

The Society's Casework in 2000: 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 at about 6,000 a year and those for complete demolition to about 250-300. The exact number of listed buildings threatened by application for total demolition in 1999 (the last full year at the time of writing) was 210. (A full list of these cases is obtainable from the Society's office.) The cases discussed here include some of the most important in the year and also some that are typical. In choosing cases we are necessarily limited by the availability of good quality reproductions. The drawings have been kindly supplied by the architects of the various schemes and the names of the practices are given in the text.

BANK HOUSE, 4 BANK PLACE, FALMOUTH, CORNWALL

The history of Bank House is one of decidedly mixed fortune. First built in 1788 for Robert Were Fox, it ceased to be a family home in 1864 when the lease was sold to Mr John Downing, who used the north end as a biscuit factory while his son, a coal merchant, stored coal in the basement and the yard. Just four years later a fire swept through the building and the roof fell in, but so solidly had the house been built that the walls remained intact. It was remodelled internally and apparently refronted soon after, although if the front elevation is of that date it is remarkably old fashioned. After repair following the fire it served as the Bank House Hotel until it was taken over by the YMCA in the early 1930s. The cruelty with which they treated the ground floor is clearly evident from the drawing. Its bad luck has continued, for in April 2000 we were told of an application by Count House (Falmouth) Ltd to demolish the building and redevelop the site with a bold new structure which it was hoped would be occupied by Her Majesty's Customs.

As the drawing (Fig. 1) shows, Bank House is part of a consistent late-Georgian/early-Victorian townscape and in view of that, the presumption in favour of retention that attaches to all listed buildings and the fact that the structural assessment of the building did not describe a building in extremis, we opposed the application

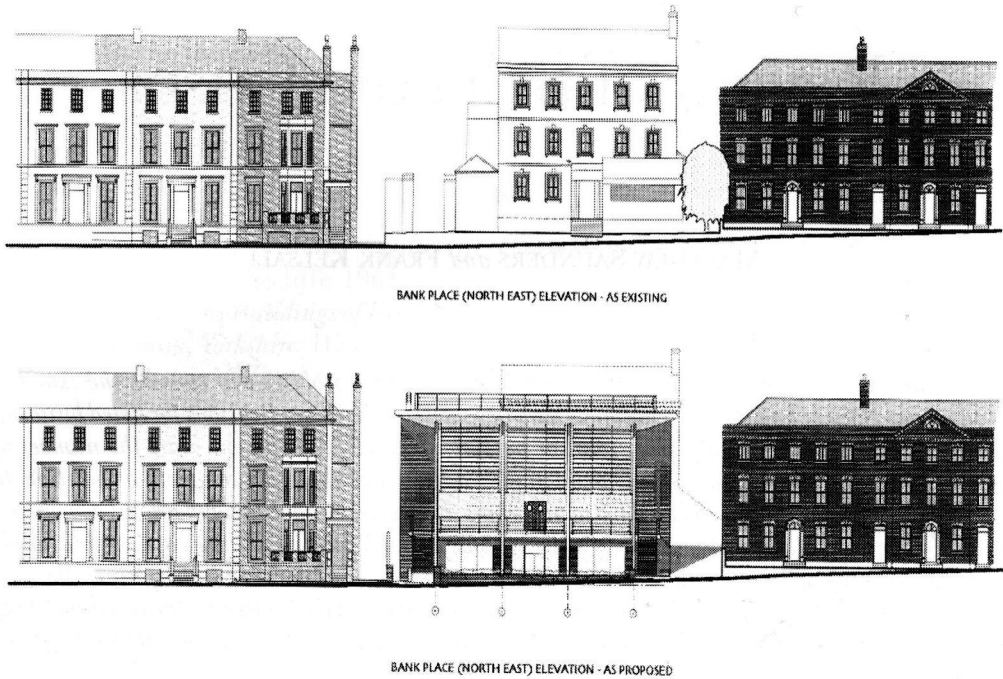


Fig. 1

Bank House, 4 Bank Place, Falmouth Cornwall

which remains undecided at the time of writing. We also felt that the hideous ground floor conservatory was easily capable of removal. One intriguing aspect of the present building is its very slight asymmetry, with the space between windows three and four, as taken from the left, clearly wider than its counterparts. Such an imbalance normally denotes the refronting of an earlier building (or incompetence on the part of the original builder) and this may be confirmation that the post-fire reconstruction did indeed involve a refronting.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, WELLINGTON ROAD, RHYLL, CLWYD

