Printed Objects and Ready-Mades in the Architectural Magazine (1834-38)

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Author(s):
Hultzsch, Anne

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Printed Objects and Ready-Mades in the *Architectural Magazine* (1834-38)

Anne Hultzsch, ETH Zurich, June 2021, preprint

**Introduction**

[Fig.1 John Loudon’s Architectural Magazine, vol.1, 1834. Private collection.]

In the *Architectural Magazine* (1834-38), commonly cited as the first of its kind in Britain, articles on designed objects often make for more entertaining reading than those on what we now more specifically refer to as ‘architecture’. Reflecting the dynamic meaning of what was considered ‘architectural’ in the 1830s, the *Magazine* was filled with illustrated descriptions of appliances often intended for mass production, ranging from a ‘simple and effective Preventive for the Slamming of a Passage Door’, a portable shower-bath, a ‘fastening for a Dressing-Room Glass’, as well as endless types of stoves and prefabricated – ready-made – objects. As such, the *Magazine* bears witness to the dialectics of architecture and design as they unfolded at this moment in Britain.

John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), founder and editor of the *Architectural Magazine*, was not an architect in the strict sense, neither by training nor by experience. Nevertheless, he shaped the field of architecture at a crucial moment: in the decade in which the Royal Institute of British Architects was founded, it was all but clear who was an ‘architect’ or who should produce – and judge – the ‘architectural’. Did one need to have had specific training in a college or institution? Not yet. The architectural profession was not an exclusive circle and the term ‘architectural’ even less so. Loudon attempted to make use of this somewhat accidental inclusivity to establish a level intellectual playing field among anyone involved with building: from the carpenter and artisan to the student, architect, amateur, and client, everyone should *read* the same publication. Playing to his strengths as a seasoned editor and author, he employed the relatively young genre of the specialised magazine to reach new audiences. In this, Loudon could draw on his experiences with the successful *Gardner’s Magazine* (1826-44), the *Magazine of Natural History* (1828-36), as well as a number of

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encyclopaedias, among which the often-quoted Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture (first edition 1832-33). By the 1830s, Loudon had published, often in collaboration with his wife Jane Webb Loudon, an astonishing number of books, articles, and magazines, mainly on agricultural and botanical subjects, but also of political nature and, increasingly, on architectural matters. Loudon was also a convinced republican, a follower of Bentham, and has even been called a feminist. Following these convictions, he attempted to spread knowledge about architectural forms, including the styles but also technologies, beyond those who would previously have been exposed to them, including the working classes and the female client and homemaker. He was not the first or only one in this endeavour; but he was the first attempt in Britain to facilitate an inclusive arena of building practitioners and users by means of a serial print publication.

When the Magazine’s first issue came out in March 1834, it addressed three reader groups: first, the expected: the architect, the architectural student, and the ‘amateur’, that quintessentially eighteenth-century white, mostly male, figure, privileged through upbringing, education, social networks, and the opportunity to travel. Second, less expected: anyone who ‘occupies … houses … and especially the female portion of it’, remarkable for the inclusion of women in an ‘architectural’ audience. Finally there is a third group, which is perhaps least expected from today’s vantage point: anyone involved with the erecting and equipping of buildings; thus, artisans and mechanics. By targeting this diverse readership, the Magazine attempted to create a visually literate public across all strata of society, able to recognise good design from bad and thus creating and encouraging a better built environment – preceding similar twentieth-century concerns of the likes of Herbert Read or Nikolaus Pevsner.

