



Figure 1. View of Unilever House, 2021. Photo: Author.

# Retrofitting the Monument of Commerce

## Unilever House, London

### Introduction

In July 1931, *The Times* newspaper reported on the completion of Unilever House in London and admired it as “The Monument of Commerce.”<sup>1</sup> The building’s monumentality is manifest through its prominent presence on the Victoria Embankment, its scale (34,000 square feet of floor space), as well as its modern design and fittings. Unilever House’s construction was also tied to the historical merger between the British soapmaker Lever Brothers and the Dutch company Margarine Union in 1929.<sup>2</sup> Building upon the notion that Unilever House can be considered both as a monument and a headquarter space for multinational corporations, this article examines its two large-scale retrofitting exercises — first by the multi-disciplinary design practice Pentagram (1980–83) and then by the international architectural office Kohn Pederson Fox (KPF) (2005–2008). The different approaches taken by Pentagram and KPF to inject value into Unilever House are considered: the former sought to accentuate the building’s artistic and historical value while the latter focused on reducing, recycling, and reusing. How Lever Brothers’ troubled history in colonial exploitations has been reenacted or repressed in these two renovations is also explored. This article further retrieves the polemic writings of Theo Crosby, one of the founders and the then-lead architect of Pentagram, on preservation and retrofitting. Examining his provocative articles such as “Gloom-ing White Elephants” and “Towards a New Ornament,” this research situates Pentagram’s renovation in the socioeconomic and architectural conditions of postindustrial London.<sup>3</sup> Through this case study, this research seeks to parse out more of the entanglement between architectural values and retrofitting.

Unilever and its predecessor, Lever Brothers, has been an influential patron of arts and architecture. Their architectural and planning projects include the celebrated factory and workers village Port Sunlight (1888) in Birkenhead, which combined Enlightenment visions with industrial paternalism and an idealized image of English vernacular architecture.<sup>4</sup> When William Lever (Lord Leverhulme) purchased the site of 100 Victoria Embankment for the Unilever House, it was expected to be another grand architectural venture. However, a series of business blunders and over-ambitious acquisitions, including the purchase of the colonial mercantile Niger Company, put Lever

Brothers in severe financial strains. Therefore, no building work was even started by the time of William Lever's death in 1925.<sup>5</sup> The plan for Unilever House restarted in 1929 after the merger with Margarine Union, and the need for a larger headquarter space for a corporation manufacturing almost all goods related to fat and oil became pressing.<sup>6</sup> Lever Brother's in-house architect James Lomax-Simpson, who had worked with William Lever on Port Sunlight, directed the project.<sup>7</sup> Although the design of Unilever House was also attributed to the partnership of renowned Scottish architects Thomas Tait and James Burnet, archival materials suggested Lomax-Simpson dictated most aspects of design.<sup>8</sup> The stripped Classicism of Unilever House is also more conservative than Tait and Burnet's other architectural outputs of the time.<sup>9</sup> Unilever House, in short, can be regarded as a structure that embodies the corporation's history and architectural vision.

The plan of Unilever House can be best described as a fan shape with a significant setback from its two frontages facing the Victoria Embankment and New Bridge Street (see Figure 1). Behind the fourteen-bay Portland stone façade was a steel frame structure punctuated by four light wells. Unilever House was well regarded by contemporary critics. For example, Charles Reilly considered it a "good large building" because it looked smaller than it was, due to its setback, proportion, and incurved treatment.<sup>10</sup> In comparison to its prominent façade, the interior space of Unilever House was rudimentary: open-plan office fitted with mass-produced furniture.<sup>11</sup> Only in the entrance spaces and elevators were there more deliberated Art Deco features. Its wartime usage as a military training facility and decades of piecemeal renovations had resulted in poorly planned compartmentations and inefficient circulations.<sup>12</sup> By the 1950s, the company head-office had already outgrown the building, and two adjacent buildings were purchased to provide additional workspaces.<sup>13</sup> In the mid-1970s, Unilever decided to sell the added properties to fund a large-scale renovation of Unilever House.<sup>14</sup>