The photograph (Fig. 2) cannot quite convey the subtlety of the geometry of St John's Church built in 1885-7 to the designs of David Walker. Edward Hubbard describes it thus in *The Buildings of Wales* – 'A large octagon with tall east and west arches opening respectively into a chancel and a one-bay aisled and clerestoreyed nave, or rather ante nave.... Though the interior is wonderfully spacious, the plan is not fully resolved, with the eastern diagonal arches giving into residual corners'. He refers also to a fine pulpit of 1891 (since removed) and windows by Alfred O. Hemming of 1906, and a very conservative one of 1932 by Christopher Charles Powell. St John's became redundant in 1997. Some of the fittings were moved out, the pews going to St Martin-of-Tours at Llay. Very responsibly, the Church in Wales

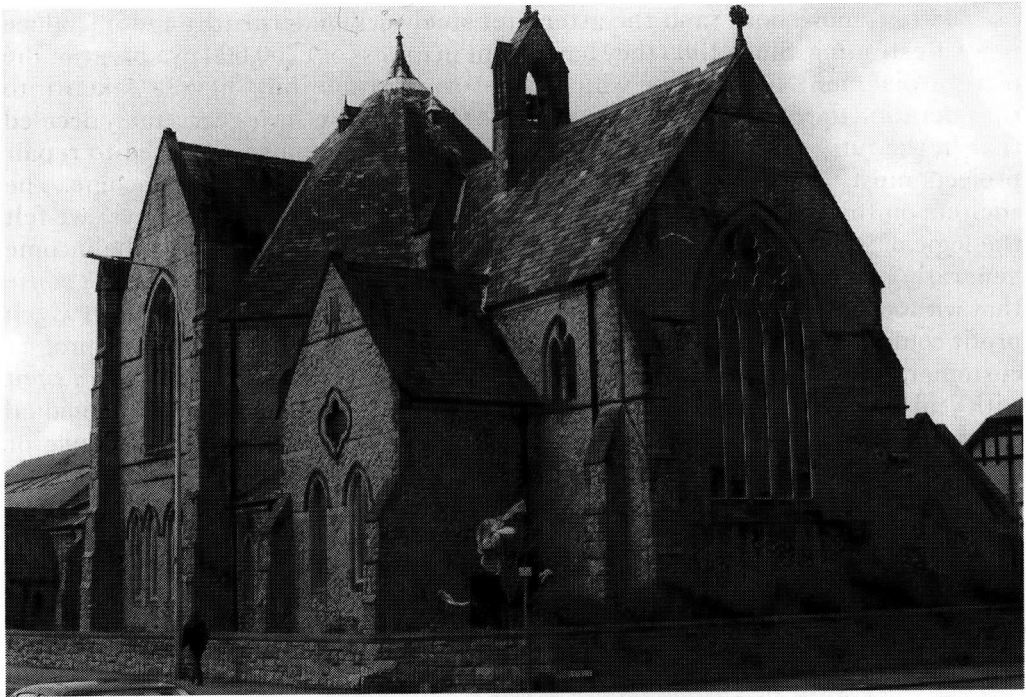


Fig. 2
St John the Baptist Church, Wellington Road, Rhyl, Clwyd

agreed to serve on a working party convened by the local authority with a view to exploring the range of possible uses. Proposals for an arts centre were developed, but in May frustration boiled over at the lack of success and the Church applied for consent to demolish. They did so more to concentrate minds than with malign intent and the application, although it stands no chance of success, has galvanized the search for a use which is well funded, reversible if possible, and acceptable in planning terms. The recent success of Christ Church Congregational Church in Water Street in the same town of 1885 by Owen Edwards in securing substantial grant aid for repair from the Heritage Lottery Fund (with increased provision of community facilities) sets an example which can perhaps be followed.

