

The Society's Casework in 2003: Review of Selected Cases

by

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Local planning authorities in England and Wales have been obliged to consult the Ancient Monuments Society (and the other National Amenity Societies) on all applications for listed building consent involving demolition, either total or partial, since 1972. In recent years the number of part-demolition cases has settled to about 5,000 a year and those for complete demolition to around 200. The exact number of listed buildings threatened by application for total demolition in 2002 (the last full year at the time of writing) was 146 (nine of them in Wales). This compared with 212 in 2001. A full list of these cases can be obtained from the Society's office and website. The cases discussed here include some of the most interesting, although in choosing them we are limited by the availability of illustrations. The drawings have been kindly supplied by the architects of the various schemes and the names of the practices concerned are given in the text.

WINGFIELD CASTLE FARM BARN, WINGFIELD, SUFFOLK

Sometimes we are alerted to cases where the threat is not to the physical fabric of the building but to its setting. Just such happened in the Summer when we learned of the planning application to convert a substantial barn near Wingfield Castle into residential accommodation. The photograph taken from the castle gives some idea of the comparatively close proximity. It transpired on further research that the connection was just as intimate historically as well as visually. The not very forthcoming exterior with a ground floor underbuilt in brick in the late nineteenth century concealed eleven

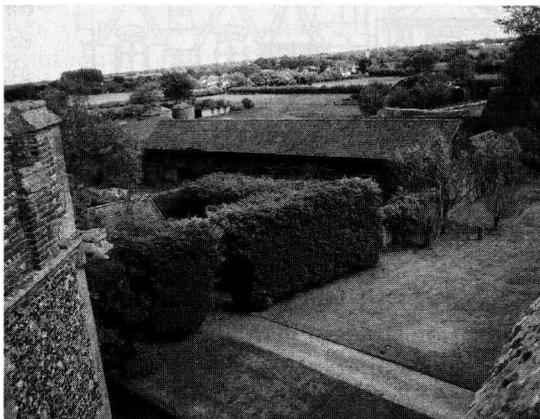


Fig. 1

Matthew Saunders is Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society.

bays of internal timber framing of the mid-sixteenth century. Most of the main frame is of chamfered timbers with ogee stops, very similar to that in the residential range of the adjacent castle itself which was built shortly after 1544 when Sir Henry Jerningham was granted the mansion. It seems that this unusually long barn must have been the principal estate farm building, the framing being of the high quality one would expect, particularly as it was the Jerninghams who resuscitated the estate following the fall of the De La Pole family (Earls of Suffolk) who built the castle in the late fourteenth century. The main barn of such an estate was normally sited where the present building stands, to one side of the base court which, in the case of Wingfield Castle, was to the east, away from the residential part which is the south-west corner. The smells and noise of the farmyard were not expected to disturb human slumber. The barn compares with examples at Framsdon Hall in twelve bays and Winston Hall Farm and Royden Hall, both these of ten bays. There is also a comparison in terms of date with the barn at nearby Wingfield College, dated to c.1527. Suffolk moated manors and their farmsteads are very important in a national context and the early Tudor period appears to be one of expanding crop volumes, leading to large barns such as this.

When the application for conversion was first lodged, the barn was unlisted. That has now been remedied and the application for conversion withdrawn.

HILLSIDE HOUSE, LONDON ROAD, WEELEY (CLACTON-ON-SEA), ESSEX

In this case some compromise in setting may be the price that has to be paid to save a listed building from complete loss.



Fig. 2

Hillside House is a Grade II listed structure situated in extensive grounds to the south of the village of Weeley. No definite architect is known but there is a date, 1858. The drawings (by John Sykes, development consultant to the proposal) give some indication that this is Roguish Gothic at its most uncompromising. To the extraordinary complicated outline and intensity of detailing portrayed so well in this line drawing needs to be added the rich, if now somewhat tarnished, effect of varied polychromatic

brickwork. Hillside has been derelict since 1987. There have been a number of applications to demolish and this case is now a desperate one. Most of the roof and flooring has fallen in. At this stage Redlong Ltd and their advisers, Anna Bloomfield, planner, and John Sykes, development consultant and designer, appeared. In order to generate funds with which to rescue Hillside, Redlong is proposing two distinct areas of new housing – six in a new walled garden to the east and a further nine to the south. The latter are designed around linked courtyards and will be in the form of a stable block and mews cottage in traditional idiom. There would still be

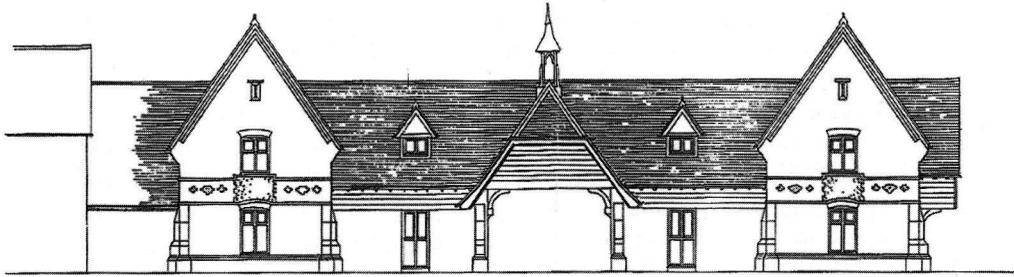


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

space for a formal garden adjacent to the listed building which would itself be converted into three flats. Existing woodland would be extended or replanted, screening the new houses both from within and without the application site, with hedges in yew and beech. The drawings (Figs. 3 and 4) show an intelligent, if more subdued, reworking of the mid-nineteenth century language that enlivened Hillside. John Sykes' Gothic has more repose and less intensity. We thought this a very interesting example of 'keeping in keeping' and felt that the application not only represented the last chance for the building but was one which in visual terms could be termed benign. (This is in contrast to an existing valid permission for a huge new extension onto the listed building itself, something which the Redlong and Sykes scheme avoids.)