### **Glooming White Elephants**

Unilever's decision to retain and retrofit Unilever House was an unconventional one in the context of 1970s Britain.<sup>15</sup> At the time, London had suffered from decades of population losses and subsequent urban decay.<sup>16</sup> There was an exodus of established companies and institutions from the City of London.<sup>17</sup> These socioeconomic conditions were also significant to the formation of Pentagram, the designer chosen for Unilever House's first retrofitting job. Today, Pentagram is known as the largest independent interdisciplinary design practice in the world and excels in almost all realms of design, ranging

from branding to interior spaces to multimedia campaigns.<sup>18</sup> They are also recognized for their ability, to borrow the words of *The Independent*, to combine “the formal restraint of Swiss modernism with the wit of the Madison Avenue advertising industry.”<sup>19</sup> What is lesser known is that in the first two decades of Pentagram’s history, under the leadership of Theo Crosby, their architectural outputs were more eclectic and consisted mostly of preservation and retrofitting projects.<sup>20</sup> This profile should be attributed to both Crosby’s preservationist stance, and the fact that there was a lack of funds in construction from both the public and private sectors in Britain at the time. Building rehabilitation, retrofitting, and interior renovation became a means of survival for architects in London in the 1960s and 1970s. Pentagram was part of this shift and distinguished itself by providing streamlined design service in graphics, architecture, and corporate identity to attract and retain prestige clients, including the news agency Reuters.<sup>21</sup>

Pentagram’s engagement with retrofitting architecture was driven by Crosby’s belief that the reuse and revitalization of old buildings provided more opportunities to integrate arts and crafts in architecture.<sup>22</sup> Crosby had been a strong proponent for interdisciplinary collaboration since the postwar era, including organizing the now canonized *This Is Tomorrow* exhibition (1956).<sup>23</sup> Since the 1960s, Crosby had been reusing the ideas he developed to promote postwar Modernism in his preservationist works. He argued that the incorporation of arts and ornaments in the built environment would create a sense of plenty and excitement for a society of leisure. In his 1970 publication *The Necessary Monument*, Crosby elaborated on his theorization of the socioeconomic value of ornaments and monuments.<sup>24</sup> He proposed using the Tower Bridge as a driver for London Southwark’s postindustrial urban regeneration.<sup>25</sup> He also positioned preservation as a remedy to the socioeconomic problems engendered by the mass construction and mass planning projects found in the postwar welfare state.<sup>26</sup> In Pentagram’s 1975 publication *Living by Design*, Crosby further developed his theory on preservation and retrofitting under the framework of “Glooming White Elephants.”<sup>27</sup> He considered one of the biggest challenges found in preservation and rehabilitation of old buildings was when “the site became too valuable (as happens in city centers) or not valuable enough (as happens with country houses).”<sup>28</sup> The task of designers and architects, for Crosby, was to inject value into old structures and retrieve a balance between the building’s purpose, its location, and its values.

Although Crosby did not explain what he considered as the values found in old buildings, it is clear that they include artistic value as well as the integrity of manual labor. In his writing,

he frequently evoked William Morris's pursuit of "the value and joy of hand work."<sup>29</sup> Crosby also recognized the intertwined nature of the different values found in historical structures. At stake was that Crosby also promoted the exchange of one kind of value with another. In *Living by Design*, he wrote, "To bring a new life to a very large old building requires a creative and complicated structure of uses within which, trade-offs of various values can be made which utilize the potential building fully—and do not distort its qualities."<sup>30</sup>

The exchanges of value, Crosby stressed, offered the necessary commercial answer and to "bring in the increased return necessary to satisfy the owner."<sup>31</sup> In his theory for retrofitting, Crosby considered the integration of arts and architecture could be a means to maintain or even increase the market exchange value of aged structures, and to provide jobs in architecture and its cottage industries. Noteworthy was also that Crosby's ideas would have been received as part of the mainstream of preservation and regeneration practice in Britain at the time—as indicated by the burgeoning "heritage industry."<sup>32</sup> Pentagram's Unilever House renovation was also featured at a Royal Institute of British Architects seminar, in 1985, entitled "Profitable Rehab."<sup>33</sup>

