

= Sharpe , Paley and Austin =

For lists of works by the practice in its various phases see Lists of works by Sharpe , Paley and Austin

Sharpe , Paley and Austin are the surnames of architects who practised in Lancaster , Lancashire , England , between 1835 and 1946 , working either alone or in partnership . The full names of the principals in their practice , which went under various names during its life , are Edmund Sharpe (1809 ? 77) ; Edward Graham Paley (1823 ? 97) , who practised as E. G. Paley ; Hubert James Austin (1841 ? 1915) ; Henry Anderson Paley (1859 ? 1946) , son of Edward , usually known as Harry Paley ; and , for a very brief period , Geoffrey Langshaw Austin (1884 ? 1971) , son of Hubert . The firm 's commissions were mainly for buildings in Lancashire and what is now Cumbria , but also in Yorkshire , Cheshire , the West Midlands , North Wales , and Hertfordshire .

The practice specialised in work on churches ; the design of new churches , restoring older churches , and making additions or alterations . They also designed country houses , and made alterations to existing houses . Almost all their churches were designed in Gothic Revival style , except for some of Sharpe 's earliest churches and a few designed later by the practice . Within the Gothic Revival style , the practice initially used Early English and , particularly , Decorated features . E. G. Paley introduced Perpendicular elements , and Perpendicular became the dominant style used by the practice following the arrival of Hubert Austin , to such a degree that the firm became regarded as the regional leader in the use of that style .

The practice used a greater variety of styles when working on country houses , including Elizabethan and Jacobean elements as well as Gothic . Other features were incorporated towards the end of the 19th century similar to those in works produced by the Aesthetic and the Arts and Crafts Movements . Not all the firm 's work was on a large scale ; as the major architectural practice in North West England they also undertook work on schools , vicarages , hospitals , factories , hotels , shops , railway stations , and war memorials .

= = History and works = =

During the life of the practice its title varied according to the names of the architects who ran it , either individually or in partnership . The history of the practice , and the works produced during each stage , are described under the titles used by the practice . As there are two periods when the practice worked under the title Austin and Paley , the relevant dates have been added to these headings .

= = = Edmund Sharpe = = =

Edmund Sharpe established an architectural practice in his mother 's house in Penny Street , Lancaster , in late 1835 . He had received no formal training in architecture , gaining his knowledge from studying and drawing buildings during a tour of Germany and France between 1832 and 1835 . In 1838 he moved his office to Sun Street , and that year Edward Paley , then aged 15 , joined him as a pupil . The following year Sharpe moved his office again , this time to St Leonard 's Gate .

Sharpe 's earliest commissions were for churches , the first being St Mark , Witton (1836 ? 38) , quickly followed by St Saviour 's Church , Cuerden (1836 ? 37) . He then designed two small chapels , Holy Trinity , Howgill , and St John , Cowgill (both 1837 ? 38) , in what is now Cumbria . Larger and grander churches followed , including Christ Church , Walmsley (1839 ? 40) , and his largest church , Holy Trinity , Blackburn (1837 ? 48) . The latter was a Commissioners ' church , so @-@ called because it was partly financed by a grant from the Church Building Commissioners . In all , Sharpe designed six Commissioner 's churches , including St George , Stalybridge (1838 ? 40) . In the early 1840s Sharpe gained a commission from the trustees of the Weaver Navigation to build three (or four) churches along its route for their employees . By 1842 he was designing his 31st church , including a long hoped for commission from the 13th Earl of Derby to design St Mary , Knowsley (1843 ? 44) .

Sharpe was persuaded by his future brother @-@ in @-@ law John Fletcher , owner of Ladyshore Colliery , to experiment with the use of terracotta in the structure of his churches ; not just for decoration , as had been done before , but for the whole structure of the church , other than the foundations and rubble infill . The churches resulting from this project were St Stephen and All Martyrs , Lever Bridge (1842 ? 44) , and Holy Trinity , Rusholme (1845 ? 46) . These were nicknamed by Sharpe himself as " the pot churches " .

In addition to Edward Paley , Sharpe took on other pupils , some of whom later established their own architectural practices . One of these was Thomas Austin (1822 ? 67) , who joined Sharpe in 1841 and left in 1852 to set up his practice in Newcastle upon Tyne . Another pupil was John Douglas (1830 ? 1911) , who created a successful practice in Chester .

