

The Society's Casework in 1996 Review of Selected Cases

by

MATTHEW SAUNDERS

Local planning authorities in England and Wales have been obliged to consult the Ancient Monuments Society 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 steadied to around 6,000 a year; and those for complete destruction to about 250 (the exact number of listed buildings threatened by application for total demolition in 1995 was 246).

The cases discussed here are not necessarily the most important of the year, but they are among the more interesting. In choosing cases to illustrate we are necessarily limited by the availability of good quality reproductions, whether photographs or drawings. Where drawings have been reproduced they have, unless otherwise stated, been prepared by the architects for the scheme. These are named in the text and all have granted copyright consent.

TY MAWR CASTLE, CAEREINION, MONTGOMERYSHIRE (POWYS)

Ty Mawr is an aisled hall of c. 1400, now in the guardianship of Cadw. A conjectural reconstruction of its original internal appearance, drawn by Peter Smith, appears both in *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* and in the *Buildings of Wales* volume on Powys by Richard Haslam.

We were informed in September that, after careful consideration of various options, Cadw had decided to return the property to the Powis Estate to permit its conversion to provide a dwelling that would allow the public to inspect the central open hall. This approach has the support of the Ancient Monuments Board for Wales, who believe it to be a chance to resolve the future of the building once and for all. The project will be funded by grant aid from Cadw and a substantial contribution from the Powis Estate, to whom the property will be transferred on a long lease. It is hoped to start conservation work early in 1997 and to complete the project in two years.

Matthew Saunders is Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society and Hon. Director of the Friends of Friendless Churches.

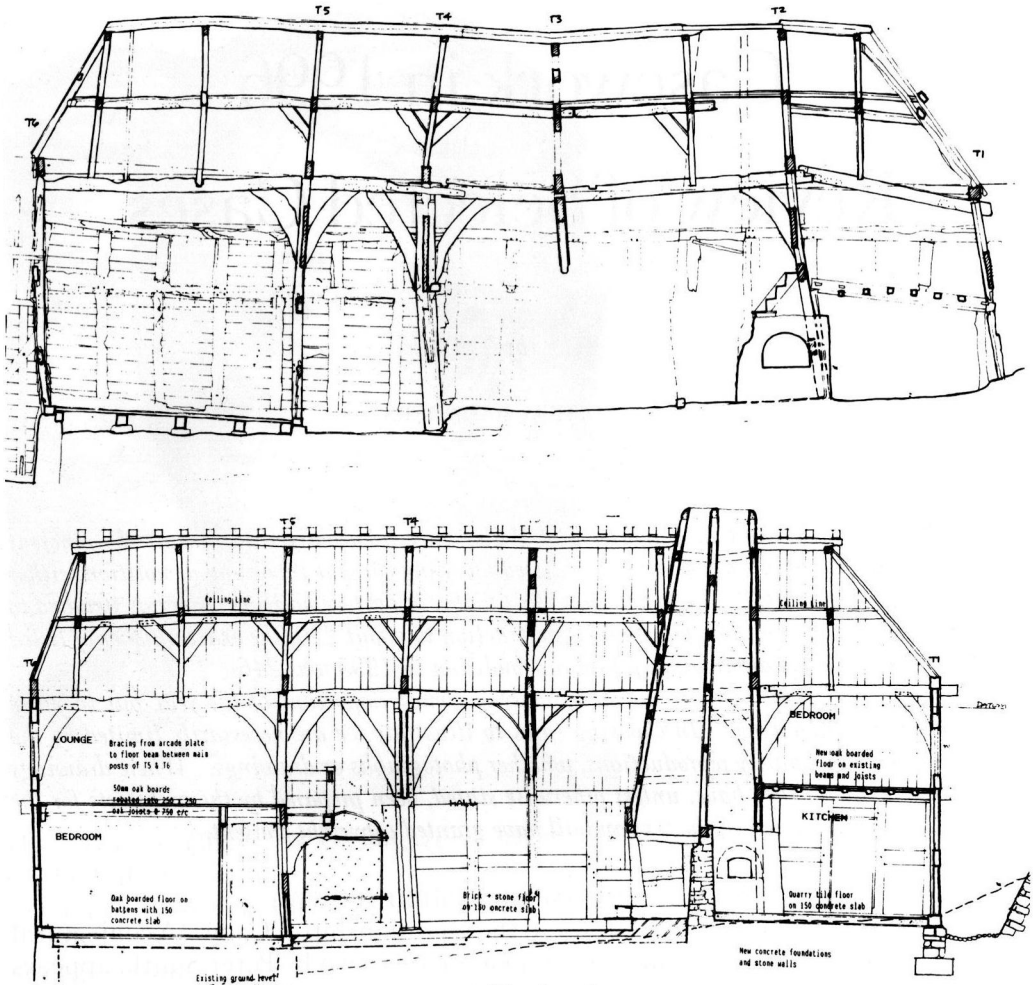


Fig. 1

Ty Mawr Castle

Sections: a. Existing; b. Proposed

The proposals, prepared by the Garner Southall Partnership, from their office in Llandrindod Wells involve minimum intervention. The smoke hood, rising through the full height of the building, is to be conserved *in situ*, and is shown in dotted line only on the survey drawing, so that the timbers behind it can be read. Some dramatically misaligned timbers will be jacked back into position, but at the end of the whole operation the structure will still lean approximately 1.5 degrees to the south (Fig. 1a-b). It will be held in this position, partly by the re-introduction of all the original wind bracing.

In view of the structure's present parlous condition, this attempt at a long-term solution did seem to be one that we could support.