### **Toward a New Ornament**

In Unilever House, Pentagram employed decorative elements as the generator of the retrofitting design. They established an alternative contractual model in which the client, Unilever, directly hired a team of artists, craftspeople, and tradespeople.<sup>34</sup> Pentagram argued that through the individuals' creativity and manual labor, their retrofitting accentuated the Art Deco characteristics, and hence increased the artistic and historical value of Unilever House.<sup>35</sup> Under such a framework, Unilever's in-house architects also maintained more control over the technical aspects of retrofitting, including the schedule and program of works.<sup>36</sup> The architect, meanwhile, served as the coordinator of the different parties who were involved in the project. In practice, the collaboration started by the team choosing a diamond shape pattern found in the building's original marble floor as the motif of the new design.<sup>37</sup> The artists, based on the motif, devised individual designs for the different parts of the building. For example, the glass designer Diane Radford developed a new diamond-shaped pattern for the decorative glass in the main lobby, which was then carried over to the design of the entrance revolving door.<sup>38</sup> The pattern was also modified and applied to fixtures such as railings, ceiling lights, and partition walls (Figure 2).<sup>39</sup> Pentagram's role was to orchestrate the collaborative work and design some elements when opportunities arose.<sup>40</sup> The result was a highly



Figure 2. Main Lobby of Unilever House after Pentagram's renovation. Radford's glass in the background. Photo: Pentagram.

decorative interior that bespoke handcrafted fixtures and ornaments unified under a similar pattern. Their use of high-quality materials and good craftsmanship also distinguished Unilever House renovation from the “flatness” of PoMo design that was prevalent at the time.<sup>41</sup>

On the one hand, the Unilever retrofitting was a rejection of the rudimentary simplicity found in postwar Modernist design and planning.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, Crosby, not unlike early twentieth-century Modernists, justified his design by positioning it as a response to economic and industrial conditions. The involvement of independent artists, craftspeople, and tradespeople resonated with the initiatives in promoting small businesses found in Britain at the time.<sup>43</sup> The retrofitting work also corresponded with the establishment of the Crafts Council, in the 1970s, that championed crafts as agents of industrial design. Although it was unlikely that Crosby had read Alois Reigl's *The Modern Cult of Monument* (1903), his approach overlapped with the classification found in the essay: Crosby aimed to increase the artistic and commemorative value of the monumental structure.<sup>44</sup> Crosby also measured the newness value of his additions, seeking to instantiate their purposes in the society that the building stood.

In their effort to upgrade Unilever House as the workspace for a multinational enterprise, Pentagram's performance was not always satisfactory. Although their Art Deco-inspired design offered opportunities to integrate building service elements in theory, their adaptability was limited in reality. For example, inspired by the diamond pattern, Crosby created columns with folded-metal capital that incorporated up-lighting fixtures (see Figure 2).<sup>45</sup> In the office space, Pentagram installed customized drop-ceilings based on the diamond pattern, distinguishing the Unilever office space from the conventional gypsum board suspended ceiling.<sup>46</sup> However, since bespoke elements were used widely in the project, they had to manufacture customized pipes and ducts that were more costly to construct. Other difficulties included predicting the light transmittance of the decorative light and undulating surfaces. Dimmers had to be installed in some areas to calibrate the lighting level, which also increased the cost.<sup>47</sup> However, one may also argue that prioritizing artistic value, over economy and efficiency, was the pursuit that undergirded the Unilever retrofitting.

Elsewhere in the building, Pentagram sought to inject and increase real estate and commercial value through artistic interventions. One of the major changes found in the Pentagram retrofitting was the enlargement of the windows on the top floors. The old bland walls on the top of the building had created an austere crowning for the Classicist façade but also rendered the attic space inhabitable (Figure 3).<sup>48</sup> The tall parapets also obstructed the view of the existing top floor. To add and improve the valuable floor spaces, Pentagram commissioned artist Nicholas Munro to create fourteen twice life-size statues to be placed in front of the new windows to draw attention away from the conversion.<sup>49</sup> They also argued that



Figure 3. Unilever House in 1932. The top of the building was a blank wall and not used as office spaces. Photo: RIBA Photo Library.

the addition reflected Lomax-Simpson's original design intent depicted in a 1929 elevation, which featured fourteen statues on the top parapet.<sup>50</sup> Moving beyond the conventional top-floor addition method that often required a setback, Pentagram demonstrated their ability to exchange artistic value for real-estate value.<sup>51</sup>