NOS. 9-10 THE TYTHING, WORCESTER

Even Nikolaus Pevsner, imbued as he was with the German preference for architects working in the idiom of their own age rather than echoing the past, found this design of 1938 by Braxton Sinclair 'an imitation of the Georgian taken remarkably seriously'. It was designed for Messrs Kay & Company and was a deliberate attempt to contextualize within the discipline of one of the city's historic streets. That they could be more daring is shown by the same firm's premises of 1907 further down

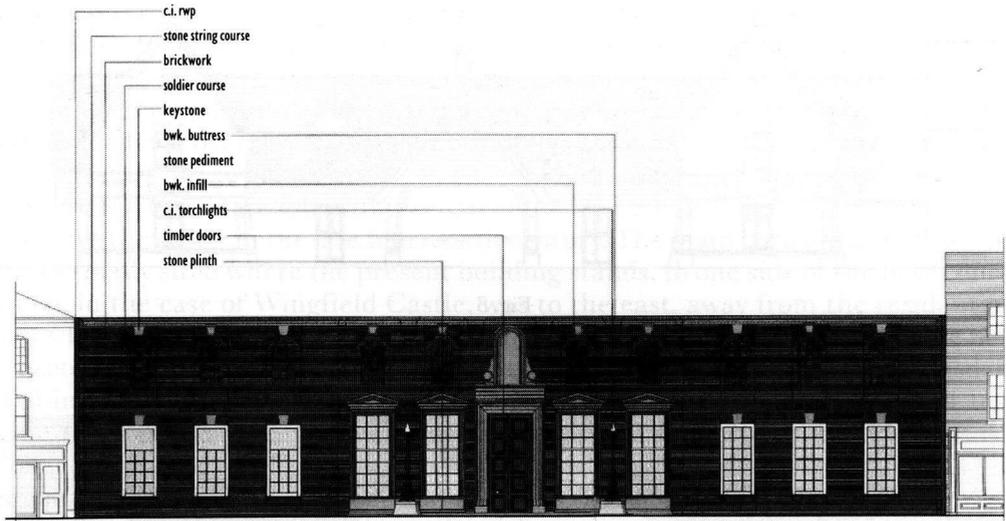


Fig. 5

the street by Simpson and Ayrton, but here they built as a self-confident, early-Georgian banker might have. In 1979 the raised parapet and matching pediments were demolished and the run of first-floor windows infilled, albeit with brick laid in decorative basketwork (Fig. 5). Now the architects, Turner Woolford Sharp of Birmingham, acting for Neil Grinnell Homes, are proposing to reinstate the original skyline. Figure 5 shows the truncated version, Figure 6, its reinstated and original

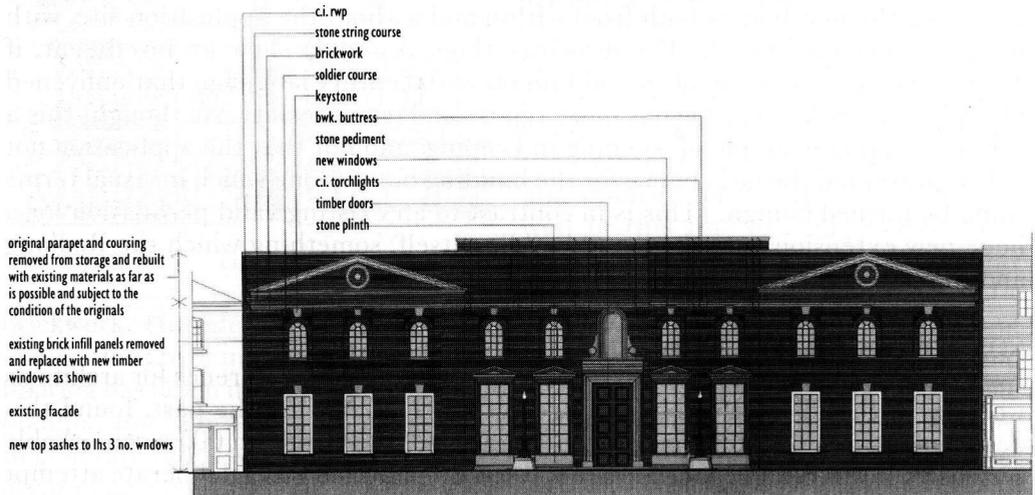


Fig. 6

guise. Reconstruction is helped by the fact that the demolition of twenty-four years ago was by hand and the dismantled fabric stored. The construction is part of a scheme to redevelop the site for mixed residential and commercial purposes. This seemed a clear example of 'planning gain' which it would be safe to support. Listed building consent for the work has been granted but Turner Woolford Sharp is not being employed to execute it.