Sharpe 's architectural works were not limited to churches , nor was his practice confined to architecture . His most important architectural work in the domestic field was his remodelling of Capernwray Hall (1844 ? 48) , and in Knutsford he designed a house for the governor of the gaol (1844) . In 1838 he was appointed as architect to what was then called the County Lunatic Asylum (later Lancaster Moor Hospital) . Here , in addition to carrying out minor repairs , he added a chapel and six additional wings for the residents . Other duties in this post included work on Lancaster Castle and the Judges Lodgings . Sharpe 's other business interests were in the field of engineering . By 1837 he had been appointed Bridgemaster for the South Lonsdale Hundred , in which role he cared for the roads and bridges in north Lancashire , including building at least two new bridges . He had also become involved with the development of railways in the region , initially by designing bridges and a viaduct for the Lancaster and Preston Junction Railway (now part of the West Coast Main Line) . He was also becoming involved in the civic life of Lancaster , having been elected as a councillor in 1841 .

= = = Sharpe and Paley = = =

Sharpe appointed Paley as his partner in 1845 , and then took an increasing interest in activities outside the practice . By 1847 Paley was responsible for most of the work in the practice , certainly carrying out independent commissions from at least 1849 . In 1851 , the year of Paley 's marriage to Sharpe 's youngest sister , Frances , Sharpe formally withdrew from the practice , although it continued to be known as Sharpe and Paley until 1856 . Being the only major architect practising in the area between Preston and Carlisle , Paley took on commissions of all sizes and types but , like Sharpe , his major designs were for churches . Between 1851 and 1867 he designed or rebuilt about 36 new churches , almost all of them for the Church of England , with a small number for Congregationalists and Roman Catholics . Among his earlier churches were St Patrick , Preston Patrick (1852 ? 53) , St Anne , Thwaites (1853 ? 54) , and Christ Church , Bacup (1854) .

The first secular work undertaken during this period was the remodelling of Hornby Castle between 1847 and 1852 , including its " expansive " symmetrical frontage . The next commission was the conversion of a manor house close to the ruins of Furness Abbey into the Furness Abbey Hotel starting in 1847 . Other secular commissions around this time were for two vicarages and for the North Western Hotel in Morecambe (1847) , and for work at Giggleswick School (1850 ? 51) . Paley also carried out work at Rossall School , including the chapel (1861 ? 62) , and the east range (1867) . He designed new schools , including the Royal Grammar School in Lancaster (1851 ? 52) , and eight village schools . Paley 's main domestic works were the rebuilding of Wennington Hall (1855 ? 56) , and a smaller house , The Ridding . Other varies commissions included the restoration of a music hall in Settle (1853) , and cemetery buildings in Lancaster and Stalmine (1855 and 1856) .

The rapid growth of the town of Barrow @-@ in @-@ Furness , the construction of the Furness Railway following the discovery of deposits of iron ore in the Furness peninsular , and the development of industries using iron as a raw material resulted in many commissions for the practice . The population of Barrow doubled between 1851 and 1861 , and doubled again in the next decade . The major figure in the development of the town and the railway was James Ramsden (1822 ? 96) , who eventually became managing director of the railway , the Barrow Haematite Steel

Company , and the Barrow Shipbuilding Company . The largest deposits of iron ore had been discovered in about 1850 by Henry Schneider in land owned by William Cavendish , who was at that time the 2nd Earl of Burlington , and who also played a part in the industry . All three men commissioned the practice to design a variety of buildings . In addition Paley designed a country house , Abbot 's Wood (1857 ? 59) for Ramsden , a large and complex building with Gothic and Tudor features .