THE FOLLY, SETTLE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

The Folly was built by Richard Preston, reputedly a wealthy tanner who owned land in Settle, and has a date stone of 1679. It survives in a largely unaltered form, even though divided into two units, and is listed Grade I.

We were consulted at the beginning of the year on an application by the North Craven Building Preservation Trust to repair and adapt it to provide a headquarters for the Trust, a Museum of North Craven Life and a single-bedroom holiday flat. The exemplary plan was prepared by Niall Phillips, architects of Bristol, and accompanied by the drawing which we reproduce here (Fig. 2).

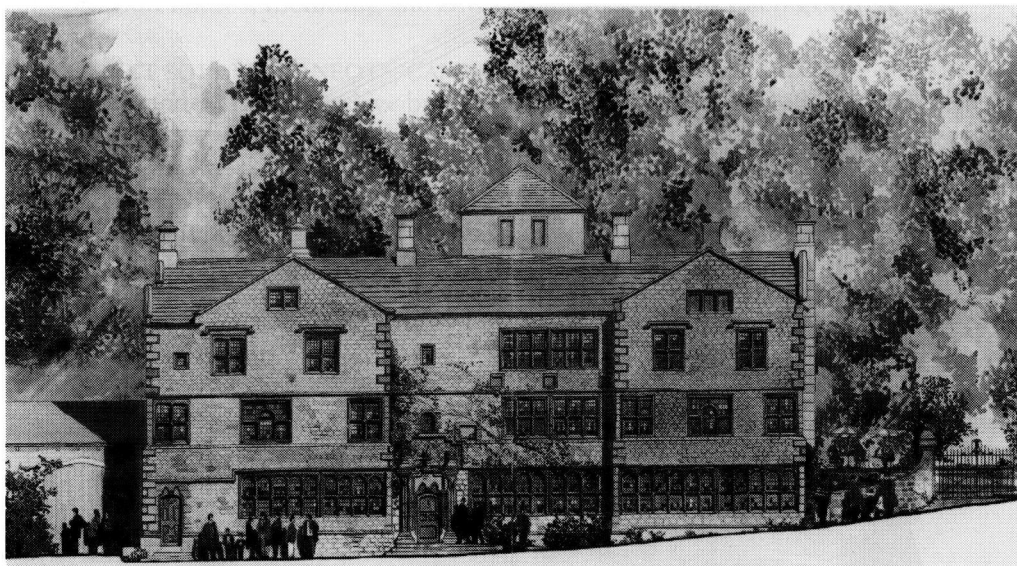


Fig. 2
The Folly, Settle
The proposed scheme

In July it was announced that the Heritage Lottery Fund had agreed to offer a grant of £230,000 towards the total cost of the project of £420,378, a welcome endorsement of a scheme which won our warm support.

BARN, TREMAYNE COURT, CARCLEW, NEAR MYLOR, CORNWALL

The great house at Carclew, built by successive owners in the first half of the eighteenth century was largely destroyed by fire in 1934. A remarkable range of farm buildings survives, occupying a position at the head of the landscaped carriage approach to the former mansion. The gardens were elaborately conceived with two substantial pools bordered with exotic and sub-tropical plants, the ponds being planned on an axis centred on the farm building, which was designed with many references to Palladio. Visitors to Carclew would have been drawn by this façade as they approached up the valley, only to turn left at the last moment to arrive in

front of the great house. The principal building within the farm complex, which although called a barn seems to have been more a general-purpose agricultural store with hay storage over, was a simplified version of the composition of the main house. The principal rectangular block with slightly projecting central pilastered and pedimented bays gives the appearance of a domestic *piano nobile* set over a plain lower-level storey acting as a plinth. There are symmetrical arcaded wings at low level.