NO. 10 THROGMORTON AVENUE, EC2, CITY OF LONDON

Sometimes the making good of the townscape is low key. Such is the case at No. 10 Throgmorton Avenue, a listed building of 1881. When Richard Seifert built Drapers Gardens for the National Westminster Bank in 1962-7 for the developer Harry Hyams, the return elevation of No. 10 was simply sliced off without any articulation. In a scheme recently completed the architects Hurley Robertson and Associates of Southwark (job architect, John Robertson) gave that return extra life by carrying the front cornice across it and by introducing appropriate fenestration. Figures 7 and 8 show 'before' and 'after'. The latter also points to what is confirmed on the elevations, namely that making good was accompanied by a considerable increase in height. A new mansard roof was introduced onto this block and its neighbour (No. 8, also listed, 1879-81 by Edward Salter). The effect is far less stark in reality

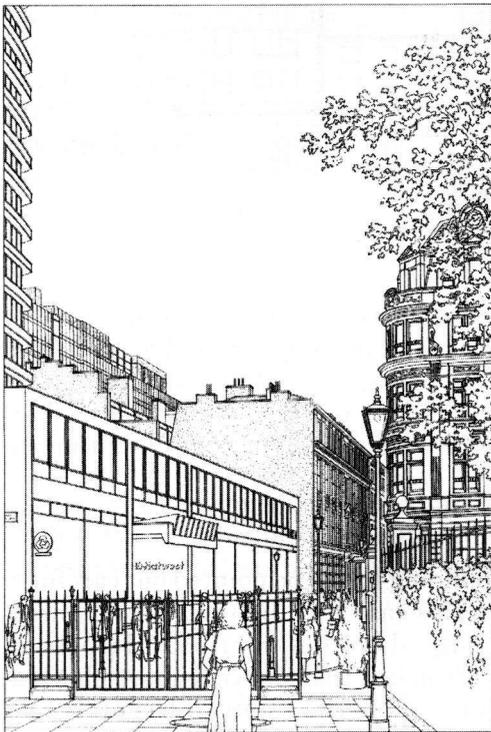


Fig. 7

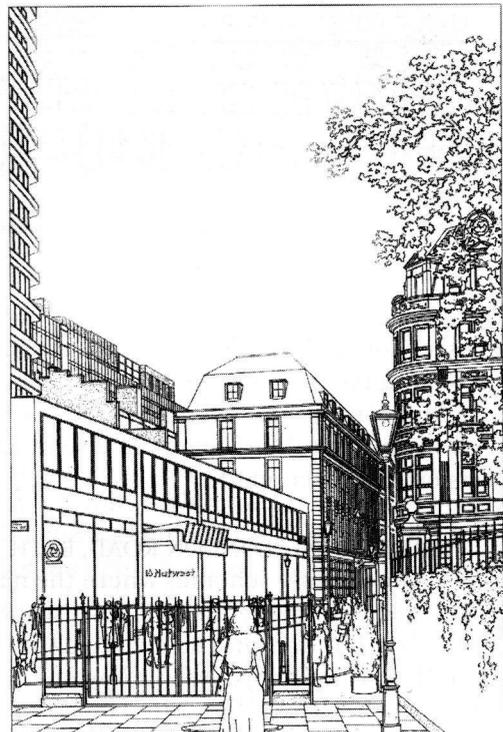


Fig. 8

than the frontal elevations might suggest, for the Avenue is sufficiently narrow to mean that the roofscape is hardly noticeable. It is one of the ironies of the often bewildering pace of change in the City that in a few years time the principal alteration in the townscape sketched here will be the loss of Drapers Gardens itself. Even though barely into its fifth decade this tower block is to be demolished and redeveloped following the rejection of a proposal that it should be listed. It seems likely that the new build will in turn conceal in whole or part the work that Hurley Robertson have just completed.

NOS. 2-6 NORFOLK ROW, SHEFFIELD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

In a city which can boast Paradise Square, Georgian or Georgianizing survivals in central Sheffield are by no means unknown. However it is particularly impressive that Norfolk Row has survived on a block of land so central that it is framed on one side by the splendid Victorian town hall and on the other by the Roman Catholic cathedral. Some of the Row is eighteenth century, some of it nineteenth century but in a Georgian spirit. As the drawing (Fig. 9) by the ARCUS Research School of

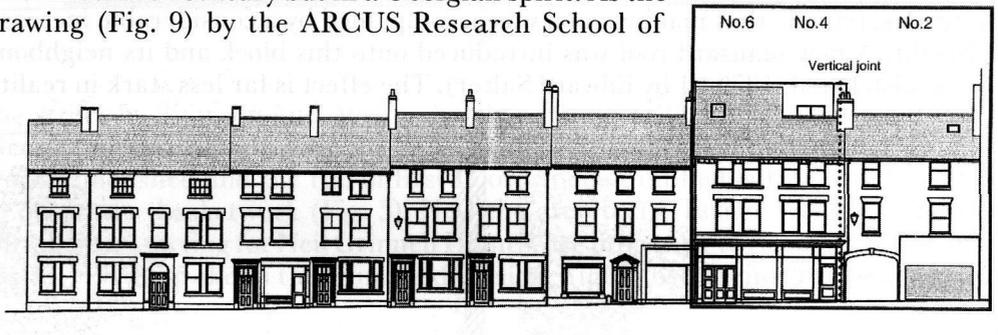


Fig. 9

Archaeology in Sheffield shows, within an attractive variety of proportioned fenestration and roofline there is a clear consistency of composition. We therefore felt very nervous about the proposal to redevelop Nos. 2, 4 and 6 by a much higher Post-Modern design, taking its cue in terms of size not from Norfolk Row but from the much taller Carmel House in adjacent Fargate. At the time of writing no decision has been made.

