in its own aedicule, a sort of mini building made up of two columns and a pediment across the top like a roof.

* Notice that San Gallo's pediments are alternately triangular and segmental. This was far too arbitrary for Barry

* who put all the triangular ones along the front,

* all the segmental ones along the back,

* and a carefully controlled mix above Carlton Gardens. A little bit of Italian fun, ironed out by our English reserve perhaps.

* Even the reduction from thirteen bays to nine produces a building more vertical and therefore more formal than its Italian counterpart.

The focus of these walls is in the middle, and here Barry departs significantly from his model.

* Michelangelo provides a typically idiosyncratic balcony with a scattering of columns either side of the opening behind it. I assume that, from there,

* Alessandro Farnese, as pope, waved to his flock. Barry was critical of Michelangelo's balcony from a purely architectural standpoint but must also have realized that the committee (the Committee Room is in the equivalent position) would rarely wish to wave to anyone in Pall Mall, let alone a flock.

* Barry substituted a regular window.

* Below Michelangelo's balcony, Sangallo had left a highly rusticated archway large enough for a carriage and four horses. We have heard Barry's notebook entry on the subject already… "A most unaccountable wickedness", he called it. An entrance of such proportions was also unnecessary for the club's needs.

Barry apparently struggled for months with the entrance, experimenting with columns and porches and the like.

* He finally opted for a door case. The door case is simple in its outline

* but elaborate in its detail. He had seen and drawn just the one at the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne.

* It is very similar indeed.

* The door case suits the whole conception perfectly. It marks, with a polite but reserved welcome, passage through this somewhat austere elevation.

I like to think of the elevation as being in some ways similar to that very English invention, the dark suit; its formality gives away little of what may be being thought or felt inside.

* The inside of the Palazzo Farnese is actually rather unlike the inside of the Reform Club. In fact, I suspect strongly that Barry never saw the interiors of the Palazzo Farnese at all. They are not easy to get into.

But if not those, then he certainly saw many other interiors. As his friend and travelling companion, J B Woolfe, wrote: Inside he, Barry, “had visions of the baptistery of St Peter’s and other gorgeous chapels of Rome and Florence”.

And for almost every architectural idea which you will find inside the club house, there is, in Rome, a source.

* Barry has given us a tunnel-vaulted staircase.

* We find it in the Scala Regia linking St Peters to the Vatican. He gave us an elaborate use of mirrors,

* as well as mirrors that turn out not to be mirrors at all. This one is to your right if you are sitting in the middle of the room. Of course, mirrors abound all over Rome, but Barry's device is not really about mirrors so much as about frames, and views through into other worlds.

* A fascination with such frames was much in evidence in late fifteenth and sixteenth century painting and architecture. This is one of Filippino Lippi's paintings in S. Maria sopra Minerva.

* Mosaic pavements in the Saloon.

* Here they are in the Palazzo Altieri.

* So called thermal windows (named after those in the thermae or baths of Diocletian) are here in the Chambers corridor,

* and in close up, and here

* in the Villa Farnesina. Obviously, Giulio Romano's painting is much more interesting but please just look at the windows in passing!

* A coved and book-lined library, the Card Room.

* Here it is in the Palazzo Corsini.

* Long rooms divided by columns in antis; you are in this room.

* And here they are in the Palazzo Colonna.

* Look at the fish scale pattern on the grille above the front door

* and here in close up.

* Here it is on the roof of an idealised church in Perugino's painting of Christ delivering the keys of heaven to St Peter.

*

* Less obviously, Barry is well known for his dominant corner chimneys.

* You can see those sea creatures again here too.

And in Rome?

* not a chimney perhaps, but I think it not too fanciful to suggest he was excited by these obelisks on the corners of the Fontana del Acqua Felice.

And of course there are the coloured marbles,

* these are typical of those on the Gallery just outside the doors you came in by. And inevitably, there are coloured marbles all over Rome, particularly in the churches.

* Here the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo.

* Here the Borghese Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore.

* Here Bernini's tomb of Alexander VII, in St Peter's.

It is not hard to imagine why Charles Barry filled so many sketchbooks while he was in Rome, and why he was rarely short of ideas for buildings throughout a long career.

* We have looked at why Charles Barry chose the idea of a palazzo as his source, how he took the simple block of the Palazzo Farnese and put it down in Pall Mall, and the advantages it gave him. We have looked at how he treated the walls of his block and how he adapted them for a different culture. We have looked at some of the rooms and their details and seen how Barry was inspired by what he had seen in Rome.

But what about the brilliant idea he had for organising all these things together, the apotheosis of this magnificent club, the double height galleried space you walked through to get to this room tonight, the saloon?

What is it about the saloon that puts it so firmly in the world class?

There are several reasons.

First there is the element of surprise. Almost everyone who walks up the steps from the front door, for the first time anyway, seems to react similarly. When they get to the top, they stop, look up,

* step forward,

* and say

* “Wow!”

Why is that? Why is the saloon such a surprise to people?

We need to go back a bit ……

If you’ve been to Rome, you know that, as you walk about the city the doors of those big blocks open, often only briefly, and you get a very fleeting glimpse of a cortile.

*

* It's always a pleasing glimpse and it's always a surprise.