It is also worth noting that in addition to Munro's statues, Unilever commissioned a total of 250 artworks during the Pentagram retrofitting. This "art shopping spree," as described by the *Sunday Times*, could be regarded as a continuation of the corporation's long-established patronage in the arts.<sup>52</sup> It also resonated with the Percentage for Art campaign in England put forward by artists, architects, and critics, including Crosby, since 1982.<sup>53</sup> Motivated by similar initiatives such as the Public Art Fund in the United States, the Percentage for Art was hoping to rejuvenate the public realm in postindustrial cities.<sup>54</sup> However, these initiatives in Britain did not lead to a nationwide reform and were instead entrenched with controversies such as Prince Charles interventions in architecture.<sup>55</sup> The limitation of the Percent for Art can also be gleaned from the Unilever House project, where the artworks spoke little about the public realm. Although the works were visible to the public, they were mostly dedicated to visualizing and commemorating the history of the corporation. Moreover, at the time of the Pentagram retrofitting, the Unilever company had been laying off more than 20,000 workers for cost-cutting.<sup>56</sup> The public art commissions,

Figure 4. View of the Staff Canteen of Unilever House after Pentagram's renovation. Photo: Pentagram.

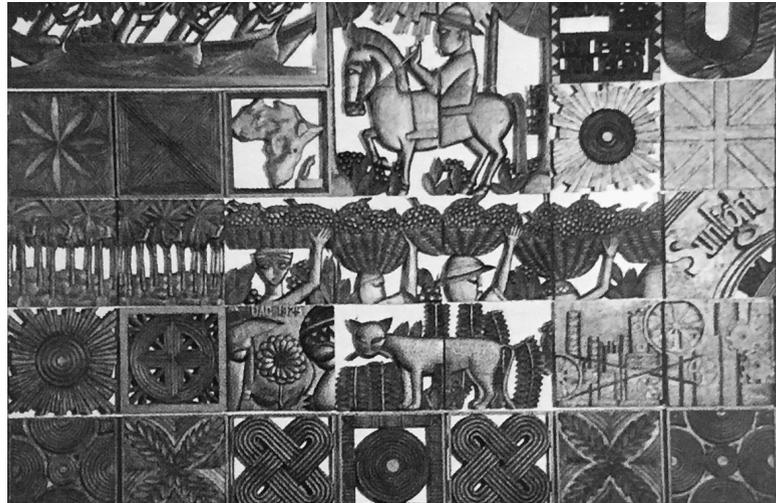


ironically, can also be seen as a mechanism for the corporation to shift their responsibilities to an abstract notion of social responsibilities and away from the welfare of the workers (as seen in the Port Sunlight project).

During Pentagram's retrofitting, the incorporation of arts and craft also inadvertently drew out more tenuous stories about Unilever's relationship with social responsibilities. In his design for the main lobby and staff canteen, Crosby used palm leaves—the raw material for Unilever's soap products—as the design motif (Figure 4). However, it was well known, even during William Lever's lifetime, that the company's expansion to acquire palm and coconut had brought about some of the worst labor exploitations in the South Pacific.<sup>57</sup> There were also artworks that made direct reference to the Lever Brothers' colonial history. A timber relief sent from United Africa International, produced by the Chief Erhabor Emokpae of Benin, portrayed William Lever's African "travels and enterprises" (Figure 5).<sup>58</sup> In the piece, African laborers carried coconuts with their hands, and heads are placed alongside modern machinery and the Sunlight label. Together, they stand underneath an enlarged figure, presumably William Lever, on horseback. The relief signified the company's association with colonial imperialism, but also obscured the much more violent and problematic reality. The United Africa International oversaw the Huileries du Congo Belge, a plantation that William Lever built on the former Congo Free State (land that was formerly directly ruled by Leopold II of Belgium, and where some of the most horrendous colonial atrocities were imposed), between 1911 and 1960. Various forms of conscripted, compulsory, and coerced labor, including child labor, were found in the 750,000 hectares concession the Lever Brothers received from the Belgian government.<sup>59</sup>

Pentagram's renovation also accidentally reenacted the company's colonial past. Crosby asked Unilever's subsidiaries

Figure 5. Wooden relief created by Chief Erhabor Emokpae of Benin featured in the Pentagram renovation of Unilever House. Photo: Pentagram.



from all over the world to contribute artworks to celebrate the retrofitting of the London headquarter. This call for participation and collective effort conveniently veneered over the fact that many of these subsidiaries were built upon colonial occupations. These Pentagram additions further highlighted the colonial association of the Unilever House — which was celebrated for its usage of “Empire Materials,” the finest materials gathered from different corners of the British Empire, when it was completed in 1932.<sup>60</sup> To solicit gifts from the subsidiaries can also be regarded as an alternative validation of the false belief that the colonies should be grateful for the modernization and industrialization brought by European colonization — a view that William Lever embraced.<sup>61</sup>