This chapter examines the relationship between the first and the third group, or rather, their designed outputs in print; the object – both the one-off and the ready-made – and its relationship to the designed space, the building. What role did the object play in Loudon’s project of taste-improvement? How could objects, perhaps more than buildings, help him in reaching his intended audience? More specifically, how could the mass-produced, ready-made ornament in print contribute to higher standards in architectural design, Loudon’s aim? Further, in light of the wider questions asked by this collection of essays as a whole, what can we, as historians of architecture and/or of

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5 While remarkable, this was not meant to encourage women to actually become architects. Rather, they were encouraged to take a share in improving homes, as homemakers, clients, and patrons, given adequate education and knowledge. In this sense, it is another demonstration of the unspecific and inclusive concept of the architectural world, rather than a call for wider access to the architectural profession. See John C. Loudon, ‘Introduction’, The Architectural Magazine 1 (March 1834): 4.
design, learn from the free mixing of objects and buildings on the Magazine’s pages? What were, and are, the consequences of this inclusivity, of bringing together all stakeholders of the design world, if we can call it thus, on the same page, into the same discursive space?

Printed Objects

The Architectural Magazine was founded in precisely the same year, 1834, as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), until today the arbiter of architectural taste, judging with an array of awards, medals, and guidelines what constitutes the ‘good’ building. Both institute and magazine were born from the loose definitions of what it meant to be an architect in Britain at the time, but they reflected this vacuum in very different ways. While the RIBA mirrored the contemporary struggle about the need for clearer professional definitions alongside educational specialisation, Loudon’s Magazine exploited and expanded the space opened up by the vague meaning of ‘architectural’. However, there was direct alienation between these two positions: Loudon did not antagonise proponents of professionalisation; indeed, the Magazine regularly printed reports of the RIBA’s meetings, clearly they had to be part of the conversation – but his was a larger one, with space for both a larger architectural audience as well as a wider range of architectural objects and buildings. Thus, the RIBA – as an institute of architecture – and the magazine – the architectural in print – simply served different purposes and audiences. As such, the Magazine is neither pioneer nor latecomer, but reflects a particular moment in which building and object could operate in the same sphere.

At the time, print cultures put a spotlight on contemporary paradigms of professional exclusivity as well as more divers, inclusive approaches. While, as Richard Wittmann has shown, in eighteenth-century France print empowered architectural debate among the bourgeoisie, in early nineteenth-century Britain, it led to an even further expansion, accompanied by an increasing fragmentation: as printing became cheaper, faster, and more varied in terms of word-image relationships, new print genres sprang up enticing all strata of society to engage with the world of buildings and objects. Literacy rates improved, but even the illiterate, or those with low reading skills, participated through illustrated broadsides, pamphlets, and posters. Much of this was market driven. There was money to be made with cheap periodicals and serial fiction, especially given the gradually reduced taxes on paper and print products.

Loudon’s unique contribution to this shifting arena of design practices lay in formalising a status quo in print and turning it into a project of increasing equality: knowledge about architectural principles, and as a consequence, taste, should be shared more widely and purposefully, and in particular with those who actually did the building. Boldly, he argued that,

taste … is not necessarily connected with wealth: it may be possessed by the journeyman, carpenter, mason, bricklayer, or cabinet-maker in as high a degree as by the architect, surveyor, or learned and wealthy amateur. In all it must first exist naturally, and in all it must be improved by cultivation.9

The subtitle of the Architectural Magazine indicates this wide-ranging project of ‘cultivation’, indicating both a didactic as well as a promotional intent: Journal of Improvement in Architecture, Building, and Furnishing, and in the Various Arts and Trades Connected Therewith. ‘Improvement’ is central here: as many British architectural writers of the early nineteenth-century, Loudon’s writing is characterised by a frustration with contemporary architectural production, especially in the growing fringes of the larger cities. Many were the attempts to improve matters, ranging from reforming architectural education or establishment of a builders’ guild.10 Loudon’s endeavour, however, must be placed in the context of both a boom in popular educational literature and a rise of institutions for adult education, rather than in that of the emerging architectural profession. In London, the Royal Institution was founded in 1799 by leading scientists with the clear intent to spread scientific thinking (and perhaps especially mechanical innovation with the potential to increase industrial capital) beyond the walls of Oxford and Cambridge. Smaller subscription-based institutions sprang up around the country in the first decade of the nineteenth century, in Surrey and Birmingham for instance, besides the London and Russell Institutions in the capital. All offered an array of lectures on the sciences, but also the arts, history, geography, and more applied subjects such as mechanics. Institutes commonly had libraries, very comprehensive in the case of the larger institutions and often located in newly erected substantial buildings, spreading the influence of new journals and books even further. And there was another link between physical lecture space and printed page: often, lectures given in these institutions were collected and published as books, such as James Elmes’ Lectures on Architecture, Comprising the History of the Art from the Earliest Times to the Present Day (first edition 1821, second 1823). This demonstrates the close link between physical, oratorial space and the printed, read page.