= = = E. G. Paley = = =

Paley continued to work from the offices in St Leonard 's Gate after Sharpe 's resignation , but in 1860 he moved to offices in Castle Hill , where the practice remained throughout the rest of its existence . During the 1850s he designed St Peter , Lancaster , a Roman Catholic church that later became Lancaster Cathedral (1857 ? 59) . This is regarded by Brandwood et al. as his " masterwork as an independent church architect " . Hartwell et al. agree , calling this church , with its northwest steeple 240 feet (73 m) high , his chef d 'oeuvre . During the 1860s , Paley began to design churches with bare brick interior walls , rather than plastered walls , the earliest being St Peter , Quernmore (1860) . Although the High Victorian style was becoming popular elsewhere , it played little part in Paley 's designs , other than more elaborate decorative features , such as the embellishment of the principal rafters at Quernmore . He never used the more blatant features of the style , such as polychromy . During this decade , before the arrival of Austin , he designed churches for the industrial towns of Lancashire , one of the largest being St James , Poolstock (1863 ? 66) . The rebuilding of St Peter 's Church , Bolton (1867 ? 71) with its northwest tower rising to 180 feet (55 m) , is considered by Brandwood et al. to be " Paley 's other great independent church project " . Hartwell et al. refer to it as a " formidable new church " .

Secular commissions during this period included the restoration of the medieval tower at Dalton Castle (1859) , and buildings for the Lancaster Carriage and Wagon Works (1864 ? 65) . The largest building designed by Paley , and indeed by the practice , was the Royal Albert Asylum (later renamed the Royal Albert Hospital) in Lancaster (1868 ? 73) ; it was in Gothic Revival style , and had an E @-@ shaped plan . It has a central French @-@ type tower , with a steeply pitched pyramidal roof flanked by pinnacles . Paley designed stations for the Furness Railway , starting with the Strand Station in Barrow (1863) ; he probably also designed the station at Grange @-@ over @-@ Sands (1866) . Overlooking the latter town he designed the Grange Hotel (1866) .

= = = Paley and Austin = = =

On 28 January 1867 Hubert Austin joined Paley in the practice as a partner . He was the half @-@ brother of Thomas Austin , who had been a pupil of Sharpe . Hubert Austin had worked for three years in the office of George Gilbert Scott , and before he joined the Lancaster practice had designed Christ Church , Ashford , Kent (1855 ? 56) . Following his arrival , the work of the practice continued much as before , with both ecclesiastical and secular commissions .

= = = Ecclesiastical works = = =

Two early large churches in industrial areas in Lancashire were built in 1869 ? 71 : St Chad , Kirkby , and St John the Evangelist , Cheetham . Pollard describes St Chad as one of the partnership 's " most powerful churches " , Brandwood et al. consider that St John the Evangelist is the practice 's " most important church in Manchester . These were followed by the rebuilding , other than the tower , of St Mary , Leigh (1871 ? 73) , in which the Perpendicular style , generally unfashionable at the time , was used throughout . Similarly the body of All Saints ' Church , Daresbury (1870 ? 72) was rebuilt in Perpendicular style . Meanwhile the practice was designing new churches or rebuilding old churches for villages in the countryside . Some of these were small , others larger and more impressive , such as St Peter , Finsthwaite (1873 ? 74) and St Peter , Scorton (1878 ? 79) . In 1872 ? 73 the partners built their only new church in Wales , St Mary , Betws @-@ y @-@ Coed .

This was followed by an estate church , St John the Evangelist (1882 ? 84) at Walton , south of Warrington , and by the rebuilding of the old parish church of St Mary (1884 ? 85) at Dalton @-@ in @-@ Furness .

They also designed about 23 urban churches of varying sizes and styles . Most were in the industrial towns of Lancashire , except for St John the Evangelist , Greenock (1877 ? 78) in Scotland , a mission chapel in Scarborough , North Yorkshire (1885) , and St Barnabas (1884 ? 85) in the railway town of Crewe , Cheshire . Notable among the Lancashire urban churches are St Matthew and St James , Mossley Hill , Liverpool (1870 ? 75) , described by Pollard as " one of the best Victorian churches in Liverpool , St Michael and All Angels , Howe Bridge , Atherton (1875 ? 77) , considered by Pollard to be one of Paley and Austin 's " most stimulating churches " , and St John the Baptist , also in Atherton (1878 ? 79) , of which Pollard says " The whole is monumental , one of Paley and Austin 's best " , with a tower that is " magnificently mighty " . In Astley Bridge , Bolton , they built two churches , which are described by Hartwell et al. as being " remarkable " ; these were All Souls (1878 ? 81) , which is now redundant , and St Saviour (1882 ? 85) , which was demolished in 1975 . St James , Daisy Hill , Westhoughton (1879 ? 81) is considered by Hartwell et al. as " a masterly performance for relatively little cash " , and St Peter , Westleigh Leigh (1879 ? 81) is described by Pollard as one of Paley and Austin 's " most radical and thrilling churches " . Meanwhile , in rapidly growing Barrow , they had built four smaller churches to a common design , each dedicated to one of the Four Evangelists . In 1884 the partnership submitted plans for a new Anglican cathedral in Liverpool . Their plan was placed in the top twelve , but failed to make the next round of the competition . In the event the project was abandoned in 1888 , the cathedral being built later and on a different site .