SUTCLIFFE HOUSE, LONDON ROAD, BATH

This is one of those schemes where the new building has to be pointed out carefully so attuned is it to the historic townscape. In this case it is the three-storey three double-bay building in the centre with the large shopfront inscribed 'Harpers of Bath' (Fig. 10). The listed building on the site is in fact that shown in more ghosted outline at the back – Sutcliffe House itself was built in the eighteenth century but given a Gothick front in the 1840s (Fig. 11). This always was in a backland location, visible through the gateway of the north-western corner of the frontage where a



Fig. 10

single stone pillar still remains (and is to be matched by a counterpart in the scheme presently proposed). It was originally constructed as the 'Old Walcot Poor House', apparently in 1766, with the rear part of the building being used as a cotton factory from 1773. The 1797 Survey of the Poor in England reported that the population of the work-

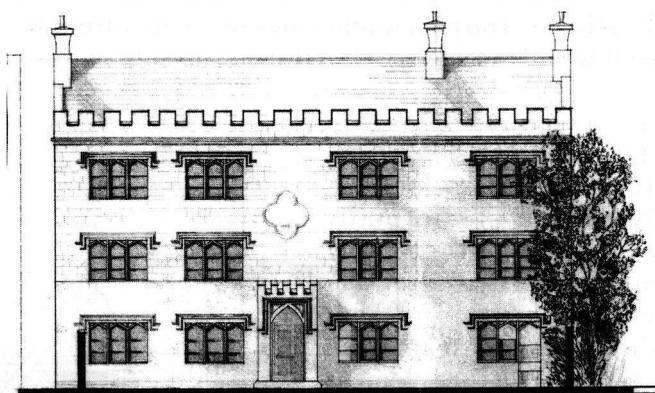


Fig. 11

house was then 101. It was apparently not until 1848 that it received its then very old fashioned Gothic frontage at the instigation of William Sutcliffe, a local benefactor who in January that year founded the Industrial School in the premises. This initially accommodated twenty-five to thirty boys who were boarded, lodged, clothed, instructed and trained in 'the habits of industry'. The building operated as a school, housing up to approximately sixty pupils with ten staff, until the Second World War. It became a soft furnishing business (Harpers) in 1947. In the 1960s the sense of enclosure which was intended was blown apart by the demolition of the nineteenth-century building on the London Road frontage as part of a road widening scheme. Now Harpers, and Edward Nash the Bath-based architect, are proposing to heal that damage by the new structure depicted in the drawing (Fig. 10). Under the same scheme there would also be a new western block fronting Weymouth Street in more informal vernacular idiom (Fig. 12). The drawing shows the carefully positioned fenestration planned, together with the splayed corner on

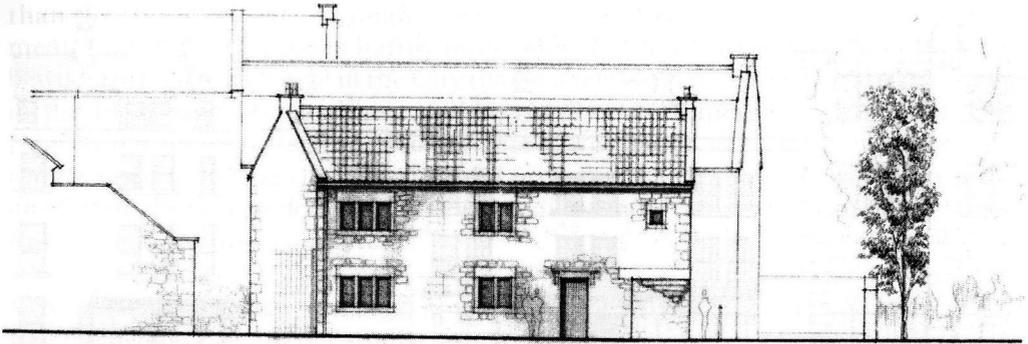


Fig. 12

a tiered corbel derived from the traditional method of blunting a corner. Under the scheme, Harpers would move to the new frontage building and Sutcliffe House itself would be converted to thirteen dwellings.

ST JAMES'S CHURCH,
KIRKLANDS LANE, BILDON,
SHIPLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE

Extensions normally presuppose that the building to be extended remains in situ. Not here where the extension, which is the monopitched element at the north end of the east elevation (Fig. 13), is applied to a building which is to be physically moved, even if within fairly close proximity to its existing location. The building is eccentric and so is the problem. St James's is an intriguing design of the late nineteenth century built in prefabricated timber form. It began life at Great Warley in Essex but was moved quite quickly to serve this West Yorkshire parish in Bradford District. Now it is

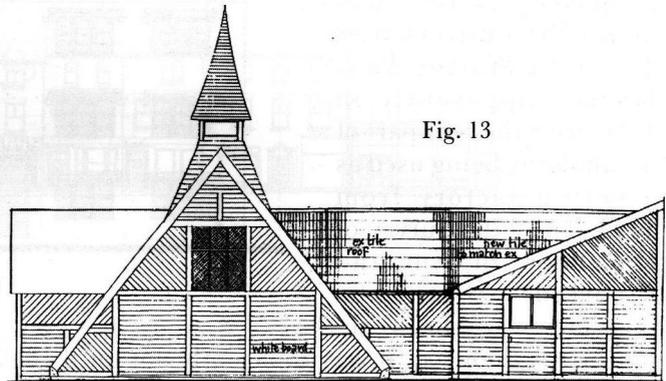
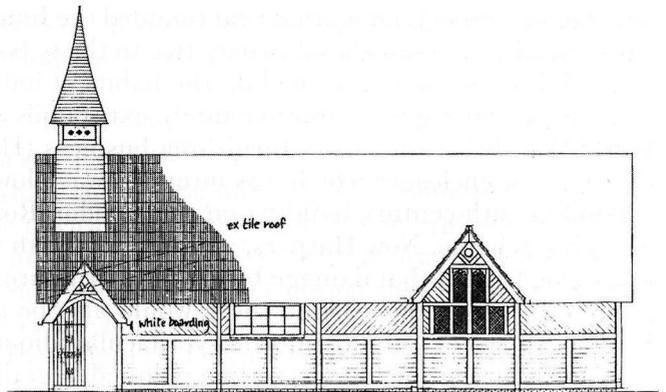