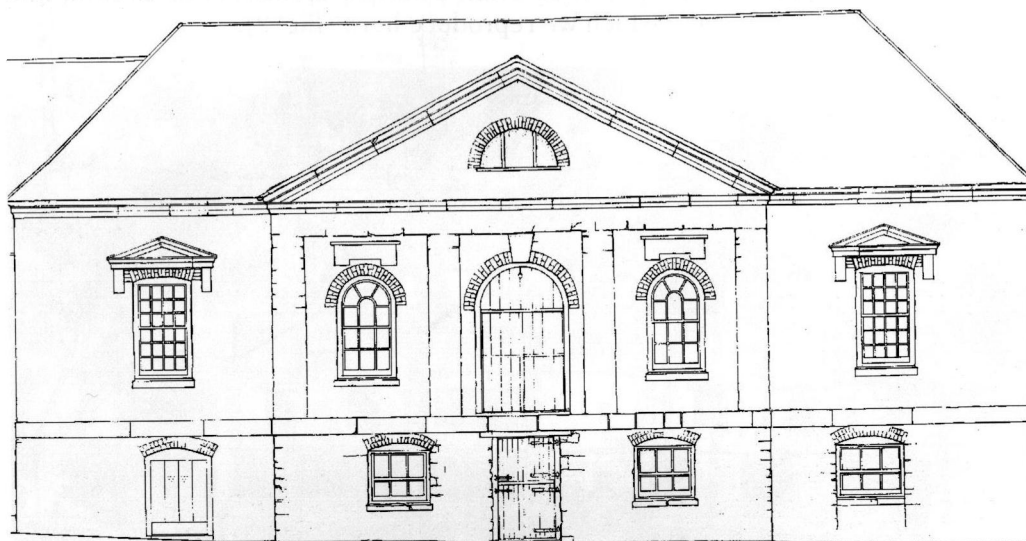
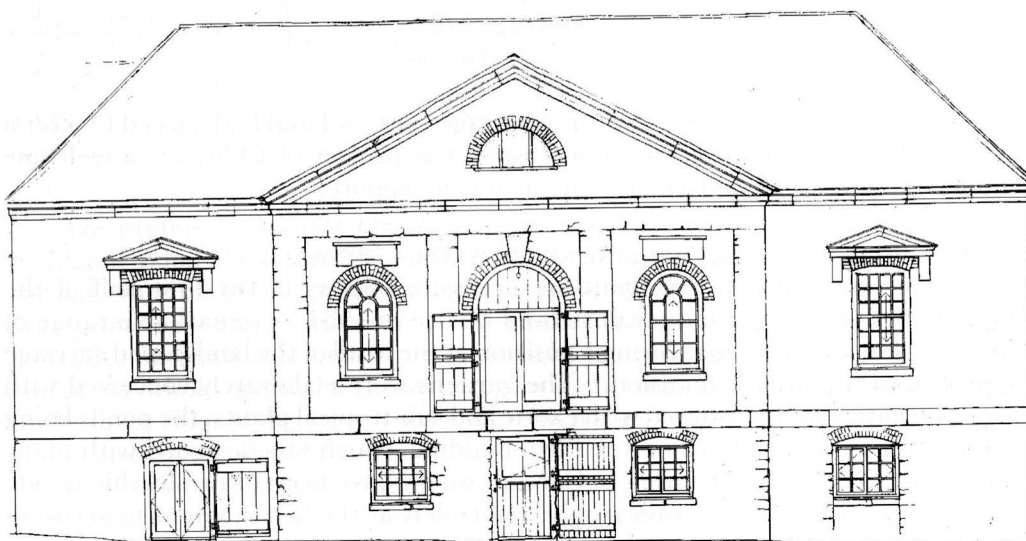


Fig. 3

Barn, Tremayne Court, Carclew
North elevation: a. Existing; b. Proposed



We were first informed in the spring of 1995 about a proposal to convert this remarkable building for residential purposes, combined with a studio. Our reaction to barn conversions is usually sceptical. However, in this instance, the designs prepared by Chris Miners, Dip. Arch. RIBA, of Bushley Green, Tewkesbury, were so respectful of the building both internally and externally that we felt it to be acceptable (Fig. 3 a-b). The proposal also received the support of the Georgian Group and English Heritage, and that of the officers of Carrick District Council. Nevertheless councillors chose to refuse permission for reasons largely unrelated to the architectural merit of the scheme. Following a reiteration of support by the conservation bodies, including the AMS, consent has now been granted.

35-7 MARKET SQUARE, ST NEOTS, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

These two modest but attractive buildings, four bays of the mid-eighteenth century and a two-bay mansarded neighbour beyond of the later eighteenth century, were threatened in March by a proposal for gutting behind the façade. We are always very alarmed to learn of proposals which reduce listed buildings to no more than front elevations, especially those which seem to be in good condition and usable as they stand (Fig. 4). We have opposed the application.



Fig. 4

35-7 Market Square, St Neots

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, COWBRIDGE, HERTFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

We are likely to be informed of some 400 cases in 1996 referred to us under the revised terms of the Ecclesiastical Exemption, introduced in 1995. This has confirmed the exemption from listed building consent and conservation area consent controls for those churches which have agreed to set up internal systems of control, dependent in part on consultation with external parties like ourselves. Apart from the Anglican church, the denominations concerned are the Methodists, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics and the United Reformed Church.

Inevitably, the quality of the consultations has varied considerably, but some of the documentation supplied has offered a number of fascinating insights into the richness of non-conformist architecture. This Hertford example is representative. The church was constructed in 1862-3 to the designs of T. Smith and Son and by the builders Henry Norris of Hertford. An internal inspection revealed an essay in structural attenuation, which seems to speak of considerable daring on the part of the original designer. The nave and aisles are divided by a set of elongated cast-iron columns, on which is set an upper roof structure of timber arch braces connected by wrought iron tie-rods at springing level (Fig. 5 a-b). These in turn support a



Fig. 5

United Reformed Church, Cowbridge, Hertford

a. Interior, view to west gallery

b. Interior, the south aisle

continuous clerestory beam buttressed by lateral arch braces across the aisles at bay lines, carried on the outer aisle walls on stone corbels. The main nave roof is supported on tall timber arch braces springing from the timber posts set on top of the cast iron columns at bay lines, with scissor trusses above. This simplified Gothic language is reflected in the divisions of the clerestory above, and in even more schematised form in the thin pointed arch, running on the east-west axis, which springs from the capitals to meet the underside of the clerestory sill beam. The configuration is one of great delicacy as well as daring.

In fact the consultation in July did not concern the roof at all, but rather the plan for a new bracket stair which would break into the present unbroken lines of the western gallery. We expressed considerable misgivings, as we did over the proposal to eject all the pews.

Many of the 400 proposals referred to us involve the replacement of pews by chairs. Yet the former are very often designed for their setting and are important for the proportions of the columns. They also have many advantages over chairs - they cannot tip over backwards, they are extremely hard to break and impossible to steal. They do not need tidying up after events as chairs do, and in certain settings they can be preferred by fire officers because of the risk which detached chairs present of tumbling over during any evacuation in conditions of panic.