= = = = Secular works = = = =

Meanwhile , the town of Barrow was continuing to grow , and this resulted in many commissions for the practice . In order to deal with this they opened a sub @-@ office in the town , run by John Harrison (1837 ? 96) , which continued to exist until the late 1880s . The first major commission in the town was to design a flax and jute mill for James Ramsden (1870 ? 72) . Other secular buildings included banks , cemetery buildings (including a large gateway) , ten large tenement blocks , schools , villas , meeting halls , and the School of Art . For the Furness Railway they designed stations , goods sheds , workers ' cottages and , probably , the circular water tower at Seascale . The partners were also involved with work at large country houses . The most important commission was to build a new wing at Holker Hall in 1871 ? 75 to replace a wing severely damaged by fire ; this was the largest project undertaken by the partners . The next major country house commission was the restoration of Hoghton Tower (1876 ? 78) for Sir Henry de Hoghton . Other work on country houses included building Sedgwick House (1868 ? 69) , adding an extension to Leighton Hall (1870) , making extensions to Walton Hall (1870) , Underley Hall (1872) , Capernwray Hall (1875 ? 76) , and Whittington Hall (1887) . New houses included Oak Lea for Henry Schneider (1874 , since demolished) , Witherslack Hall (1874) , and Hampsfield House (1880 ? 82) . Their last major work on a country house was the remodelling of Thurland Castle (1879 ? 85) following severe damage by fire . The practice continued to design new schools , and in the 1870s they began to design new buildings for Sedbergh School , creating an association with the school that was to produce commissions throughout the remaining life of the practice .

= = = Paley , Austin and Paley = = =

In 1886 Edward Paley 's son , Henry (who was and is usually known as Harry) , became a partner in the practice , which continued to work much as before , with ecclesiastical and secular commissions . New churches were built in villages and towns , and older churches were restored or altered . The first new country church resulting from the partnership was the Church of the Good Shepherd , Tatham (1888 ? 89) . Brandwood et al. describe the 1890s as " something of a golden decade for the firm 's country churches " . The first of these was St Bartholomew , Barbon (1892 ?

93) , mainly Perpendicular in style , but with some rounded arches , followed by St Peter , Field Broughton (1892 ? 94) , also in Perpendicular style . Smaller churches were St Mary , Borwick (1894 ? 96) (Perpendicular again) , and a mission church seating 150 at Sunderland Point (1894) . The 1890s was also a prolific period for new town churches but , before the start of that decade , the firm had designed St Mary , Ince @-@ in @-@ Makerfield (1887 , demolished 1974) , St John , Birkdale (1899 ? 90) , and St John , Cloughfold , in Rawtenstall (1899 ? 90 , now redundant) . Major town churches of the first half of the 1890s include St John , Crawshawbooth (1890 ? 92) , and Christ Church , Waterloo (near Liverpool) (1891 ? 99) . During this time the partnership produced their only church in the south of England , All Saints , Hertford (1893 ? 95) . Brandwood et al. say that it is a " Perpendicular building entirely characteristic of the firm " but , being built in Runcorn sandstone from Cheshire , Pevsner considered that it was " completely alien in Herts " . This period also saw the finest church design to be executed by the practice , St George , Heaviley in Stockport (1892 ? 97) , which is considered to be the solely the work of Austin . Brandwood et al. describe it as " the largest , grandest and most expensive church the practice ever built and is the masterwork of Hubert Austin " . Hartwell et al. say it is " a church on a splendid scale " . Another ecclesiastical project was the chapel at the Royal Albert Asylum (1886 ? 80) .