Fig. 13



in a comparatively poor condition and the Parochial Church Council with their professional advisers, Wales, Wales & Rawson of Skipton, are proposing to take advantage of the prefabrication and move the building bodily to the presently empty site at the junction of Kirklands Lane and Otley Road. This would allow the site which it currently occupies, together with the adjacent plot, to be redeveloped with new housing. The profits from this would then go towards the costs of reconstruction and extension. The scheme has incited some local objections but in architectural terms seems benign if idiosyncratic.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH,
WALBERSWICK, SUFFOLK

Much more mainstream is the modest but refreshingly self-effacing project planned at this major medieval church, by Hilary Brightman, the architect based in Maldon. It is a scheme of conversion rather than new build, designed to accommodate a disabled w.c. Three quarters of the western tower is now a ruin and tucked into the eastern face of the western tower is a small monopitch store. This is to house the toilet and the only change will be the substitution of the existing door by a new stone mullion two-light window with steel casements infilled below with random coursed rubble to match the existing. The store seems almost tailor made for its new function and it is rare for a brief to be so convincingly and self-effacingly accommodated.

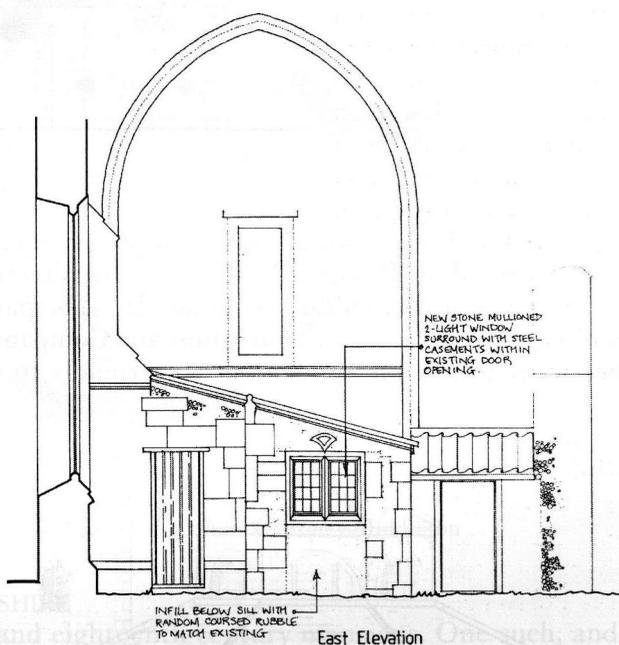


Fig. 14

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH, STONEY MIDDLETON, DERBYSHIRE

At Stoney Middleton, a similar brief was much more difficult to execute. St Martin's, built in 1759 onto a retained medieval tower after a fire, is an octagon with Diocletian windows in the top storey or lantern. Although ascribed to James Paine by J. Charles Cox in his book on the churches of the county of 1877, it is now reliably credited to James Booth, the master mason based in the village. He was employed by Paine to build the stables at Chatsworth in 1758-63 and those behind the Crescent at Buxton, under the supervision of John Carr, 1779-85. As Sir Howard Colvin states, if he was responsible for this octagonal design he was a designer 'of ability'. He is

known to have been one of the subscribers to James Paine's *Plans...of Noble-men and Gentlemen's Houses* of 1767. Although there was a restoration in 1861 the only appreciable external change was the addition of the north vestry in 1880 shown on the Survey drawing of the west elevation in 1880 (Fig. 15). Although Pevsner is unkind about the way that the octagon is overscaled in relation

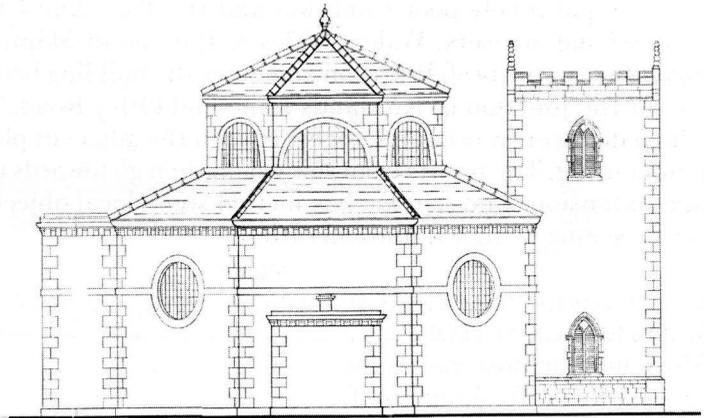


Fig. 15

to the retained tower, the geometrical precision of the footprint of the Georgian work is still telling. It is greatly due to this architectural accomplishment which led to the listing of the building as Grade II*. The parish is now proposing with the architects and surveyors, Elden Minns and Company of Sheffield (designer, A.D.W. Shepherd) to provide the sort of w.c. friendly to the able bodied and disabled,