THE PIER, LYTHAM ST ANNE'S, LANCASHIRE

St Anne's pier dates from 1885 with additions of 1904 and 1910. Following a disastrous fire in 1978 it was reduced to about half its original length, but what survives is still impressive and is an important part of the character of this Lancashire seaside town. We were faced in September 2000 with an application to demolish the two cantilevered shelters (Fig. 3) which add a particularly dramatic touch to what is now the far end of the structure. The owners, the St Anne's Pier Company Ltd, balked at the expense of £35,300 to repair them and proposed

instead to remove both (and the attendant steelwork underneath) and introduce new balustrading. Since 1985 they have spent in excess of £700,000 in a programme of refurbishment to the pier which is set to continue but 'having taken into consideration the ongoing decline in revenue the Directors have regrettably decided that in the future best interests of St Anne's Pier the monies allocated to repair projects must be restricted to those parts of the pier that generate income. The shelters on the seaward end of the pier do not produce revenue'. However we felt the logic of such an approach was flawed. It is impossible to separate the income generating sections of the pier on the superstructure from the rest in the sense that without the basic platform of the jetty or pier nothing would exist from which profit could be generated. The shelters may not house tenants but they do protect customers and, much more significantly from our point of view, they are *a jeu d'esprit* with real design flair. It may be hard to detect from the photographs, but individual touches are given by the ogee-shaped capping, the fretting to the valance or bargeboard, the herringbone slatted wood on the dado and the decorative console



Fig. 3

The Pier, Lytham St Anne's, Lancashire

sitting on the latter and resting against the side of the gridiron of glazing. And the option of demolition, making good and the provision of a new length of balustrading instead of the shelters is unlikely to be appreciably cheaper than the £35,000 estimated for repair.

We do not believe that an overwhelming case for demolition has been established. The Council agreed and consent was refused in December 2000.

THE TITHE BARN, CROWLE COURT FARM, CROWLE, WORCESTERSHIRE

The photograph (Fig. 4) shows a building in dire straits. To deny that would be fatuous but, nevertheless, the AMS, together with the SPAB, were greatly alarmed at the proposal to demolish all that remained and 'rebuild it' in a lame replica as part of a scheme for residential conversion. The reason why demolition remained unpalatable was that the barn in question is in fact early medieval, built *c.* 1356, dated as such both by dendrochronological analysis and by documentary research. It has also been the subject of a previous refusal of listed building consent by the



Fig. 4

The Tithe Barn, Crowle Court Farm, Crowle, Worcestershire

Secretary of State at an earlier Public Inquiry. Extracts from the Inspector's findings after that remain relevant – 'The scale of construction and the large span of the trusses add to the architectural significance of the building. The simple fact that this fourteenth century masonry building survives in such a recognizable form must be of historic, if not of architectural, importance. Here, though, that historic importance is considerably increased because the barn is known to be part of a manorial estate that belonged for centuries to the Priory of Worcester. It is the only surviving building of that time (save for the remnant of the Manor itself) although the moat and other enclosures remain as physical evidence of its former context'. The Inspector continued, 'Even in its present dilapidated state the form and obvious age of the barn give it a prominence and presence that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Crowle Conservation Area. Its demolition would convey no benefit to the community.... It is the most obvious visual reminder of the medieval core of the village. In my opinion, the preservation of the barn would convey a more vivid message, to more people, than a documentary record, however detailed'. He further quoted Dr Nat Alcock, the distinguished scholar of vernacular architecture, in his view that the 'remaining arch brace truss was the earliest recorded secular example of such a feature in the West of England'.

The fact that the building has deteriorated since to the extent now that the whole of the roof has been removed and the truss laid flat in the farmyard makes it

even more important that this war of attrition on what was an outstanding building must not be allowed to succeed. Clearly substantial reconstruction of the building is unavoidable, but in sensitive hands this can be achieved with maintenance of genuine historic character and the reinstatement of the medieval roof timbers. The current application does not propose that and we have strongly opposed it. It has since been withdrawn.

69 MIDDLE STREET, DEAL, KENT



Fig. 5
No. 69 Middle Street, Deal, Kent

This is a modest building (Fig. 5) – we would not claim otherwise – but it is an essential building block in the charming group of varied properties interlocked in a network of streets and alleys making, as John Newman says in the Pevsner volume for North-East and East Kent – ‘a fascinating dense texture, a late seventeenth century new town, unlike anything else in England; the Rows at Great Yarmouth, though, were the same sort of thing: and they were even narrower. Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century cottages are everywhere, even facing the sea, for Deal has never taken itself seriously as a resort’. All the roads were kept deliberately narrow in order to minimize the effect of the winds sweeping in from the sea. We were faced just before Christmas 1999 with an application to demolish No. 69 and rebuild it in a feeble replica. But this was quite unnecessary. The building is easily capable of retention and repair, keeping those elements, particularly the Georgian doorcase and the charming

shopfront which give it such character. The application was refused and expectation now lies with repair.