* I think what is happening is that big masonry buildings repeatedly play tricks on our perceptions. Our ability to reason that there must be a courtyard in the middle, or else how would the rooms get any daylight, repeatedly fails us. There is always surprise when we catch a glimpse of *outside* just as we are expecting an *inside*. Something similar happens at the British Museum when you suddenly find yourself in the Great Court.

At the Reform, the surprise is heightened by the fact that you go up steps to reach the Saloon. By making us look mostly at our feet, to avoid tripping on the steps, Barry delays the moment when we look up and thereby increases the surprise.

The second thing that makes the saloon so special is to do with technology. The courtyard of the Palazzo Farnese is open to the skies. We believe that Barry might have left the Saloon at the Reform open to the sky, had it not been for the weather, and the insistent common sense of the Committee.

But as soon as Barry accepted that he had to cover the cortile, he at once embraced the latest technology,

* we might say he opted for a "high-tech" solution, one involving purpose-made cast iron frames bolted together to support purpose-made curved cut glass lead crystal panes. Not the kind of thing you could get off the shelf at the builders' merchant. And the fact that the technology is so foreign to one's expectation on entering a Renaissance palazzo again accentuates the experience.

After all, there are lots of far less imaginative ways Barry could have glazed over the space.

Thirdly, the straightforward joy of top lighting contributes much to the saloon. Remember that most rooms are lit from the side. We know that Barry thought lighting figures from above was something special. He wrote in his journal that "the Romans considered it advantageous to light their rooms from the top – as an instance of this, he writes, girls before marriage would be seen by their intended husbands in the Rotunda". By the Rotunda,

* he means the Pantheon where the top light falls through a wide-open oculus in the roof.

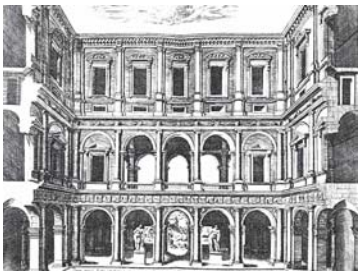
* And so, of course, it is no accident that, in the late afternoon, the declining sunlight filters majestically down through the glass roof into the saloon and falls on the busts of Palmerston and John Bright, underlining, well perhaps not their eligibility for marriage, but certainly their hero status.

Surprise, technology, and top light contribute to the remarkable qualities of the saloon. But there is more. There's something else which, for me at any rate, is special.

* I am reminded of the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, who writes that, "Between earth and sky we dwell".

This is no throwaway line. "Between earth and sky we dwell" describes our most simple, most basic, most fundamental experience of place. The phrase may not answer *why* we are here, but it describes *where* we are.

Hence, for any architect, the construction, the rendering tangible, if you like the 'making concrete' of that basic experience becomes a critical ambition. The very best architecture manages to provide shelter without denying us the experience of the basic condition of dwelling. In other words, the best architecture, such as where we are tonight, fulfils human needs far deeper than the merely practical.



* Standing in the courtyard of the Palazzo Farnese, you are actually on the earth, bar a few paving stones, and when you look up you actually see the sky. It is a good experience certainly, but it's relatively straightforward.

When Charles Barry discovered in the process of design that a person standing in the middle of the Reform Club would be neither on the earth nor directly under the sky, that person's experience might have been seriously compromised.

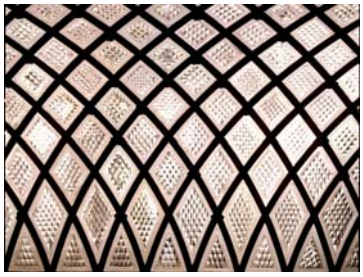
But on the contrary, and this is where we glimpse Barry's genius, he turns the difficulty to advantage and rather than being diminished, the experience is enhanced beyond all measure.

* He maintains the sense of the earth by covering the floor with hard mosaic and by supporting it, not on timber, as in all the rooms around, but on solid brick vaults. Try jumping on the Saloon floor. It feels really solid, and imagine how terribly wrong it would feel if it bounced or felt in any way hollow. And when you go downstairs, past the photographs of famous members, imagine not that you are going downstairs, but that you are going underground, into the bowels of the earth, down towards the caves, where your wine is stored.

It becomes obvious that what Barry has built here in the saloon is not a mere floor in a building but a little stone piazza, a piece of the earth raised up for our enjoyment.

And the sky?

* Look up, and you will find the heavens shimmering in glittering ethereality above you,



* almost a thousand cut-glass lozenges refracting the light in a hundred thousand directions…….. This is a sky beyond all skies. No wonder we are awed.

* Charles Barry has gathered together “into a club-like mass”, stone, brick, iron, timber, plaster, paint, and precious metals. He has formed from them all the splendid rooms that any club member or Palazzo prince might dream of. He has wrapped them within that polite and reserved dark suit…..

* but still he has had the brilliance not to close us in but, taking a commonplace idea from Italy, the cortile, he has created out of it a space of almost religious power.

There is no plagiarism here. Charles Barry has taken his inspiration and worked it hard.

The enthusiasm, the excitability and the romance of Italy have been transformed by Barry into something which on the outside may be infinitely more polite, reserved and private but which still holds within its heart those English passions. The Reform Club owes a debt of vast magnitude to its precursor, the Palazzo Farnese but, through Barry’s genius, it contrives also to be quintessentially English.

High emotion on a tight rein.

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