### Reducing Value

In comparison to Pentagram’s use of artistic value to trivialize speculation and exploitations, more questions about values in architecture can also be asked about the subsequent KPF renovation. KPF took a drastically different approach, and their design principle can perhaps best be described as inserting a twenty-first-century hi-tech office architecture behind a 1930s façade. They demolished all the existing structures except the Portland Stone façade and the foundation of the building. The existing lightwells were combined into a large atrium space (Figure 6). This reductive design approach to retrofitting may also be regarded as a reflection of the changing working conditions in Unilever. Due to the developments in telecommunication and automation, the corporation no longer needed the large quantity of office space provided in Unilever House. As part of the retrofitting, Unilever sold the Unilever House to the developer Stanhope and leased back part of the building.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, KPF also removed part of the rear of the building to further reduce the floor area of the building. As a result

of this partial demolition, the frontages of Unilever House increased from two to three. A large curtain-wall rear façade was introduced to the expanded rear facade. This opening up of the building is both physical and conceptual: the design seeks to signify a nonhierarchical and globalized network of trade and commerce. Glass walls or semitranslucent partitions replaced Pentagram’s highly decorative crafted panels.<sup>63</sup> The boardrooms and meetings, originally located on the top floor of the building, are distributed over different parts of the building, signifying Unilever’s new vision of a nonhierarchical, visible, and collaborative workspace.<sup>64</sup> A series of suspended platforms in the atrium spaces that function as meeting spaces and vertical circulation became the main visual element of the retrofitting. An artwork entitled “The Space Trumpet” made by artist Conard Shawcross is attached to these platforms to underscore their sculptural quality.<sup>65</sup> All of the artworks and decorations from Pentagram’s retrofitting was removed, and only a few artifacts from the 1930 original structure, including the Pewter panels created by Eric Gill, were preserved.<sup>66</sup> There is no celebration of colonial explorations, yet there is also no reference to the long and troubled history of the building and the corporation.

The theme of reduction is carried over to the process of retrofitting as well: the project paid significant attention to minimize the time required for material delivery, construction waste, day-to-day energy usage, to water run-off from the roof.<sup>67</sup> The project claimed to minimize landfill by achieving 87 percent recycling/reuse rate. They recycled and reused 6000 metric tons of steel, 5500 cubic meters of concrete, and 100 percent of the furniture.<sup>68</sup> Some of the materials were reused in the Unilever House, including most of the steel and the floorings. The furniture and a part of the structure were donated to schools and charity organizations in London.<sup>69</sup> The concrete was sent to a concrete crushing facility to be repurposed and reused in the building industry. In contrast to Pentagram’s emphasis on the individuality and meaning of each bespoke piece, KPF treated building materials as a collective whole. To preserve, for KPF, is less about maintaining or modifying the physical entity, but more about conserving the embodied energy found in the existing structure. In considering the relationship between the past and the present in their retrofitting work, KPF prioritized closing the material life cycle, instead of a stylistic dialogue with old architectural expressions. In these two retrofittings, one can find the meaning of “value” shifts from one definition to another. In the Oxford Dictionary, the word *value* can be defined as “the regard that something is held to deserve; importance or worth” or “the numerical amount denoted by an algebraic term; a magnitude, quantity,



Figure 6. Office and Atrium Space after KPF's renovation of Unilever House (2005). Photo: Wikicommon Image.

or number.”<sup>70</sup> In Pentagram’s retrofitting, the exchange of artistic value and real estate value suggests they adhered to the former definition. In the KPF retrofitting, the dematerialized and decontextualized method reconceptualizes the building and material as numerical amounts. This change in the understanding of value in architecture to the second definition also propelled the reductive approach in an age of environmental awakening.