HENRY LUCAS HOSPITAL, WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE

Clearly the most acute threat is one of demolition, but we are alerted to proposals to abandon the original uses and sell outstanding buildings. One such is the Lucas Hospital or Asylum at Wokingham built in 1665 and described by Pevsner as ‘the best building of Wokingham without any doubt’. The photograph (Fig. 6) is one taken by B.T. Batsford himself for Walter Godfrey who reproduced it in *The English Almshouse* written in 1955. The principal interior is the exquisite chapel which retains the original armorial glass giving Henry Lucas’s arms and the hourglass (Fig. 7) over the pulpit, allowing the rector to be timed on his sermons.



Fig. 6
Henry Lucas Hospital, Wokingham, Berkshire



Fig. 7
Henry Lucas Hospital.
Detail from the almshouse chapel

The almshouses are owned by the Drapers' Company, but not for much longer. The Company has spent more than a decade exploring possibilities for the building and in 1990 won permission for a substantial new build on the land at the back, which, it was hoped, would have made it more economic to remain on the site which is attractive but remote from the amenities of the town centre. The Foundation is, in the words of the Company, 'very poorly endowed and its income is insufficient to maintain and develop the building to the standards required by potential beneficiaries of the scheme (poor persons, aged over fifty who are resident in the beneficial area, i.e. certain parishes in Surrey and Berkshire)'. English Heritage grant aid has gone towards the repair of the outbuildings (which are Grade II* compared with the Grade I accorded to the Hospital itself), but the Drapers have now come to the view that they must provide new almshouses elsewhere and sell the existing premises. We have made contact with them and are in amicable discussion but their resolution to dispose of the site seems unstoppable. They recognize the importance of what they themselves have termed the 'magnificent chapel' but we are very nervous that the sort of nursing home use which is envisaged on the site to the back extending into the almshouses will have no use for such a space. We will stand alongside to help, if necessary through the Friends of Friendless Churches. Precise details of the sale were not known at the time of writing.

THE CONVENT OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, CLEWER, BERKSHIRE



Fig. 8

The Convent of St John the Baptist, Clewer, Berkshire.
High Victorian splendour

We were equally alarmed by the potential threat posed by the sale of another outstanding historic property in Berkshire with a chapel of supreme importance (Fig. 8). This is the Convent of St John the Baptist situated at Clewer, now in effect a suburb of Windsor. The whole complex, begun in 1853, was designed by Henry Woodyer who returned in 1881 to complete what is now the third extant chapel on the site, the building described by Pevsner as 'astonishingly grand and lavish' – with a wonderfully lofty nave, a vaulted chancel, stained glass by Hardman, extremely elaborate reredos within the Lady Chapel and at the High Altar, a large brass to the foundress, Harriet Monsell, on the chancel floor, a recumbent alabaster effigy under a canopy just by the High Altar to Canon Carter, Rector of Clewer and the first warden, designed by Bodley, choirstalls of continental scale, and polychromatic decoration covering the brickwork and vaults. The interior, quite genuinely, takes the breath away. And the complex retains the original chapel of 1857 where the interior has been liberally neutered by white paint and an intense little prayer room (Fig. 9) with saints and prophets painted onto the entrance screen and a large painting over. This was for the exclusive use of the 'penitents' or fallen women, which the convent was set up to care for. Declining numbers, although not funds, the buildings being in excellent condition, have forced the nuns to relocate to Begbroke near Oxford and put Clewer up for sale. We have offered to assist the new owner who is, at the time of writing, unknown and we shall stand alongside the Victorian Society in monitoring what happens in particular to the 1881 chapel.