In the 1820s, another movement joined this world of adult education, that of the Mechanics’ Institutes, which aimed explicitly at the working classes (even if it failed eventually, reaching at best the situated mechanic and clerk). Again, the physical venues of education are accompanied by printed sites, by means of the weekly Mechanics’ Magazine, a title praised also by Loudon. The cheap magazine, octavo sized, and sold weekly at three pence, transformed the dissemination of specialized information and knowledge. In the attempt to popularize knowledge from two keys arenas of the period – the sciences and the colonial project of Empire – among the working classes, it covered subjects ranging from air pumps and the ‘ancient inhabitants’ of America to bedchamber bolts and the effects of the imagination. An equally eclectic mix of topics, with just a little less emphasis on mechanics and more on what can be called ‘culture’ was present in the Penny Magazine, also issued weekly from 1832. Both these magazines were part of a general trend in publication from the 1820s onwards, which saw whole publishing houses specialise in cheap educational literature. Lardner’s Cabinet Cyclopædia, for instance, included treatises on optics, mechanics, and chemistry, but also statistical surveys on the production and trade of silk and porcelain. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, also responsible for the Penny Magazine, published biweekly titles in its Library of Useful Knowledge. The readers of journals and magazines were thus joined by those of surveys and textbooks targeting previously excluded groups, such as tradesmen, workers, or women. Generally, one can attest in this period not only a ‘second print revolution’, as publication historians have done, but also an explosion of campaigns for educational improvement among the working and middle classes.

The success of such publications was not always a given, but those that did sell, often sold very well. The Mechanics’ Magazine reached a circulation of about 16,000 copies per issue, while the Penny Magazine topped an unprecedented print run of 100,000. Both the specialised and the general-interest title thus maintained a very respectable readership, especially considering the sharing of copies in both private contexts as well as in libraries and coffeehouses. In comparison, the more highbrow Athenæum sold only between 500 and 1000 weekly copies in 1830, while The Times issued just

under 6000 copies daily.\textsuperscript{16} While the \textit{Athenaeum} had a more literary tone, both the \textit{Penny} and the \textit{Mechanics’ Magazines} were explicitly of an instructive nature, exploiting the advances in diagrammatic representations of complex objects and processes. The image of the object bridged ways into technical literacy at the same time as marketing new products. It is in this sense, of what Brian Maidment has called ‘the new market-driven, commodity visual culture of the 1820s and 1830s’, that building-object relationships in the \textit{Architectural Magazine} must be examined.\textsuperscript{17}

Even if Loudon was aware of earlier architectural journals and often quoted from German, French and other European sources, his own magazines were much closer to publications such as the \textit{Mechanics’ Magazine} and the \textit{Penny Magazine}. He employed both the instructive tone of these magazines as well as an emphasis on using illustrations whenever he had them available (and the funds to print them). He also kept to their cheap pricing – monthly issues of the \textit{Architectural Magazine} cost 2 pence – and their format – a slim octavo. In comparison, Loudon’s \textit{Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture} was sold at £3 3s, an impossible price for London bricklayers with a daily income of about 5 shilling per day or a labourer earning just over half as much.\textsuperscript{18} Even if books were often sold in cheaper instalments, when aiming at the working classes, the advantage of a magazine becomes immediately apparent. This was valid not only in terms of affordability, but also of content: a magazine did not need a stringent order, a plot with a beginning and an end. Instead, it took both the form of a storehouse of miscellanea (a magazine, literally) and of a conversation, through its seriality; a place of exchange characterised by a diversity of voices, rather than a monolithic organ. A magazine could be coherent while including a wide diversity of subjects, objects of different scale, theories and histories, as well as very technical articles, promoting Loudon’s project of equal access to taste and judgement. In short, it was much better suited to the ‘architectural’ as a non-hierarchical space of buildings and objects.