### **Conclusion**

These two different approaches to retrofitting also tie to the changing notion of the environment in architectural culture. Both designers presented their projects as an attempt to tackle the environmental crisis of their time. The KPF retrofitting aligned the construction process and their design decisions with the aims of reduction, recycling, and reusing, as well as established sustainable building frameworks.<sup>71</sup> Influenced by publications such as E. F. Schumacher’s *Small Is Beautiful* (1973), Pentagram and Crosby also presented retrofitting projects, in general, as a means to reduce and reuse.<sup>72</sup> However, from Crosby’s writings, one can gauge that the main driver behind the decorative design was a critique of the monotonous and deteriorating built environment of their time.<sup>73</sup> To inject values into decaying old structures, for Pentagram and Crosby, was to ensure the sustainability and viability of the city environment that was under threat.<sup>74</sup>

These two retrofitting projects also offer an alternative means to reflect on the other crisis of our time. The Pentagram retrofitting is an addition to the ongoing debate about architectural heritage and colonial and racial injustice. It also draws attention to how later additions and retrofitting may perpetuate the problematic pasts that architecture embodied. In Britain, where many companies, industries, and institutions are directly or indirectly tied to imperialism, how one should retrofit seemingly conventional old structures such as offices, schools, and houses requires more consideration. At the time of writing, there have been initiatives to remove or at least remark on the colonial connotation of buildings. While these changes are only at an initial stage, there are growing debates and re-envisioning of what street, buildings, and public arts should signify. The Unilever retrofitting by KPF, meanwhile, provokes other difficult questions about the practice of white-washing—or greenwashing—history. The current methods and criteria stipulated by sustainability and green building regulations lean heavily on the numeric amount of emission and consumption, which may function as a distraction from the historical and cultural connotations of buildings. However, this emphasis on material matters does not necessarily lead to

a reduction in meaning: there are more stories to be told in the timbers, steels, and stones extracted from different corners of the empire and by exploited labor. In architectural history, there are emerging scholarships that delve into the colonial material origins and labor implication of building materials in Britain and America.<sup>75</sup> Existing studies in the history of economy and the theorization of new materialism and architecture can also scaffold this shift in architectural research and practice. Somewhat ironically, there are also new projects in former British colonies such as Hong Kong that diligently traces the material, labor, and knowledge network in colonial architecture.<sup>76</sup> While the discussions on these projects do not entirely shift away from colonial nostalgia, they are examples of how architectural retrofitting can critically demonstrate both the collaborations and oppressions found in colonial architecture. These studies and projects highlight that new design approaches can be devised to incorporate the uncomfortable facts about materials and labor in the cycle of reuse, reduce, and recycle.

#### Biography

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Anon., "Unilever House: A Monument of Commerce," *The Times*, July 19, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Clive Aslet, "Unilever House Blackfriars," *The Thirties Society Journal* 1 (1980): 18–21.

<sup>3</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design* (London: Pentagram, 1978). Theo Crosby, *Unilever House: Towards a New Ornament* (London: Pentagram, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Anon., "News in Brief; Unilever House," *Sunday Times*, October 5, 1986. Elizabeth Outka, *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism, and the Commodified Authentic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 46–49.

<sup>5</sup> Aslet, "Unilever House Blackfriars."

<sup>6</sup> Aslet, "Unilever House Blackfriars."

<sup>7</sup> Aslet, "Unilever House Blackfriars." Anon., "James Lomax-Simpson," Oxford Reference, 2011, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100113528>.

<sup>8</sup> Aslet, "Unilever House Blackfriars."

<sup>9</sup> For example, in 1933, Tait completed the Royal Masonic Hospital and, in 1934, terrace houses in St John's Wood London, which are both of Art-Deco modern style.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Reilly, "Unilever House: The New Building at Blackfriars," *The Times*, December 12, 1931. Reilly's favorable comment may be attributed to the fact that Lord Leverhulme was a patron of the Liverpool School of Architecture, which he chaired.

<sup>11</sup> Anon., "Steel Furniture at Unilever House by Sankey-Sheldon," *The Times*, July 19, 1932, sec. Advertisement.

<sup>12</sup> "The £37m Face-Lift," *Architect & Surveyor*, May 1982, 5.

<sup>13</sup> "London County Council Metropolitan Management and Building Acts Amendment Act 1868 Section 12 and 13 Licensing of Places of Public Entertainment: Public Control Committee Report by the Architect to the Council," Case No. 2537. Unilever House, Victoria Embankment, E.C. 10<sup>th</sup>, and 23rd July 1942 in London Metropolitan Archive, folder LMC GLC/AR/BR/19/2537.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Williams, "Rehab de Lux," *Building*, February 26, 1982, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Royal Institute of British Architects, "Profitable Rehab: A One Day Seminar Held at the Royal Institute of British Architects" (London: Royal Institute of British Architects, 1985).