Fig. 9

The Convent of St John the Baptist, Clewer, Berkshire.
The Prayer Room for the Penitents

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL, WAVERTREE, LIVERPOOL

The third building where the threat is one of sale was described by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner in the South Lancashire volume of *The Buildings of England* as 'without any doubt the most spectacular building in Wavertree and one of the most spectacular of half a dozen of its date in Lancashire'. This is the Blue Coat School, first founded in 1708 in central Liverpool in a building that has now been well converted to provide an arts centre (see Fig. 10) but relocated in 1903-6 to the more leafy suburb of Wavertree. The architects on that occasion were Briggs Wolstenholme and Thornly. The complex is as grand as a public school with an octagonal chapel (Fig. 12), a Board Room in seventeenth-century style with paintings and memorabilia, monuments from the first building relocated in the chapel and in nearby corridors, and a superb Baroque tower (Fig. 11) which was given by Sir Charles Nall-Cain in 1915.

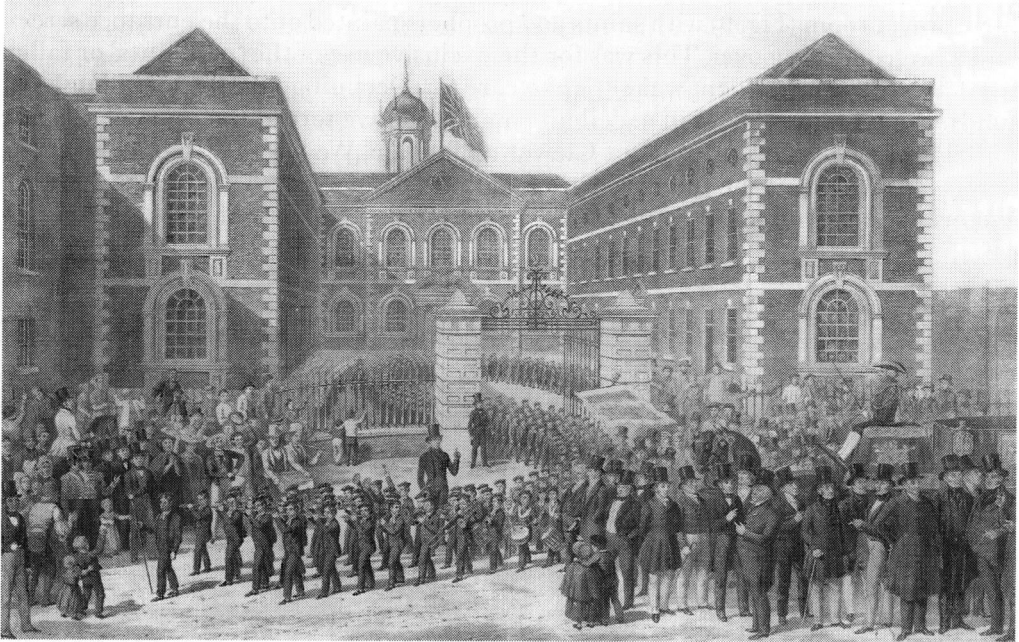


Fig. 10

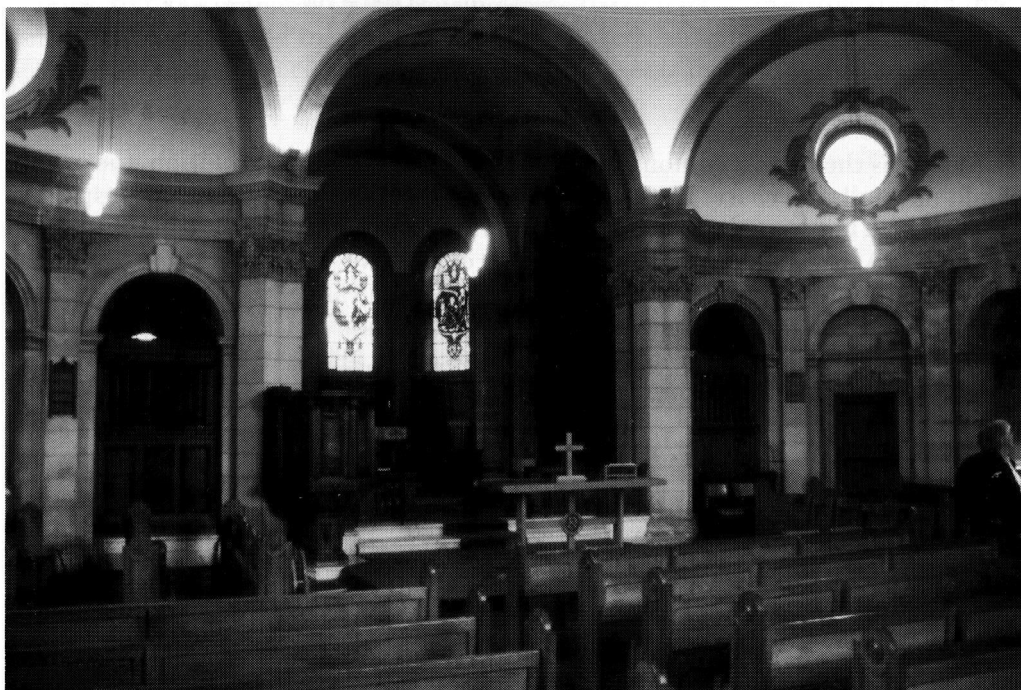
The original Blue Coat School of 1708 (now an arts centre)