(\textit{Un})architectural Objects

The title vignette of the \textit{Architectural Magazine}, drawn by one of its most frequent contributors, the architect Edward Buckton Lamb, described the wide range of contents which Loudon intended to include as a list of practices: architecture, building, furnishing, ironmongery, cabinet-making, joinery, carpentry, and so on and on. These linked not only to the subjects covered but also to the magazine’s readers. Any one of the implied practitioners – the architect, the builder, the ironmonger, the cabinet-

\textsuperscript{16} Unless otherwise stated, all figures quoted here on print runs are taken from Richard D. Altick, \textit{The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900} (Ohio State University Press, 1998), 393–95.


maker, the joiner, the carpenter, up to the road-maker and engineer – would find material of direct interest, and benefit from all the rest too. As this list implied, the ‘objects’ discussed in the *Architectural Magazine* varied widely, besides architecture, and readers found articles on what we would now call interior decoration as well as furniture, ornaments, inventions and machines, tools, and much else. More often than not, such matter was addressed both to the artisan or mechanic who would execute it, as well as the architect. As one author of an article on ‘Advantages of Painting and Papering the Walls of Apartments’ wrote,

> One step towards the improvement of any trade or profession is, to disseminate a proper knowledge of it . . .; for, when this point is accomplished, such a trade or profession is more likely to become a general topic of conversation, and, when improvements are made, they will thereby have a better chance of being understood and appreciated.\(^{19}\)

Essentially, the magazine hoped to trigger a snowball-effect ‘conversation’ in print. By exposing more and more readers to a discourse about design, Loudon hoped to raise both the quality of the discourse as well as that of its designed outcome, whether building or object. In the following, I examine four objects, presented in turn by a surveyor, an architect, a builder, and an inventor, to explore both their relationship to the building as well as, more widely, the concept of ‘architectural’ in the *Magazine*.

[Fig. 3 ‘A Temporary Table, Or Ironing-Board, for Small Country Cottages’, *Architectural Magazine*, February 1838. Hathi Trust, public domain.]

In February 1838, a somewhat regular contributor, W.S., elsewhere attributed as being a surveyor, published a description of a simple, yet ingenious device in the *Architectural Magazine*: ‘A Temporary Table, Or Ironing-Board, for Small Country Cottages’.\(^{20}\) The article, a little more than half a page, was accompanied by an axonometric sketch showing how the temporary table, or ironing board, doubled as a window shutter. Text and image here were closely aligned with the text describing the contraption in some detail so that it could be easily replicated. While simple, this utilitarian piece of furniture demonstrated the fluidity between ‘architecture’ and ‘design’. It turned the building itself into a piece of furniture, and vice versa, blurring the lines between building and object. In the end, both are united through utility and the intent to better the human condition.

In the previous issue, Edward B. Lamb, the author of the *Magazine*’s title vignette and one of Loudon’s most frequent contributors, had contributed a piece entitled ‘On Furniture’. Lamb was to equal measure architect, draftsman, and author, publishing almost as fervently as Loudon himself. In this article, he discussed the difficulties that arose from applying similar paradigms to both

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20 S. W., ‘A Temporary Table, Or Ironing-Board, for Small Country Cottages’, *Architectural Magazine* 5, no. 28 (February 1838): 75.
architectural and furniture design, to building and object. Lamenting ‘the want of some knowledge of the styles and details of architecture by upholsterers’, he pointed to ‘many absurdities which we frequently discover in ornamental furniture’. His criticism was not limited to the artisan, however; architects themselves, he argued, too often looked on furniture design as ‘derogatory to the art’. To counter this, Lamb called on both architects and artisans to strive for three paradigms when designing furniture: ‘usefulness and comfort’ first, then ‘beauty of proportion’, and finally ‘unity with surrounding objects’. Furniture and the design of the room it was placed in had to be in harmony to entirely ‘satisfy the mind’. A ‘union’ between object and building, Lamb demanded, could only be achieved by ‘the propriety and fitness of the minor details’. It was not a matter of simply attaching decorative columns and cornices to any piece of furnishing, clearly more thorough knowledge of underlying ideas of harmony and decorum was necessary.21

[Fig. 4 Lamb’s design of a piano, , Architectural Magazine, January 1838. Hathi Trust, public domain.]