- <sup>16</sup> Richard J. Williams, *The Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2004), 6–8.
- <sup>17</sup> In the reporting of the Unilever House retrofitting, journalists also remarked that “it was fashionable to talk about relocation” in the late 1960s and early 1970s London. “The £37m Face-Lift,” 4.
- <sup>18</sup> “Pentagram — the World’s Largest Independent Design Consultancy,” Company Website, 2020, <https://www.pentagram.com/>.
- <sup>19</sup> Emily King, “Obituaries: Alan Fletcher,” *The Independent*, September 25, 2006.
- <sup>20</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design*. Pentagram, *Pentagram: The Work of Five Designers* (London: Lund Humphries, 1972).
- <sup>21</sup> King, “Obituaries: Alan Fletcher.”
- <sup>22</sup> Theo Crosby, *The Pessimist Utopia* (London: Pentagram, 1974).
- <sup>23</sup> Crosby, in the current historiography of British architect, is mostly known for his role as the technical editor of *Architectural Design* as well as the organizer of the now canonized 1956 exhibition *This is Tomorrow*. Simon Sadler, “Theo Crosby’s Environment Games 1956–1973,” in *Exhibiting Architecture: A Paradox?*, ed. Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen (New Haven: Yale School of Architecture, 2014), 99–106. Salomon Frausto, “Sketches of a Utopian Pessimist,” *AA Files* 75 (January 2018): 162–68. Stephen Parnell, “Brute Forces,” *Architectural Review*, June 2012.
- <sup>24</sup> Theo Crosby, *The Necessary Monument* (London: Studio Vista, 1970).
- <sup>25</sup> Crosby, *The Necessary Monument*.
- <sup>26</sup> Crosby, *The Pessimist Utopia*.
- <sup>27</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design*, 174–75.
- <sup>28</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design*, 174–75.
- <sup>29</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design*, 174.
- <sup>30</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design*, 174.
- <sup>31</sup> Pentagram, *Living by Design*, 174.
- <sup>32</sup> Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).
- <sup>33</sup> Royal Institute of British Architects, *Profitable Rehab: A One Day Seminar Held at the Royal Institute of British Architects* (London: RIBA, 1985).
- <sup>34</sup> Crosby, *Unilever House*.
- <sup>35</sup> Timothy Olster, “Working with Artists: 3 Case Studies,” *The Architects’ Journal*, February 1984, 64–66.
- <sup>36</sup> Olster, “Working with Artists: 3 Case Studies.”
- <sup>37</sup> Crosby, *Unilever House*.
- <sup>38</sup> Crosby, *Unilever House*.
- <sup>39</sup> Gavin Stamp, “Inner Light,” *The Architects’ Journal*, February 1982. Anon., “Service in Style,” *Building Services*, July 1982.
- <sup>40</sup> Olster, “Working with Artists: 3 Case Studies,” 64.
- <sup>41</sup> John Stokdyk, “Maverick with Message,” *Building*, May 1988.
- <sup>42</sup> Crosby, *The Pessimist Utopia*.
- <sup>43</sup> During the second Harold Wilson government, a Committee of Inquiry on Small Firms resulted in the Bolton Report. In the following years, to support the growth of small businesses became an issue that was supported by both major parties in Britain. David Kirby, “Government and Policy for SMEs in the UK,” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 22 (2004): 775–77.
- <sup>44</sup> Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origins,” *Oppositions: A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture* 25 (Fall 1982): 21–56. Riegl’s essay was translated into English in 1982, after the publication of Crosby’s writing on “Glooming the White Elephant” and *The Necessary Monument*.
- <sup>45</sup> Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments.”
- <sup>46</sup> Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” 24.
- <sup>47</sup> Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” 25.
- <sup>48</sup> Aslet, “Unilever House Blackfriars.”
- <sup>49</sup> Olster, “Working with Artists: 3 Case Studies.” “Unilever House London- Unilever PLC,” Archival Record at the Unilever Archive, GB1752.UNI/PLC/UH
- <sup>50</sup> Aslet, “Unilever House Blackfriars.”
- <sup>51</sup> Such a strategy was also found in other Pentagram retrofitting projects such as the Ulster Terrace, originally designed by John Nash, where they created an undulating façade where the largest addition was conveniently found at the top floor where the value was the highest.
- <sup>52</sup> Anon., “News in Brief: Unilever House,” *Sunday Times*, October 5, 1986.
- <sup>53</sup> Deanna Petherbridge, “Art and Architecture,” *Art Monthly*, November 1982. The Art and Architecture campaign was launched after a conference held at the ICA London in 1982, and speakers included artist John Maine and Stephen Lobb, art critic Kate Linker, and architectural critics including Kenneth Frampton, Joseph Rykwert, Charles Jencks, Robert Maxwell, and Crosby.