SMITHKLINE BEECHAM FACTORY, GREAT WEST ROAD,
HOUNSLOW, LONDON

The drawing by the Richard Rogers Partnership gives some idea of the dramatic composition of what was built as a factory and office block for Simmonds Aero-accessories, but which has, since 1955, been occupied by Beechams (Fig. 6). Some clue to the first client is given by the sketchy portrayal of the full height statue of the pilot which crowns the tower. This view of the building has not in fact been possible for decades, since the M4 flyover sweeps across the front just above the height of the flanking wings. Nevertheless, this great tower, built between 1938 and 1942 to the designs of Wallis Gilbert and Partners, the greatest exponents of Art Deco industrial buildings, remains one of the most dramatic of

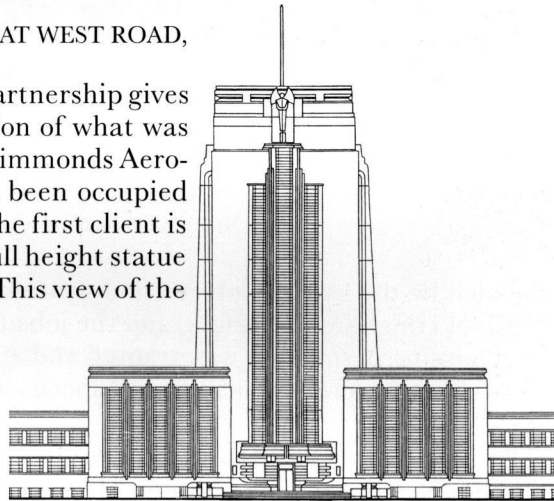


Fig. 6

SmithKline Beecham Factory, Hounslow, London
proposed reinstatement of the entrance façade

the factories which used to be strung out along the line of the Great West Road. We joined with English Heritage in opposing an initial application to demolish the building and have welcomed in recent months a scaled-down scheme which provides modern premises on cleared land to the rear and retains the listed building and tower.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, FELMINGHAM, NORTH WALSHAM, NORFOLK

The extension of ancient churches will always be a problematic area. However, this example is one which we felt able to accept since the newcomer is modest in scale and fuses stylistically with the existing building. The church is in Felmingham in Norfolk, and the new build is the gable construction built against the westernmost bay of the aisleless nave (Fig. 7). It provides a vestry, kitchen and lavatory and is constructed like the body of the church in brick, the material also being used for the Y-shaped mullion. Some polychromatic contrast will be

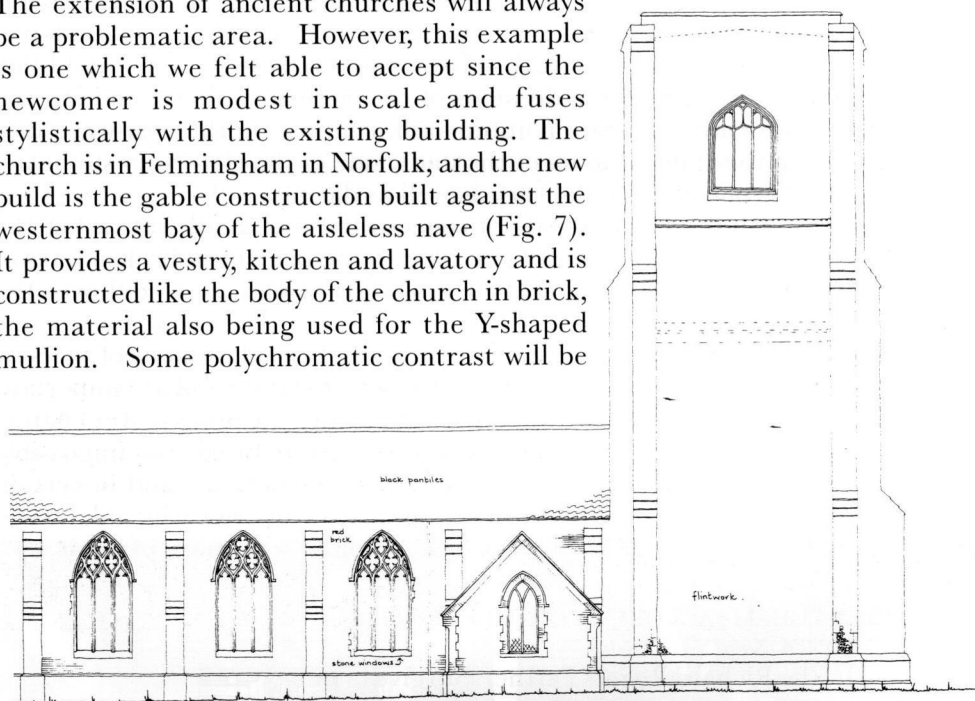


Fig. 7

St Andrew's Church, Felmingham
North elevation – proposed extension

provided by the use of both red and white brick. The architects are Birdsall and Swash of Hingham in Norfolk, and the job architect, Ruth Blackman.

Planning permission was granted and at the time of writing, in autumn 1996, the architects were preparing a full specification.

