

**Pozvání na 45. kolokvium ISTS**

ve čtvrtek **28. května 2026** od **14,00** hodin

ve Velké Aule Matematicko-fyzikální fakulty UK, Malostranské nám. 25, 1. patro.



**Prof. Maximilian Sternberg**

University of Cambridge

**Castle fantasies. Letyens' Lindesfarne and the modern medieval imagination.**

Maximilian Sternberg is Professor of History and Theory of Architecture the Department of Architecture in Cambridge University and a Fellow of Pembroke College - Cambridge.

Sternberg served as Head of Teaching in the Department (2023-25) and Honorary Secretary of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (2020-2022). He has published widely on medieval and modern architectural history in Germany and France. Sternberg is author of *Hans Döllgast: Reconstruction and Modernity* (Lund Humphries, 2026) and *Cistercian Architecture and Medieval Society* (Brill, 2013), as well as co-editor of *Rethinking Döllgast* (Transcript, 2026), *Shrines of Wisdom: Learning, Knowledge and the Architecture of Libraries* (Transcript, 2026), *Phenomenologies of the City: Studies in the History and Philosophy of Architecture* (Ashgate, 2015) and *Modern Architecture and the Sacred* (Bloomsbury, 2020). He has published articles on Hans Döllgast, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto and medievalism in German modernism in leading journals in architectural history, including *The Journal of Architecture*, *Architectural History*, *Architecture Research Quarterly* and *The Art Bulletin*.

Díky spolupráci ISTS s Fakultou architektury Cambridžské univerzity máme příležitost rozpravy na aktuální téma potřeb ověření a rozvoje nového pohledu na motivy tradice v moderním a současném tvůrčím myšlení. Minulost se dnes z různých stran stává výzvou k přehodnocení významů a kritérií umění stanovených dosavadním bádáním. Z těchto důvodů předpokládáme zájem o vystoupení profesora Sternberga jak u odborné veřejnosti zaměřené na architekturu v kontextech proměn poetiky umění a architektury během jejich dlouhé historie, tak i u odborné veřejnosti, která s námi spolupracuje ve snahách o mezioborové studium věd a umění.

K uspokojení širšího okruhu odborné veřejnosti Matematicko-fyzikální fakulta umožnila umístit přednášku do Velké auly své budovy na Malostranském náměstí.

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Abstract

Despite stridently calling for a radical break with tradition, modern architects loved to mythologize distant pasts. Images of the Middle Ages served leading modern architects as reference points in critiquing the contemporary social, cultural and spiritual role of architecture in both the present and future. As faithful stylistic imitation of medieval forms was abandoned, modern architects discovered the free interpretation of medieval artefacts and images in their consciously modern designs. Although Edwin Lutyens frequently cited medieval forms in his work, the motif of medievalism has received surprisingly little focused commentary in a career typically divided between an 'Arts and Crafts' period followed by a subsequent turn to the 'high game' of neo-classicism. And yet two contemporaneous restorations of medieval castles, both suggestively located on holy islands rich in medieval heritage, Lindisfarne and Lambay, stand right in the middle of this transition. These works of 'adaptive reuse', as we might call them today, were reportedly among the commissions which must enthused Lutyens, and which are ranked among his most creative and poetic designs. Lutyens' intimate, domestic medievalist adaptations are striking for their inventive and humorous modernity that was nevertheless sympathetic to the found medieval remains. His interventions also point to themes which resonate in case studies discussed subsequently, namely a playful engagement with the contingent, and a primitivist evocation of the spiritual authenticity inherent in chthonic medieval artefacts and sites, activated by the dialogue of architecture and landscape (enabled not least through the contribution of longstanding collaborator Gertrude Jekyll).

The chapter will argue that what is often referred to as an interest in the 'picturesque' in the work of Lutyens and Jekyll, is in fact better understood in terms of their engagement with the medieval, characterised by an emotive and deliberately subjective narrative attitude to the different periods and images of the Middle Ages as a playful simultaneity. Lutyens' work in Lindisfarne anticipates aspects of modernist design of the 1920s that are normally seen as marking a violent rupture from the world of Lutyens. The paper concludes by asking how Jose Plečnick's work on the medieval castle of Prague might be fruitfully contrasted with Lutyens. In British architectural history Lutyens are frequently compared. Like Lutyens Plečnick not only resists easy categorisation as a modernist, but he is also typically understood as a neo-classical architect. Might looking at their respective conceptions of the medieval shed new light on their similarities and differences?

