
Hertford and Dorchester: Two London Treasure Houses

Dates	Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 February 2024
Times	18.00-20.00 GMT
Location	Online (Zoom Webinar)
Tutor	Dr Ralph St Clair Wade
Level	All Levels



English School, *Hertford House*, about 1812-3

Course Description

Sir Richard Wallace and Robert Stayner Holford were both avid art collectors. Both men had the common ambition to build a London townhouse in which to display their remarkable collections. Explore the monumental results of their work: Hertford House, Marylebone, and Dorchester House, Park Lane.

Despite being the home of the Wallace Collection today, remarkably little is known about Hertford House. Who was the original architect, and who was the mysterious T B Ambler who secured the prestigious commission to rebuild it? Dorchester House is an even greater challenge. Demolished to make way for the famous namesake hotel in 1929, only the architect's intricate drawings survive.

Discover the remarkable story of two of London's greatest treasure houses and engage with rare archival material from the Wallace Collection and the RIBA. You'll gain an appreciation of Victorian architecture at its richest, and of the community of architects and artists that made London's 'Gilded Age' a reality.

Presented in collaboration with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Session One: Hertford House, Marylebone

Hertford House, although well-known as the home of the Wallace Collection today, is a surprisingly mysterious building. Built as Manchester House in 1776 and flamboyantly remodelled for Sir Richard Wallace in 1872, little is known about either its original architect or its Victorian remodelling.

In our first session, we'll establish the facts behind this prestigious commission, before getting to grips with the present building. Our virtual tour will reveal the Georgian remains beneath the Victorian opulence, and uncover the fragments of Sir Richard Wallace's lost Turkish Smoking Room. Close study of archival prints and drawings will also reveal 18th-century sources for Hertford House's magnificent interiors.

Session Two: Dorchester House, Park Lane

Dorchester House, Park Lane was London's preeminent Victorian townhouse. Its patron, Robert Stayner Holford, was a prolific art collector who built his house both for display and entertainment. In a strange twist of fate, the Georgian house he rebuilt had previously housed the core of the present-day Wallace Collection. Holford's architect, Lewis Vulliamy, was a pupil of Sir Robert Smirke, and his sculptor, Alfred Stevens, was later celebrated for his work in St Paul's Cathedral. Holford's new house only lasted 76 years.

In our second session, we'll work with a wealth of surviving architectural drawings to reconstruct this lost masterpiece. You'll see Vulliamy's intricate Italianate drawings - complete with his annotations and changes-of-mind - and Alfred Stevens's more expansive, impressionistic sketches.

Course Tutor

Dr Ralph St Clair Wade lectures in the History of Art at the University of Cambridge. He holds PhD and MPhil degrees from St John's College, Cambridge where he graduated top of his year. His work has been funded by Cambridge and Yale Universities and is published in *Architectural History* and *The Buildings of Scotland* ('Pevsner'). His recent projects include lectures at the National Gallery, London; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and at the Royal Institute of British Architects. He is a sporadic contributor to *Private Eye* magazine.

Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience

None required. This course is designed as an introduction to the subject.

Joining Information and Format

This course will be taught through [Zoom Webinar](#). Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute break and time for Q&A with the tutor.

Tickets are for both dates. Ticket holders will be emailed the Zoom link, Webinar ID and Passcode 24 hours in advance of the first course session, which should be retained for accessing both sessions of the course.

Course Recording

This course will be recorded. Within 48 hours of each course session, ticket holders will be emailed a link to view the recording, which will be available for two weeks only.