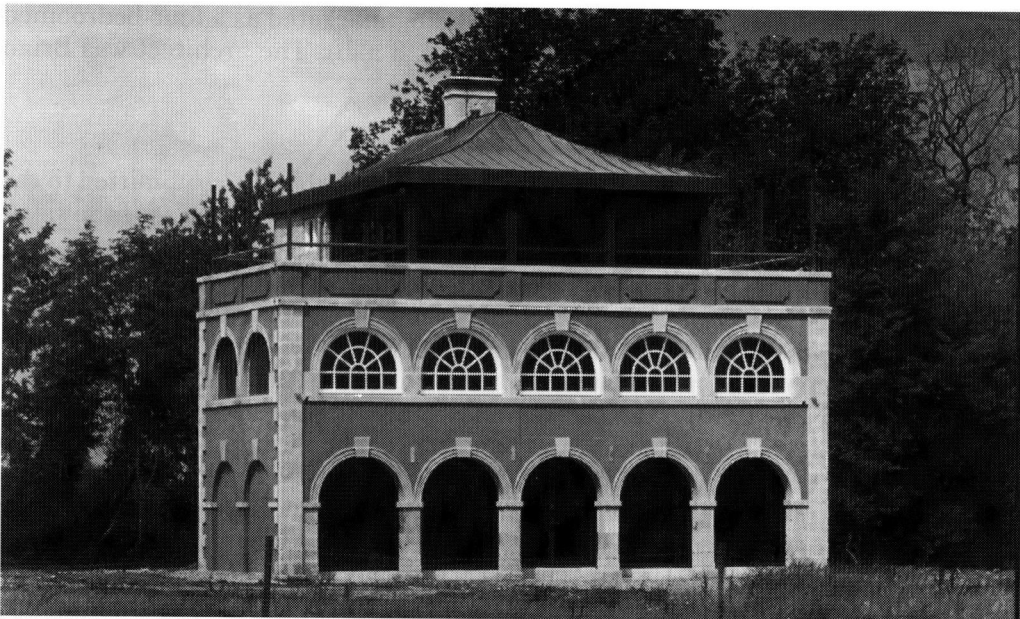
THE GRANDSTAND, WOTHORPE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Another scheme which seemed thoroughly praiseworthy was the proposed restoration of the long-abandoned horse racing grandstand at Wothorpe.

Horse racing appears to date back to the early sixteenth century, when the sport gradually took over from deer coursing as a popular spectator event. In the early eighteenth century small racecourses proliferated, but government regulations passed in 1740 concentrated race-going at a few locations, many of them associated with great aristocratic estates. This led to the commissioning of a string of elegant grandstands, many designed by the architect Carr of York, at Doncaster, Beverley, Stamford and York itself. Where no grandstand was available it was common for spectators to drive their carriages onto the courses, and for the poorer to make do



Fig. 8
The Grandstand, Wothorpe
a. Under repair in October 1995; b. For sale in 1996



with canvas tents and crude viewing stands, which were no more than sheds on stilts.

Race days were occasions of much entertaining and conviviality, including feasts known as 'ordinaries'. Cock fighting and travelling theatres were often offered as incidental attractions, as were dances and assemblies in the evenings. Once the racing season was over, many grandstands doubled as cricket pavilions or as spectator stands for military parades.

It is known that racing was organised at Wittering Heath on the Burghley Estate in Northamptonshire early in the seventeenth century. The present course at Wothorpe was established about 1717 and continued until 1873. The grandstand came in 1766, a rectangular building on three floors which includes a railed standing space on the roof. The precise date has been confirmed by the retrieval of the original date stone. The first floor was reserved for the gentry and the display of the Stamford Gold Cup, which was awarded for the main race and remains on view at Burghley House. The first 99-year leaseholder was John Terrement, an innkeeper of Stamford, who doubtless undertook to provide the necessary provisions. It is now clear from archaeological analysis that the grandstand was enlarged, probably in 1820.

No archaeologist was required to confirm that, by the post-war period, the building was reducing in size as it steadily collapsed. It has been retrieved from the threat of complete oblivion by Jennifer Freeman, former Secretary of the Victorian Society and currently Director of the Historic Chapels Trust, who formed Freeman Historic Properties Ltd in 1992, with the precise object of acquiring and repairing listed buildings 'at risk'.

Her brave venture, assisted by grant aid from English Heritage, is now complete and at the time of writing the grandstand is being marketed as a four-bedroomed house (and as a Grade II* listed building) (Fig. 8 a-b). The architect was Brian Austin and the archaeologist, Donald McKreth.

ST PETER'S CHURCH, NEW ROAD, DITTON, KENT

The most radical proposal for an extension to an historic building submitted to the Society in the course of the year is that for more than doubling the size of the small medieval church of St Peter ad Vincula at Ditton in Kent.

St Peter's was restored by Gilbert Scott in 1860, at which time the chancel arch was removed. However, much original Norman work survives, now juxtaposed with the Perpendicular tower. Built in order to serve a village, St Peter's is too small for the congregation of what is now a substantial settlement. The approach of the minister, the Reverend Ross Terranova, and his architects, Atelier MLM (Peter Melvin and Jane Newman), has been to propose turning the whole church through ninety degrees and constructing a completely new place of worship on a fan-shaped footprint, splayed away from the present building on the south side (Fig. 9 a-b). If there are echoes they are of Edward Cullinan's rebuilding of the fire-gutted parish church at Barnes in Greater London and Quinlan Terry's new work at Brentwood Roman Catholic Cathedral.