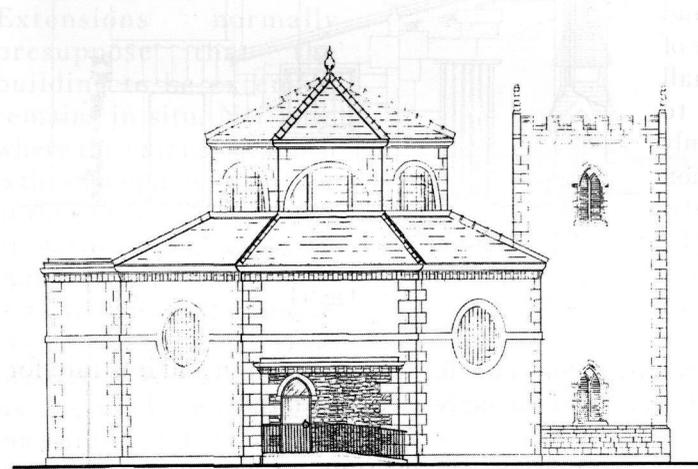


Fig. 16

Before amendments

which will become a quasi obligation from October 2004. They chose to address this difficult problem by extending and rebuilding the existing 1880 vestry. Although we had some concerns over the asymmetry of the main new elevation thus created (Fig. 16), concerns which were addressed in subsequent amendments not shown here, the new work seemed to

be a logical and sensitive response to the brief. The extension was to be constructed in coursed limestone with gritstone dressings. Existing fabric was to be reused as far as possible with new imported stone chosen to match. The existing cornice, window and door dressings would all be re-used. All the necessary consents have now been given but at the time of writing the funds were not in place to start the work.

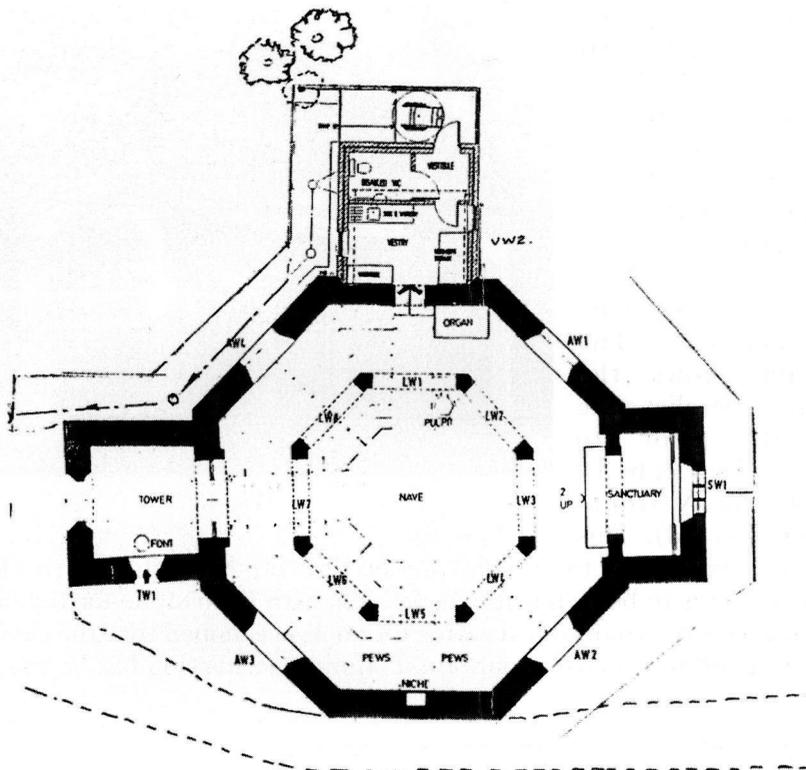


Fig. 17

Proposed ground plan of St Martin's Church, Stoney Middleton

SLEDMERE HOUSE, EAST YORKSHIRE

Yorkshire is the county for grand eighteenth-century mansions. One such, and a byword for immaculate standards of repair and maintenance is Sledmere, occupied by Sir Tatton Sykes, the latest member of the family with a history of enlightened architectural patronage. The family paid in the nineteenth century for just short of a score of great churches by Street and by Pearson (a number of which are now under threat in a scheme of diocesan reorganization). That patronage continues at the house itself which was, in turn, rebuilt internally after a disastrous fire of 1911. The resultant reconstruction was entrusted to the great Walter Brierley. Now Sir Tatton plans to embellish the north-west corner of the house with a new orangery on the site of the 1912 Brierley service wing, demolished in 1945. His architect for the work will be Digby Harris of Francis Johnson & Partners of Bridlington. It will for the most part be an exercise in reconstruction for Sir Tatton acquired some time ago the derelict orangery from Fairford Park in Gloucestershire which the National Trust had saved and stored when that mansion was destroyed. Its varied fortunes are graphically summarized in John Harris's *No Voice from the Hall*. Fairford Park itself was demolished in 1955 and there is a new secondary

school on the site. The orangery was the work of Sir John Soane in 1789. Plans for re-erecting it at Sledmere were prepared in the late 1980s by Francis Johnson himself but it seems that the final carrying through of the scheme is to fall to the inheritor of his mantle, Digby Harris. The photograph shows the orangery in its derelict state immediately prior to dismantling (Fig. 18 by D. Farrell in the National Monuments Record). This



Fig. 18

can be then compared to the reconstruction drawing by Digby Harris (Fig. 19). The construction is to be as faithful as possible with Bath stone for the elevation and graded green Westmorland slate for the roof. It is hoped that the centrepiece of the interior will be a marble fountain. Planning permission has been granted.