During this time much less work was carried out in the secular sphere . There were no new substantial country houses designed during this time , the largest being the " rather plain , four @-@ square " Hampsfield House . The only major public buildings were the Storey Institute (1887 ? 91) in Lancaster , and the Lancaster Royal Infirmary (1893 ? 96) . Work was carried out on school buildings , including extensions at Lancaster Royal Grammar School and Christ Church School , Lancaster (both 1887) , and a new building for the Keswick School of Industrial Art (1893 ? 94) . Commercial buildings included shops for the Lancaster and Skerton Cooperative Society , including a large store in the middle of Lancaster .

== = Austin and Paley == =

===== 1895 ? 1914 =====

Edward Paley died on 23 January 1895 at the age of 71 , and the remaining partners continued the practice under the title Austin and Paley . It is not clear how much Edward Paley had been contributing to the work of the practice in his later years ; it is likely that by then Austin had been " the chief creative force " . The church commissions continued much as before , particularly with new churches , and also with church restorations . New country churches included St Mark , Dolphinholme (1897 ? 98) , St Luke , Slyne (1898 ? 1900) , and St John , Flookburgh (1897 ? 1900) , the last of which incorporated Romanesque features . After 1900 the practice designed All Saints , Barnacre (1905 ? 06) , St John , Ellet (1906 ? 07) , and St Mark , Natland (1909 ? 10) . There were many new town churches , including St Barnabas , Morecambe (1898 ? 1900) , St John the Divine , Sandylands (1898 ? 1901) (also in Morecambe) , St Anne , Hindsford (1898 ? 1901 now redundant) , and St Thomas , St Anne 's @-@ on @-@ the @-@ Sea (1899 ? 1900) . These were followed in the 20th century by new churches including St Michael , Middleton (1901 ? 02) , St Mary , Walney (1907 ? 08) , St Andrew , Starbeck , Harrogate (1909 ? 10) , and St Margaret , Halliwell , Bolton (1911 ? 13) . Brandwood et al. describe two further buildings as the partnership 's " last two major urban churches " . The first of these is St Michael and All Angels , Ashton @-@ on @-@ Ribble , Preston (1906 ? 08) . The other , described as the partners ' " last great masterpiece " is St Mary , Widnes (1908 ? 10) . Further ecclesiastical works were the chapels built for Sedbergh School (1895 ? 97) and for St Bees ' School (1906) .

Although church work dominated the work of the practice there were also some secular commissions . There was no work on country houses during this period , nor were there any commissions for public buildings , other than an expansion of the Storey Institute (1906 ? 08) . The last public building designed by the partnership was Hornby Village Institute (1914) . In the commercial field the firm designed workshops and a showroom for William Atkinson , which were

among the earliest motor garages and showrooms in the provinces . The practice continued to carry out work for the Lancaster and Skerton Cooperative Society , designing numerous shops in the local area . The partners also carried out work on schools , in particular for Sedbergh School . They designed an extension to Leeds Grammar School (1904 ? 05) , Llandoverly College , North Wales (1901 ? 03) , Shrewsbury School (1913 ? 14) , and extra buildings for St Bees School , Rossall School , and the Clergy Daughters ' School at Casterton (1896) .

= = = Austin , Paley and Austin = = =

Hubert Austin 's eldest son , Bernard Tate (1873 ? 1955) , studied architecture in the firm , but had a disagreement with his father and left in 1902 to work as an architect for Lever Brothers . Austin 's youngest son , Geoffrey Langshaw (1884 ? 1971) , also worked with the practice from 1907 , and was made a junior partner in January 1914 , when the practice became known as Austin , Paley and Austin . However the partnership was short @-@ lived as Geoffrey enlisted to serve in the King 's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment in February 1915 . He saw active service in the First World War , leaving the army in 1919 , but did not return to the practice , nor did he continue with an architectural career .