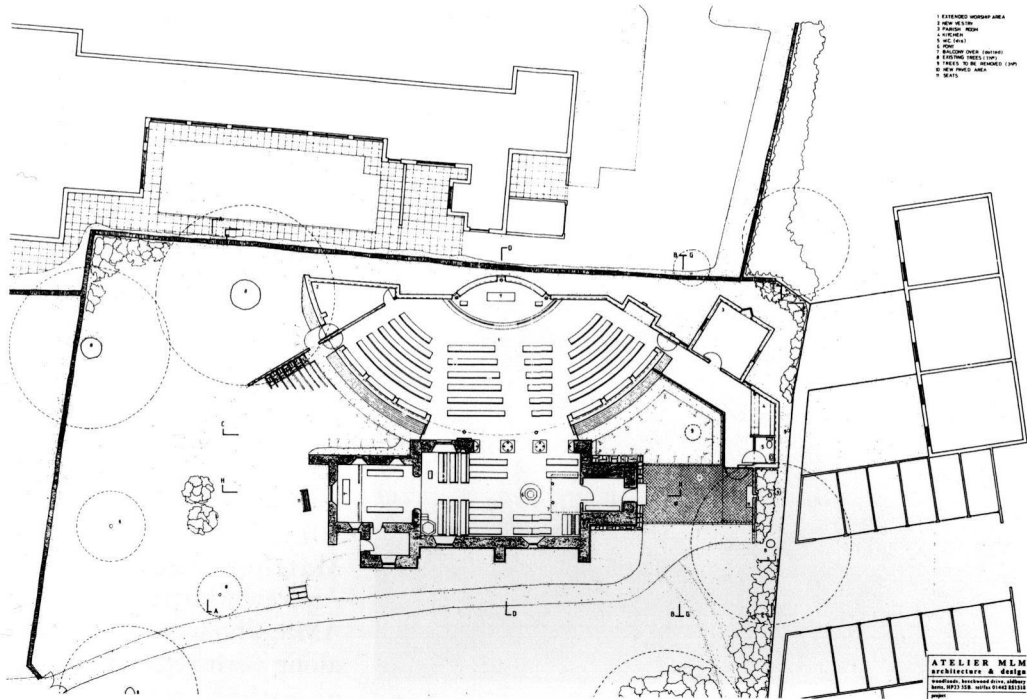
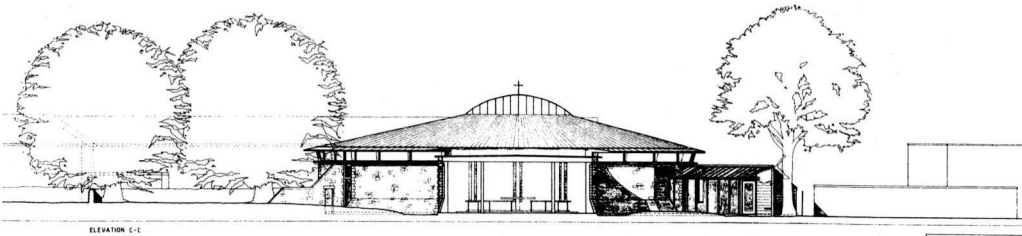
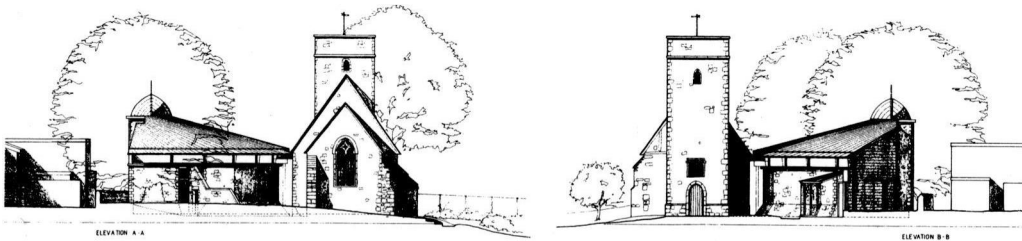


Fig. 9
St Peter's Church, Ditton
a. Proposed ground floor plan; b. Proposed elevations



ATELIER MLM
architects & design
100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200

The Society's Technical Committee found this far too strong a brew, and objected particularly to the treatment of the early medieval masonry, where this was breached to provide access to the new place of worship. Planning permission has been refused but at the time of writing a decision has not been taken as to whether to lodge an appeal.

BARRINGTON PARK, GREAT BARRINGTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Fig. 10
Barrington Park, Great Barrington

This is an exceptionally rare photograph (the copyright of Cotswold District Council) of one of the great secret houses of England - Barrington Park in Gloucestershire, where visits by only a very select few have been allowed (Fig. 10). These now include Matthew Saunders and Andrew Martindale of the AMS, who were allowed in, along with representatives of other conservation bodies, after an application was lodged in 1994 to

reduce the building to its central eighteenth-century villa form, to demolish later wings and reorganise the house internally.

Although incorporating remains from an earlier house, including a Jacobean overmantel, the bulk of the property dates from 1737. There is a tentative attribution to William Kent, but recently discovered documentation points more clearly to Smith of Warwick. In the eighteen-seventies, plans were prepared by MacVicar Anderson for two substantial wings, in the Palladian manner, and these eventually were built together with a large *porte-cochère* (the latter on the main front entrance). Thereafter the interior offered an integrated fusion between fine quality Georgian rooms - the entrance hall, tapestry room and drawing room - and good Victorian work by Anderson - the dining room, billiard room and neo-Adam boudoir.

We objected strongly to the proposed truncation, because it would involve the destruction of much excellent nineteenth-century work, and require a great deal of conjectural reconstruction of supposed eighteenth-century interiors. Further it would not of itself restore the symmetrical balance of the original, given the plan for a new asymmetrical wing. Studies commissioned by Cotswold District Council, in particular the report of Richard Griffiths, architect, showed that repair and adaptation of the building as it stands for continued use by the family would not be more expensive than the scheme of part demolition, refacing and extension proposed.

The application was refused in May 1995 and, after a period of some indecision on the part of the council, the case eventually went to appeal at a hearing which began in October 1996. The Society relied on that occasion on a lengthy written submission, backing up the very convincing case against demolition mounted by Cotswold District Council, English Heritage and the Victorian Society.