Lamb explained these difficulties by presenting his own design for an upright piano, solving what he attested as the ‘very unarchitectural character’ of the grand piano.22 Why ‘unarchitectural’? It was the form ‘prescribed by its uses’ and the considerable size of the instrument which preoccupied Lamb. His solution essentially stripped the instrument of its recognisable appearance, turning the mechanism and strings not only upright (from horizontal in the grand piano), as had been devised as recently as 1826 by Robert Wornum in London, but also downwards, in order to keep the space above the keyboard free for a singing voice to spread easily – or perhaps more to hide its original form.23 In the illustration, we find an object perhaps more akin to a mantelpiece, complete with vases on pedestals flanking a framed painting or mirror above. The only distinctions are a closed console, containing the keyboard (but rather short looking), two pedals (awkwardly hovering at its bottom edge without a clear connection to the inside of the instrument), and a stool placed in front. No columns are applied anywhere, instead the mantelpiece turned piano is treated as part of the wall, with panels and decorative inlays and a hint of a cornice from which the keyboard projects. While a lot more carefully designed than the ironing table by W.S., the object here is equally made ‘architectural’. While the ironing board emphasised its utility through its plainness, both it and Lamb’s piano were multifunctional, disguising one potential use (shutter or instrument) while being employed for another (table or mantelpiece). At the same time, neither building nor object are sovereign, physically attached to each other, conditioning each other’s appearance and use, united by an ‘architectural’ character.

22 Lamb, 27.
As utility, beauty, and context were crucial to the design of building and object, so were the technologies and materials dominant at the time. It was in the latter the that most obvious change occurred in the course of the industrial revolution during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, discussed at length in the *Magazine*. An article in the very first issue in March 1834, signed by ‘Mr. William Rose, Builder’, proposed slate to replace marble in the furniture for ‘the middling classes and the poor’; tabletops could be made out of slate ‘with or without margins of wood, or, in some cases, of cast iron or copper … or even zink’ and supports ‘might be cast iron bronzed’. As many other articles, Rose gave the cost for such a table (slate 15s, joiners work 2l, painting 12s, plus 20% as these were, he adds, ‘trade prices’) concluding that, in the end, ‘you have … a very cheap, durable, and, as I think, handsome sideboard’. As was his habit, Loudon added a comment to the article applauding Rose’s proposal as both practical, thus useful, and handsome, thus pleasant.24

[Fig. 5 ‘Marble Table, with a Cast-Iron Pillar, Constructed on an Economical Principle’, *Architectural Magazine*, October 1834. Private Collection]

A very similar design was presented in the *Magazine* again just a few months later, in October 1834, by John Robison, a Scottish inventor and scientific administrator. He became a regular contributor and later published proposals for other inventions, such as a lamp post which included a water fountain for dogs or a heating and ventilation system for public buildings.25 His ‘Marble Table, with a Cast-Iron Pillar, Constructed on an Economical Principle’ was praised for its reproducibility, its appearance, as well as, as the title indicated, its economy: ‘It makes a very handsome piece of furniture, yet is very moderate in its cost’.26 Going as far as including prices for marble in France as well as the cost for freight from there to Edinburgh, the article reinforced the fundamental categories of judgement: utility, economy, and aesthetics. In the *Architectural Magazine*, both building and object had to adhere to this paradigmatic triad, again blurring distinctions between the two categories.