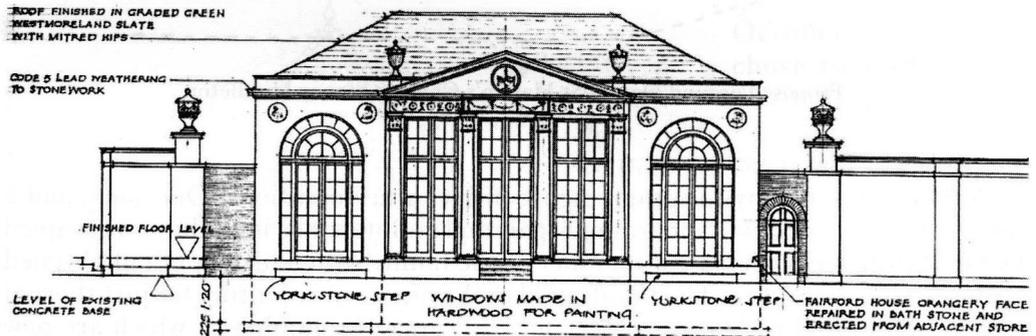


Fig. 19

CHAPEL HOUSE, MAGNET LANE, BILTON, WARWICKSHIRE

Although not in Pevsner, the memorial chapel at Bilton is a modest but interesting work by Comper and Bucknall of 1893, listed Grade II. It has already been converted into housing in a scheme which has left the interior almost unrecognizable. The setting was not improved by an expanse of blank buttressed wall leading to a functional garage. Therefore, when we were faced with an application to replace the latter with a new wing of some architectural flair (Figs. 21 and 22) it seemed

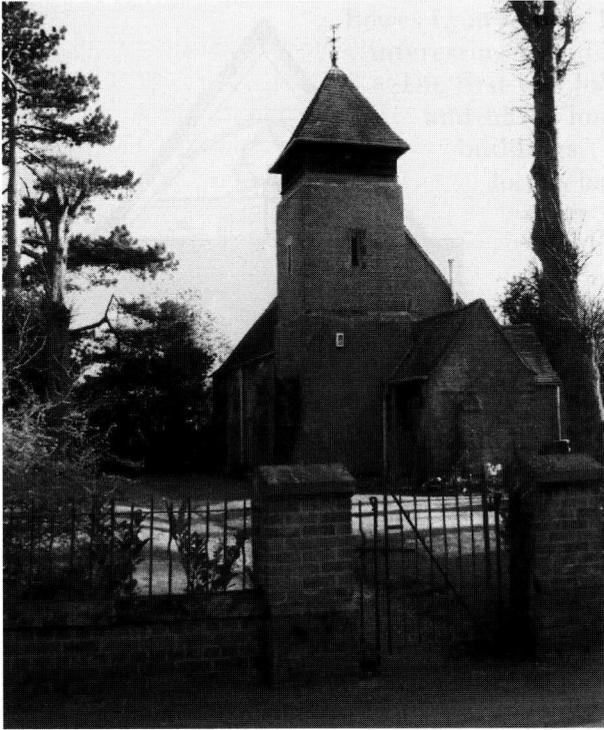


Fig. 20



Fig. 21 (below)

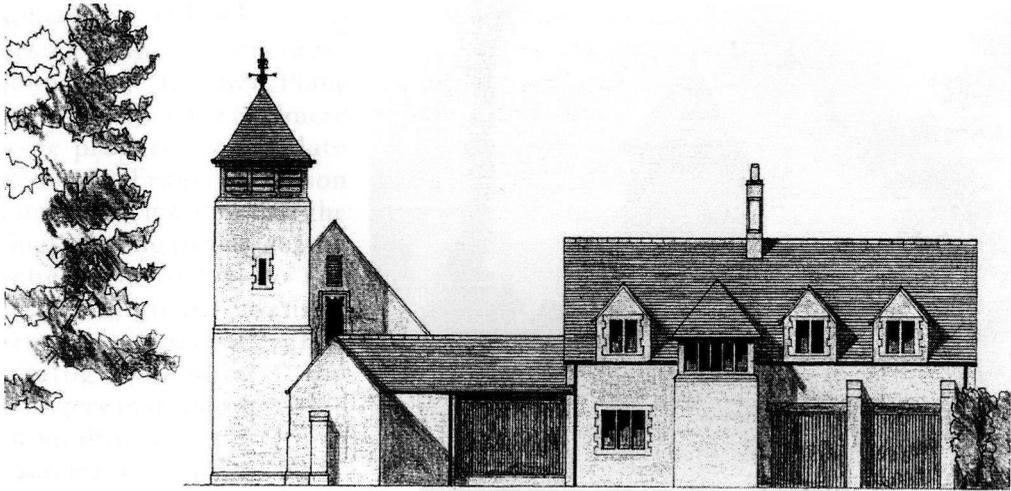


Fig. 22

a welcome opportunity. The photograph (Fig. 20) shows the original simple Comper work. The drawing by Peter Greenaway, RIBA, of Rugby depicts the new wing intended to provide extra bedroom and living room space (and remodel the garage). The staircase wing with a line of glazing under a pyramidal cap clearly echoes the bell stage of the tower, whilst the raised quoining to the windows follows the dressed stone of Comper's original.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, LETTY GREEN, HERTINGFORDBURY, HERTFORDSHIRE

In this case the redundancy of the church is recent. Grade II listed, it was designed in 1849-50 by G. Fowler Jones and probably endowed by the sixth Earl Cowper of Panshanger. There was an extension in 1890. The shell is in brick with knapped flint facing and dressing in stone and there is a window by Christopher Webb for the