NUN APPLETON HALL, APPLETON ROEBUCK, YORKSHIRE



Fig. 11

Nun Appleton Hall, Appleton Roebuck
a. North elevation; b. South elevation



As a case, Nun Appleton had a great deal in common with Barrington Park. If anything, Nun Appleton is even more of a palimpsest, being the result of at least four major rebuilding campaigns, one during each of the last four centuries (Fig. 11 a–b). All of Edward Buckton Lamb's gargantuan work of 1863 was demolished earlier this century and the same reductionist spirit informed the application referred to us in 1996, which proposed to cut the house down to two storeys with dormer windows in a hipped roof, reminiscent of Coleshill.

Andrew Martindale inspected the building on our behalf and we lodged strong objections to the proposal. This would not only destroy much interesting fabric of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (we did not champion the porch of 1920 or the ugly watertower by B. Chippindale); it would also 'restore' the house to a form for which there is no irrefutable historical evidence.

At the time of writing no decision on the application had been taken.

17–18 HIGH EAST STREET,
DORCHESTER, DORSET

As at St Neots the Society defends humble elements within townscapes, as well as the grand house. 17 and 18 High East Street may be architecturally modest but this is one of the earliest buildings within a rich street scene, and we were not persuaded on the evidence submitted that there was no alternative to destruction (Fig. 12 a–b). A decision on the case is awaited.

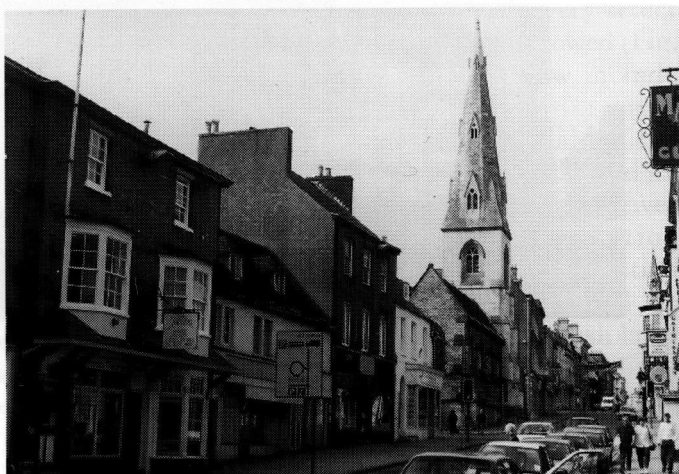


Fig. 12

17–18 High East Street,
Dorchester

- a. The building in context
- b. Detail showing the stone slates at the eaves of the clay-tiled roof – a vernacular tradition in Dorset

THE PAROCHIAL OFFICES, PRINCES STREET, BRIGHTON, SUSSEX

We expressed some concern over the proposal to demolish the newly-listed Parochial Offices of 1894, on a site visible from the Pavilion in Brighton, for replacement by a much taller and much more rectilinear office block (Fig. 13 a–b). Listing only makes sense if it creates a presumption in favour of retention and that presumption can only be set aside if the building in question is proved to be irredeemably unsound, incapable of beneficial use or if there is an over-riding public good to be derived from its demolition. The present building acquits itself as a candidate for destruction on all three grounds. A decision is awaited.