As Rose’s slate table, Robison’s marble table was presented by means of two sets of images: a perspectival view of the whole, including shading to render it more three-dimensional, and a diagrammatic drawing including letters indicating specific parts with the accompanying text serving as an extended legend, noting that ‘the screw-bolts, for screwing the base of the pillar to the plinth on which it stands, are shown at a’.27 This was common practice in books and journals and one perfected by Loudon both in the *Encyclopaedia* as well as in his *Gardener’s Magazine*. Sarah Dewis has referred to Loudon’s use of illustrations as an ‘epistemology of the image’, as he combined diagrams,

26 John Robison, ‘Notice of a Marble Table, with a Cast-Iron Pillar, Constructed on an Economical Principle, Under the Direction of John Robison, Esq.’, *Architectural Magazine* 1, no. 8 (October 1834): 308–9.
27 Robison.
such as that by Robison, with pictures, sketches, vignettes, maps, plans, or other image types, training his readers is deciphering their meaning. In this context, there is very little difference in the representational techniques employed in depicting a building or an object. The fact that such emphasis was given to the image in its different modes was, however, remarkable. More expensive and more highbrow literary magazines often purposefully avoided including more than one image on the title page. As Dewis has remarked, in early nineteenth-century periodicals ‘written text was privileged over images because of the latter's associations with the less literate culture of the poor, women and children’. Loudon included images both to render complex matters clearer as well as to provide an inclusive space for object and buildings to mingle.

**Ready-made Objects**

Evidently, reproducibility played an increasing role in any aspects of design over the first decades of the nineteenth century. One much discussed, and applied, material was artificial stone, and Loudon was a particular proponent of it. Already in the *Encyclopaedia* as well as the *Gardener’s Magazine*, he had drawn his readers’ attention to the products of Austin & Seeley, one of the leaders in the field of architectural and garden ornaments supplying everyone from the suburban middle classes to later Queen Victoria herself. The company kept a show yard on what is now Euston Road, referred to by Loudon as ‘Mr. Austin’s very interesting museum’. Loudon’s use of the term museum presents the commercial space of the sales shop as a collection with scientific, artistic, and cultural aspirations. Without concerns about truth in materiality, which would later concern the arts and crafts, Loudon regarded artificial stone as a tool in his project of widening access to the cultural good of decorations and ornaments.

Austin & Seeley’s products were the subject of repeated articles in the *Architectural Magazine* and their designs are found in advertisements across the contemporary press, from the *Morning Chronicle* to the *Civil Engineer and Architect’s Journal*. In October 1834, Loudon declared that the demand for artificial stone as well as its durability was now unquestioned, yet what ‘appears to be wanting is, to make known generally to architects, and to amateurs of architecture and garden scenery, what can be effected in this material, at a price … extremely moderate when compared with that of real stone’. Ornaments such as those reproduced on the pages of the *Architectural Magazine*

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29 Ibid.
31 Loudon, ‘Notice of Some Designs for Architectural Fountains, Manufactured in Artificial Stone by Mr. Austin of London’. 
could do for outdoor decoration, both as parts of buildings as well as in gardens and parks, what Lamb had done for the piano (even if Lamb might not have agreed with this).

[Fig. 6 Ornaments by Austin & Seeley in the Architectural Magazine, June 1834. Private Collection.]