= = = 1915 ? 44 = = =

Hubert Austin died on 22 March 1915 leaving Harry Paley as the sole principal , but the practice continued to be known as Austin and Paley . Helped by assistants and clerks Paley continued to work until the 1940s , but without appointing another partner . He continued to work on churches , repairing and restoring older churches , and designing new ones . His new churches include All Saints , Becconsall (1925 ? 26) , St Stephen on @-@ the @-@ Cliffs , Blackpool (1925 ? 27) , St Hilda , Bilsborrow (1926 ? 27) , St Luke , Orrell (1927 ? 28 and 1938) , St Stephen , Whelley (1928 ? 30 and 1937 ? 38) , St Barbara , Earlsdon , Coventry (1930 ? 31) , St Thomas , Blackpool (1930 ? 32) , and his last church , St John , Abram (1935 ? 37) . A major source of commissions following the First World War was the design of war memorials and monuments . Two of Paley 's war memorials are considered to be sufficiently notable to have been designated as Grade II listed buildings . They are both in villages in Cumbria , Beetham and Great Salkeld , both in sandstone in the form of a Celtic cross , and were constructed in or about 1919 . Work continued to be carried out at Sedbergh , Giggleswick , and Leeds Grammar Schools , and on the Royal Lancaster Infirmary . The practice continued to be active until the 1940s . It is uncertain when Harry Paley retired , and it is possible that some work was carried out by his assistants after his retirement . The practice had certainly closed by 1945 , when the offices were sold to Lancaster Corporation and the records of the firm were destroyed . Harry Paley died on 19 April 1946 .

= = Architectural styles = =

Sharpe 's first three churches were in Romanesque style , as according to Sharpe " no style can be worked so cheap as Romanesque " . He then started to include Gothic features , which often did not accurately reflect the features to be found in medieval churches , being an approximation rather than an accurate (or " correct ") representation . Influenced by A. W. N. Pugin (1812 ? 52) and the Cambridge Camden Society (later named the Ecclesiological Society) , of which Sharpe was a member , he introduced more " correct " Gothic features into his designs , which he continued to use throughout the rest of his career . In 1844 he was praised by the society for his design of the new steeple at St Michael , Kirkham (1843 ? 44) , which was described as being " beautiful and correct " .

Almost all of Paley 's designs were in Gothic Revival style , mainly reflecting features of the 13th and early 14th centuries , with open roofs , benches for the congregation , stalls for the choir , the pulpit to the side of the entrance to the chancel , steps leading up to the chancel , and no side chapels . Most of the designs were largely in the Decorated style , although Paley did occasionally

introduce 15th @-@ century Perpendicular features , for example in his rebuilding of St Patrick , Preston Patrick (1852 ? 53) . During the 1850s Paley introduced what was to become one of his favourite features , the traceried oculus window , in Christ Church , Bacup (1854) and St James , Wrightington (1857) .

During the Paley and Austin partnership , the architectural styles used by the practice changed and developed . In church architecture , Paley had already started to introduce Perpendicular features in some of his designs , and this trend was to continue and increase after the arrival of Austin . Throughout their partnership , the designs for churches were mainly in Gothic Revival style . After the arrival of Austin , there was much greater use of Perpendicular features . Brandwood et al. see the practice as national pioneers in this trend , saying " the firm can be seen as a true pioneer in the rehabilitation of Perpendicular architecture after its ecclesiological exile for a quarter of a century " . Early examples of what the authors consider to be part of what they call " the Perpendicular revival in the North " are the rebuilding of the bodies of St Mary , Leigh , (1871 ? 73) and All Saints , Daresbury (1870 ? 72) . The Perpendicular " would become the stock @-@ in @-@ trade style for some of the most admired buildings as the years rolled on " . However they did continue to use features from the Early English and Decorated styles , sometimes together in the same church , as in New St Leonard , Langho . Away from the Gothic Revival style , Norman or Norman transitional features were occasionally used , as in St Mary , Betws @-@ y @-@ Coed (1872 ? 73) , and St Peter , Finsthwaite (1873 ? 74) .

Brandwood et al identify two other , potentially incompatible , stylistic changes in the firm 's designs during this period . The first is what they describe as " a greater muscularity ... at times accompanied by continental overtones " . Examples are in the restoration of the tower of St Peter , Heversham , (1868 ? 70) and in the new church of St Mary , Walton , Cumbria (1869 ? 70) . The other stylistic factor was the use of " gentler , less ornate " motifs taken from the Aesthetic Movement , or motifs that could " pass muster as proto @-@ Arts & Crafts work " . Features " verging on Art Nouveau " are present in window tracery in All Saints , St Helens , and on the gate @-@ piers outside St George , Heaviley . What became a " favourite feature " for Austin and Paley were carved inscriptions , usually black , sometimes in Latin and sometimes in English ; examples can be in St John , Crawshawbooth , and Christ Church , Waterloo (both in Merseyside) .