- <sup>54</sup> Kate Linker, "Provision and Persuasions in US Public Art," *Art Monthly*, November 1982.
- <sup>55</sup> The Arts & Architecture sought the patronage of Prince Charles. Several of the groups' meetings and newsletters were dominated by the debates on Mansion House redevelopment, which led to discontent from artists and craftspeople due to the dominance of architectural debates. *Arts and Architecture Newsletter* 21 & 27, Arts & Architecture Archive. Royal College of Art Library Special Collection.
- <sup>56</sup> Anon., "News in Brief; Unilever House," *Sunday Times*, October 5, 1986.
- <sup>57</sup> Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts: Colonial Exploitation in the Congo* (London: Verso, 2017), 234–51.
- <sup>58</sup> Crosby, *Unilever House*.
- <sup>59</sup> Brian Lewis, *So Clean: Lord Leverhulme, Soap and Civilisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 183. Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts*.
- <sup>60</sup> Anon., "Unilever House: A Monument of Commerce."
- <sup>61</sup> Lewis, *So Clean*, 155–56.
- <sup>62</sup> The structure was also renamed 100VE after the renovation. Unilever, *100 Victoria Embankment: the Redevelopment of Unilever's London Headquarters* (London: Unilever, 2007).
- <sup>63</sup> Unilever, *100 Victoria Embankment*, 34–35.
- <sup>64</sup> Unilever, *100 Victoria Embankment*, 25.
- <sup>65</sup> Conrad Shawcross, "Space Trumpet [2007]," Conrad Shawcross, 2007, <http://conradshawcross.com/blog/project/space-trumpet-2007/>.
- <sup>66</sup> Christian Bensing, "Unilever House London," *Detail*, 2008, 242.
- <sup>67</sup> Lisa Page, "Unilever House: A Bovis Lend Lease Stanhope Alliance Project," Project Report (London: Bovis Lend Lease, 2008).
- <sup>68</sup> Page, "Unilever House."
- <sup>69</sup> Unilever, *100 Victoria Embankment*, 16–17.
- <sup>70</sup> Catherine Soanes and Stevenson Angus, eds., "Value," in *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2137961325?accountid=12117>.
- <sup>71</sup> The building was awarded "excellence" under BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method).
- <sup>72</sup> E. F. Schumacher, *SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: Economics as If People Mattered* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1973). Crosby, *The Pessimist Utopia*.
- <sup>73</sup> Crosby, *Unilever House*.
- <sup>74</sup> Crosby has written and exhibited about the decaying urban environment, including his 1973 exhibition at the Hayward Gallery *How to Play the Environment Game*.
- <sup>75</sup> Historian Irene Cheng, for example, examines how timber from Burmese teak plantations and British Honduran mahogany forests was used in bungalows in California. Irene Cheng, "Forest, Plantation, Bungalow," in *Marginal Landscapes* (72nd Society of Architectural Historian Annual Conference, Providence, 2019).
- <sup>76</sup> For example, the Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage and Art in Hong Kong converts a former colonial prison and courthouse into a public art venue. The bricks of the existing structure, which were produced in northern England in the mid-nineteenth century are reproduced and again shipped from England to Hong Kong for the retrofitting. They also examined the use of Canton (the region of Hong Kong), Amoy (name given by the Europeans to Xiamen, Fujian) and Formosa (Taiwan under Japanese colonial rule) bricks in the existing building. Enid Tsui, "Hong Kong Central Police Station Restoration," *South China Morning Post*, June 15, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/2150710/hong-kong-central-police-station-restoration-how-citys-most-ambitious>. Purcell Miller Tritton LLP, "The Old Central Police Station and Victoria Prison Hong Kong: Conservation Management Plan" (Hong Kong: Tai Kwun, June 2008).