Harmony, in this sense, was however not equivalent with homogeneity. Influenced not least by ideas of the Picturesque as developed by Price and Knight, Loudon fervently argued for greater variety and less regularity, extending this to the design of the new suburbs.\(^{32}\) This was not the same kind of variety that Ruskin would, just over a decade later, seek in The Stones of Venice (1851). Ruskin, with a focus on the distinct contribution by the individual worker, contested variety, or ‘changefulness’, as one of the ‘characteristics or moral elements’ of the Gothic, praising ‘that strange *disquietude* of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness’.\(^{33}\) In direct opposition, the variety that Loudon hoped to encourage by promoting artificial stone ignored any such concerns of artistic individuality. Instead, he pointed to the mix-and-match possibilities of the ornaments available in Austin’s catalogues. Thus, the mass-produced chimney pot could be used in a variety of ways: perhaps as a ‘shaft of a sundial’, as a ‘pedestal to an ornamental vase’, or ‘as a support for a … stone basin to contain gold-fish or a curious plant’ – even for a ‘baptismal font in a church’.\(^{34}\) Loudon also alluded to the circumstance that chimney shafts, in their original use, were ideally of different patterns in the same stack, following historical precedent. Previously, this made them very expensive.\(^{35}\) Now, house builders could choose from a variety of types of ready-made elements creating a picturesque impression without spending more on variety than they would on uniformity.\(^{36}\) Crucially, Loudon gave not only the seal of aesthetic approval to one of the chimney stacks, describing it as ‘handsome’, but also that of usefulness, pointing to features increasing the chimney’s efficiency to expel smoke and thus ascribing it with the ‘double purpose of ornament and utility’. Again, the triad of utility, economy, and aesthetics seals Loudon’s approval.

Interestingly, variety in the object is here provided by means of universality. As with a set of building blocks, Loudon wrote, ‘Mr. Austin can compose a great many different kinds of … [ornaments] out of a given number of what may be called elementary parts’.\(^{37}\) If different parts could be arranged to form different wholes, he argued, this ‘contributes … both to variety and cheapness’.\(^{38}\) Tazza vases, pedestals, eagles, Gothic ornaments – all demonstrated a ‘universality of … application’

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34 Loudon, ‘Notice of Some of the Ornamental Chimney Pots and Shafts Manufactured of Artificial Stone by Mr. Austin of London’.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Loudon, ‘Notice of Some Designs for Architectural Fountains, Manufactured in Artificial Stone by Mr. Austin of London’.
38 Ibid.
not only in terms of the materiality of the cast stone itself, mouldable as it was to most shapes and forms, but also regarding the finished ornament-object. Its universality implied that it did not quite matter which one was chosen and where it was placed – the key being that it was there.\footnote{John Loudon, ‘Notice of Architectural Ornaments Manufactured in Artificial Stone by Mr. Austin’, \textit{Architectural Magazine} 2, no. 13 (March 1835): 123–26.} Being universal in application indicated both an increase of its reproducibility – as the same ornament could be used in a multitude of situation – as well as its commodification. While this increased visual variety, in Loudon’s mind improving many suburban homes, it would ultimately be precisely what Ruskin revolted against: the loss of individual expression in the ready-made, stripped of the link to the worker.\footnote{Ruskin, unsurprisingly, was strictly against the use of artificial stone (or cast iron) arguing that all natural stone had to be carved. John Ruskin, \textit{The Seven Lamps of Architecture. The Works of John Ruskin, Library Edition}, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 7 (London: George Allen, 1903), 85.} If Ruskin looked for variety in parts to unite into a truly whole work of art – the building – Loudon regarded the parts as single, replaceable objects, to be arranged in a myriad of ways with much less concern for the concept of an artistic whole.

Loudon was confident in the success of his mission, writing that, if the \textit{Magazine}’s promotion would lead to ‘only one or two’ of Austin & Seeley’s ornaments to be placed ‘in the gardens of those long rows of houses lining the New Road, the Kent Road, and other suburban roads, we shall be satisfied with the beginning’.\footnote{Loudon, ‘Notice of Some Designs for Architectural Fountains, Manufactured in Artificial Stone by Mr. Austin of London’.} Increasing variety was his way to instil a basic awareness for the aesthetically pleasing in design among builders and house owners. Every reader counted, as did every improved building, every ornament, and every piece of furniture. There is a focus here on atomised parts, whether ornaments or people, rather than the spirit that lies in the whole of a work or art, or in the genius of the artist.