In their secular commissions the practice used a variety of styles . Their new wing at Holker Hall was in Elizabethan style , as were the additions to Underley Hall . Witherslack Hall has Jacobean detailing , while other country houses , such as Sedgwick House , incorporate Gothic features . Thurland Castle has features of both Elizabethan and late Gothic styles . Motifs taken from the Aesthetic Movement can be found in both the exterior and the interior of their new wing at Holker Hall , and from the Arts and Crafts Movement in the interior of Thurland Castle .

= = Patrons = =

Sharpe 's earliest commissions were promoted by his older cousin Revd J. W. Whitaker , vicar of Blackburn . Whittaker had connections with major figures in the Church of England and members of the aristocracy . Sharpe 's work came to the notice of the Bishop of Chester , Rt Rev John Bird Sumner , whose diocese at that time included Lancashire as well as Cheshire . He was a member of the Church Building Commission , and it is likely that he played a part in Sharpe 's involvement in designing Commissioners ' Churches . Family connections led to an association with the Greenall family , brewers in Warrington , which possibly led to the commission for the series of churches along the Weaver Navigation . Sharpe had hoped to gain commissions from the Earl of Derby , but was successful only in his design for St Mary , Knowsley . The relationship the practice developed with the major entrepreneurs in Barrow @-@ in @-@ Furness , James Ramsden , and Henry Schneider , resulted in the many commissions for buildings in the town and for the Furness Railway .

= = Practice organisation and personalities = =

As the office records have been destroyed there is no detailed account of how the office was run , or how the partners related to each other in business matters . Sharpe was a man of many interests and talents . In addition to him being an entrepreneur , establishing a practice that lasted for more than 100 years , he was a railway engineer and developer , a public figure who pioneered sanitary reform in Lancaster . He was also an accomplished sportsman and musician . Edward Paley also took an active part in the civil life of Lancaster , while Hubert Austin had a more retiring personality , concentrating more on his work in the practice and with his family . By the time Harry Paley came to run the practice alone there was less work available . As he was relatively comfortable financially , he was also able to take part in the life of the town and in his sporting interests .

All the principals were Anglicans , and most of the church commissions came from the Church of England . Sharpe , in particular , had low church sympathies , and most of the commissions throughout the life of the practice were for the churches of low church or middle @-@ of the @-@ road patrons . This was consistent with the state of Anglicanism generally in Lancashire , possibly a reaction against the strong presence of Catholicism in the county . Henry Austin was a keen churchman , and was a churchwarden for many years . Nevertheless , the practice did design churches and other buildings for Catholics , Congregationalists and Presbyterians .

= = Appraisal = =

The firm was a " provincial architectural practice " in the strict use of the term ; sited as it was in a town some distance from any major city . Its output was almost entirely located in North West England , particularly in Lancashire and in the southern part of what is now Cumbria . Nevertheless , the practice did achieve national recognition , especially in the later part of the 19th century , and in particular for its churches . A contemporary opinion of the practice was given by the German architect and critic Hermann Muthesius who was present in England between 1896 and 1904 . He commented on English architecture and architects , and in his book *Die neuere kirchliche Baukunst in England* (1901) he placed the works of Austin and Paley on a par with Bodley and Garner , James Brooks , J. D. Sedding , Norman Shaw , and George Gilbert Scott , junior . He was particularly impressed by St Peter , Lancaster , and by the village churches designed by the practice . Writing in 1969 the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner said " this Lancaster dynasty of architects did more work in the county , and for a time more outstanding work , than any other " . Referring to the late Victorian churches designed by the practice , Pevsner stated that they were " of the highest European standard of their years " . Of the partners , Pevsner had highest regard for Hubert Austin , whom he called a " genius " , saying that it was he " it seems , who was responsible for the firm 's masterpieces " . The title of the introduction to the book by Brandwood et al. entitled *The Architecture of Sharpe , Paley and Austin* is " A practice like no other " .