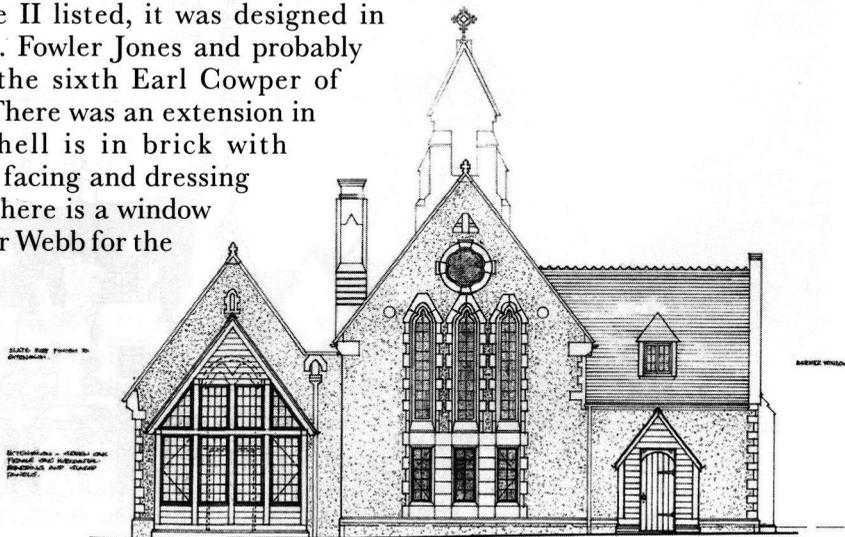


Fig. 23

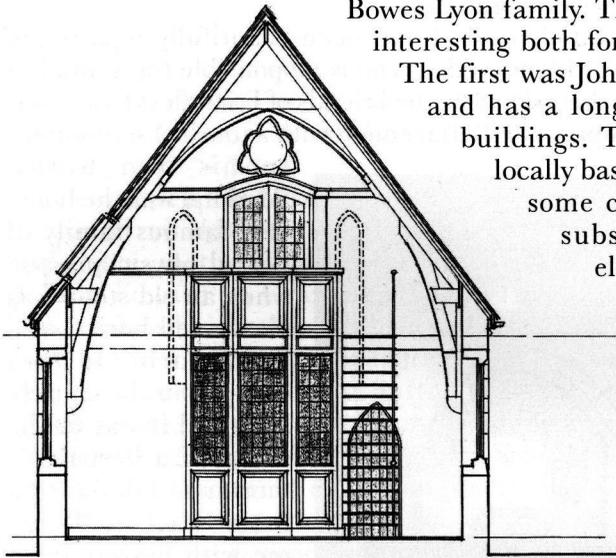


Fig. 24

Bowes Lyon family. The projected conversion seemed interesting both for its client and for its architect. The first was John Milne who lives in the village and has a long standing interest in historic buildings. The architect, Iain Welsh, also locally based, at Furneaux Pelham, caused some controversy by proposing quite substantial changes on the east elevation. Instead of a pre-existing toilet block and ugly shed and sub-station he proposed two new builds, a full-height gabled extension in green oak at the end of the aisle to serve as a dining room and sun room and a new entrance porch in weatherboarding with a ledged and braced door under a curved spandrel archhead. Even more controversially, three new

rectangular spaces were to be punched beneath the eastern lancet occupying the position presently taken by the altar. The drawing (Fig. 23) shows the east elevation as planned under the scheme as first referred to us. Figure 24 is a section which shows the panelled and domesticated bay window with gallery above, framing the bedroom to be slotted into the centre of the former nave (these particular plans were later modified). Figure 25 depicts the planned longitudinal section.

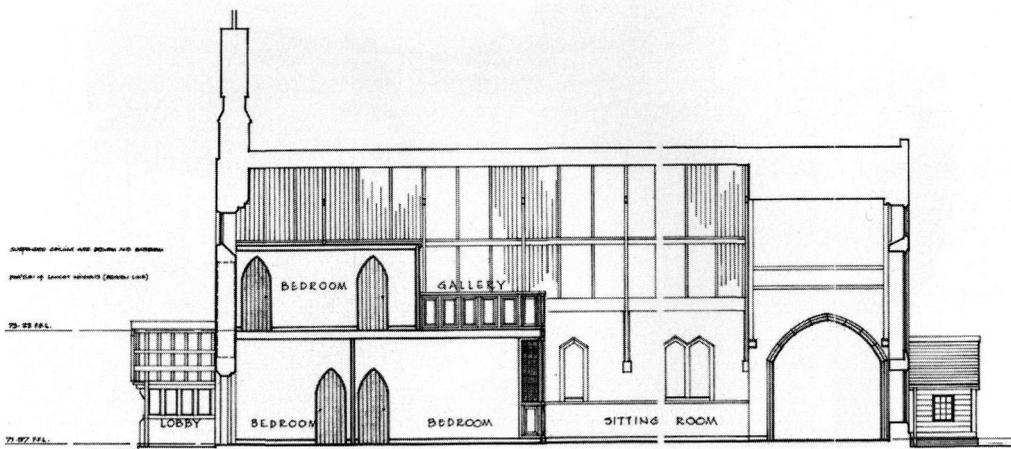


Fig. 25

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, MYDDFAI, PEMBROKESHIRE

The ancient church at Myddfai, listed Grade I, has been beautifully repaired of late by Roger Clive Powell RIBA of Llanybydder, who is responsible for a number of conservation campaigns at churches owned by the Friends of Friendless Churches. He has been able to combine appropriate self-effacement with a touch of serendipity.



In his own words: 'Myddfai was the home of a famous family of herbal physicians and when an old stoup was discovered buried at a local farm it was dumped in the church. I noticed it was in the shape of a herbalist's mortar so I designed a little bracket: 'Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean'. Syrian Hyssop isn't the most decorative plant but I think the result is quite fun.'



Fig. 26