At times, Loudon seemed rather unconcerned with the quality of the ornament itself, going as far as proposing that there was merit simply in the circumstance of more people engaging with the ‘advancement of the decorative part of architecture’.\footnote{Ibid.} While the chimney pots and shafts are for the most part ‘handsome’, ‘elegant’, and ‘look remarkably well’,\footnote{Ibid.} he is, however, critical of stylistic clashes in some of them. He admitted that many of Austin’s products constituted ‘a compound of forms, some of them of the Grecian class, and others belonging to Gothic architecture’. But, he contests, the object in question, ‘is not introduced here on account of its beauty, but as aiding to form a variety’.\footnote{Ibid.} Ready-made architectural decoration is multifunctional, multi-style, and combinable in endless variations. In the end, Loudon added a disclaimer: ‘we are not responsible for the taste displayed in them’, in Austin’s products.\footnote{Ibid.} His aesthetics, then, is one of pragmatism: better to engage as great a number of people as possible in matters of aesthetic appreciation, rather than being limited...
to an elite by using words and objects that would be impenetrable to the many. By judging both object and building according to their utility, economy, and aesthetics (often in this order), Loudon stood at a turning point in British architectural discourse: his pragmatism would not last, at least not in the world of print. The *Builder*, often posited as successor of the *Architectural Magazine*, at first followed in its tracks, addressing in its subtitle anyone in the *Drawing Room, the Studio, the Office, the Workshop, and the Cottage*, matching Loudon’s intended audience. By the fourth volume and under changed editorship, the *Builder* however changed tactic, now focusing on the *Architect, Engineer, Operative and Artist*, targeting the professional elite rather than the populace at large. For the magazine format, the architect and building won, the public and the object lost. This would only shift again with the arts and crafts movement later in the century and then with a renewed, and fervent, link established between the craftsperson and the work of art.

**Building and Object in the Magazine**

As historians, we now mark the *Architectural Magazine* as the first of a new genre, one that is strong still today. Yet, Loudon himself did not once remark on such novelty (which is noteworthy in a period obsessed with novelty). For him, this was not an architectural magazine for architects, or even for architectural circles, including critics and other stakeholders, but excluding workers, artisans, and the wider public. Instead, it was a magazine, a storehouse, for useful knowledge on forms and lines, of objects and buildings, for making space and making place, and for conversations and debates about all of this. For him, the magazine was a natural continuation of the encyclopaedia, and thus of the existing field of educational literature generally. Architects, ladies, amateurs, as well as masons, cabinetmakers, and ironmongers should know about ‘the Elements and Principles of Gothic Architecture’, but also about ‘a simple and effective Preventive for the Slamming of a Passage Door’ or ‘Dovetailed Caps for Wooden Fences’, all of which were discussed in the first year of the *Magazine*. Beyond this, however, the *Architectural Magazine* was, for Loudon, also one thing: a means to earn a living, and to pay for his more costly undertakings such as the *Arboretum*. Addressing a wide readership was simultaneously a marketing strategy to sell more issues as well as an expression of his belief in equity between architect and mechanic. It is likely that the latter was, in the short term, more successful than the former.

There is little difference made in the *Magazine* between the building and the object – and indeed, neither between the one-off design and the ready-made, mass-produced design. Loudon provided a, at times simplified, intellectual reasoning to place building and object into one discursive space. He commented and explained and critiqued, but the latter was not the main purpose of his endeavours. He was concerned with dissemination to, and with exposure of, as many readers as

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possible, but he was no working on behalf of any one group. His aim was neither the furthering of an elite high culture nor the advancement of or increase in business for the architectural profession.

I have argued elsewhere that the Architectural Magazine is evidence for a short-lived democratisation of architectural production and reception, an episode that receded with increasing professionalisation and the rise of the much more ‘architectural’ type of magazine, in the form of the Builder (from 1843) or, later, the Architectural Review (from 1896), both of which are still published today.\(^{47}\) In Loudon’s Magazine, the ‘architectural’ stood not for the building, not for the remit of the architect, and least of all it signified exclusivity. Instead, it provided a non-hierarchical collection of objects and buildings, copies and originals, more akin to a Wunderkammer than to the modern museum.

\(^{47}\) Hultzsch, ‘From Encyclopaedia to Magazine’.