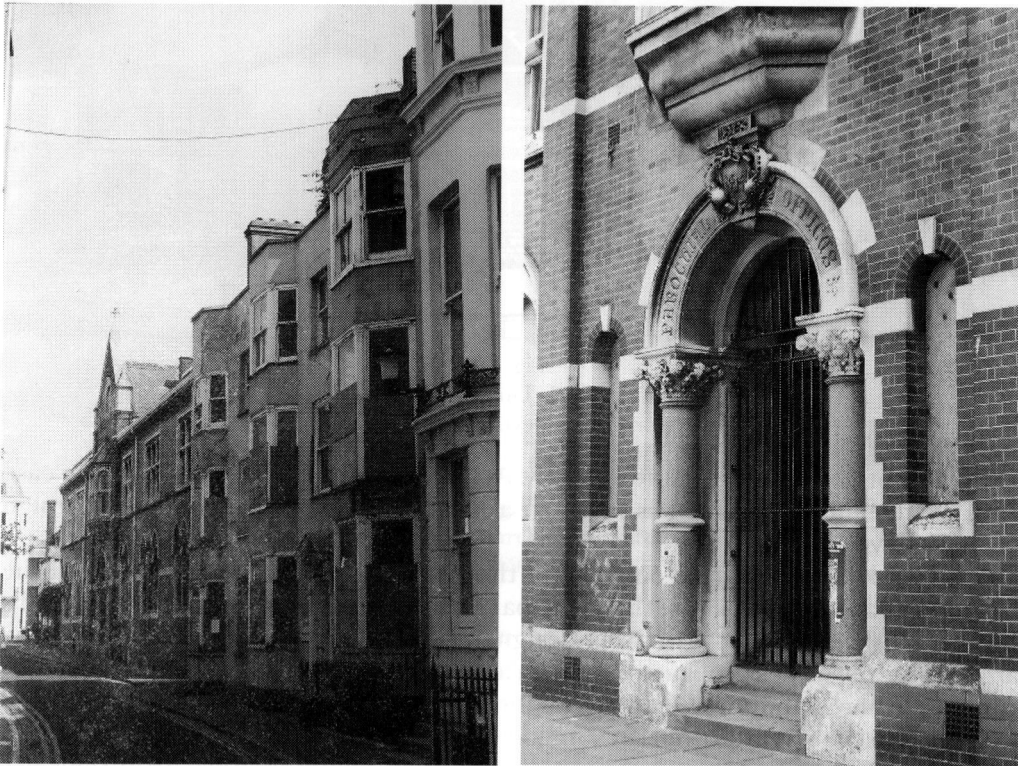


Fig. 13

Parochial Offices, Princes Street, Brighton
a. The context; b. The main entrance

THE KURSAAL, SOUTHCHURCH AVENUE, SOUTHEND, ESSEX

This perspective, prepared by John Breley Design Associates, shows the Kursaal at Southend in a repaired state (Fig. 14). As the building currently is derelict, this is a goal shared by John Breley's clients, the Rowallan Group, and the AMS. Beyond that, however, we diverged on the design of a vast new development planned for the area behind. The new return elevation was quite unacceptable in juxtaposition with a design of the quality of the Kursaal. As we often do in such cases, we copied



Fig. 14

The Kursaal, Southchurch Avenue, Southend
The original redevelopment proposal

our letter of objection to the Royal Fine Art Commission. They took up the case with a vengeance and helped us to secure a considerable improvement in the design of the redevelopment.

No work has yet started on site, but the prospects must be better for what the listing schedule describes as 'the principal architectural monument to Southend's Edwardian boom period'. It was designed in 1898-9 by George Sherrin as the architecturally most significant part of an amusement park, which originally covered twenty-six acres and included a menagerie, music hall, funfair, ninety shops and fifty-three houses. It is Sherrin's major work outside London and the only large dome he designed following his completion of the London Oratory, after the early death of the original architect, Herbert Gribble.

ST ILLTYD'S CHURCH, GLYN TARELL, LLANILLTUD, POWYS

We were extremely saddened to learn early in 1996 that the church of St Illtyd at Glyn Tarell within the Brecon Beacons National Park had been demolished. We had applied in July 1990, unsuccessfully, to have it listed. Its architectural interest was borderline, the church itself being a simple rebuild in stone of 1858 by the local architect William Jones. Its interest came much more from its setting within a substantial circular churchyard, strongly suggestive of pagan and Early Christian origins, and its fittings. These included the two monuments shown here (Fig. 15 a-b), the fate of which is unclear.

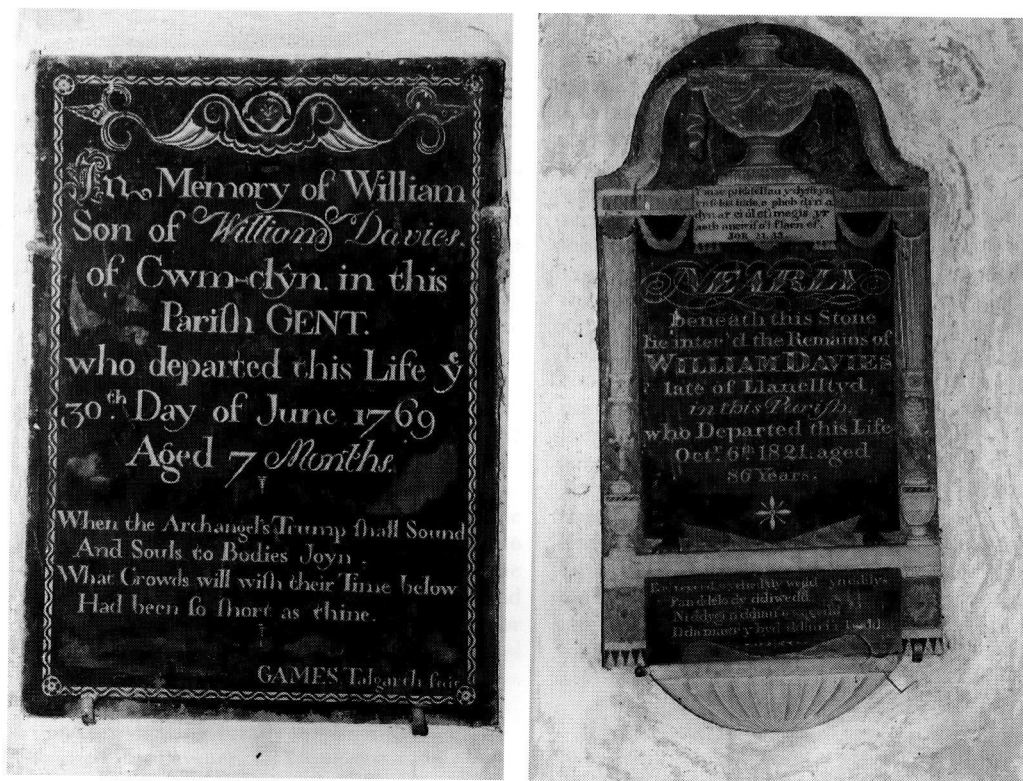


Fig. 15
St Illtyd's Church, Glyn Tarell
Memorials of 1769 (a) and 1821 (b)

The loss of Glyn Tarell stresses the need for an expansion within Wales of the work of the Friends of Friendless Churches, something that is almost certain to begin in 1997 with the agreement, and financial support, of Cadw and the Representative Body of the Church in Wales. It must be acknowledged, however, that vestings would almost certainly be limited to redundant churches listed in the Grade II* or Grade I categories alone, since Cadw can only offer Historic Buildings grants to 'outstanding' churches.



read the inscription. The monument was found in the churchyard of St Illtyd's Church, Glyn Tarell, Powys. It is a simple rectangular stone monument, possibly of local stone, and is set in a grassy area. The inscription is illegible due to the quality of the photograph.

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