This splendid building is now a victim of conflicting interests between local and national politicians. The Department for Education promised some £7,000,000 for refurbishment two years ago, but then withdrew the offer in favour of moving again to a new site in a more socially challenging area of the city. The Governors, who had already spent a great deal of money in putting up temporary buildings in the grounds to which the children could be moved while the buildings were refurbished, were given six months to find a new site but, despite their endeavours,



failed to do so. In the meantime a structural survey has shown the building to be sound, even if clearly in need of redecoration and updating, and the majority of the Governors and parents remain puzzled by the confusion and are anxious to stay. We have visited the building, met the Chairman of Governors and have joined in the lobbying of the Department for Education, urging them to reinstate their original £7,000,000 offer. It seems quite extraordinary that a building of this quality and character should be threatened with the vagaries of disuse, particularly in a city like Liverpool. In December 2000 Liverpool City Council supported the creation of a new school which will incorporate the present buildings.

Fig. 11 (*left*) and Fig. 12 (*below*)
The tower and chapel of the present school

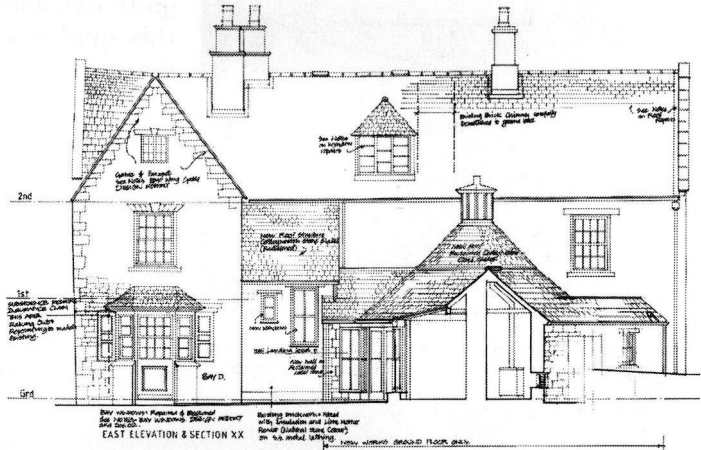


No. 2 PARK STREET, KINGS CLIFFE, PETERBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



Fig. 13
No. 2 Park Street, as existing (left)
and as proposed (below)

Every day casework throws up the problem and challenge of how to extend a listed building. Do you do it either seamlessly 'in character', are you shamelessly 'modern' or are you just deliberately low key, ensuring that the newcomer does not offer a challenge to the existing structure?



The latter is the most common and, it has to be said, the safest solution, the one we would normally advocate. But occasionally a scheme comes in with a real spark of originality. That happened in August when we were told of a scheme by Robert Dixon, RIBA, based in Kings Cliffe itself, to extend No. 2 Park Street (Fig. 13) in a way that would connect the main building with the range of eighteenth century outbuildings behind. He chose to reconcile the junction by the use of a conical top-lit structure roofed with graded Collyweston slates. The main building which is eighteenth century, altered in the early nineteenth, retains its original, and very attractive panelled shutters. The work at the back retains the early nineteenth century 'tack room' and indeed re-roofs it in character.

THE CHANTRY HOUSE, WYCHE ROAD, BUNBURY, CHESHIRE

On much the same theme as the above is the proposed two-storey extension to the Chantry House (Fig. 14). Given the grading of the building (II*) and its considerable historical sensitivity, the scheme that was sent through to us had the broad approval of English Heritage. The architects, Bleazard and Galletta, have produced a design which both echoes the timber framing of the original, but then lends it its own

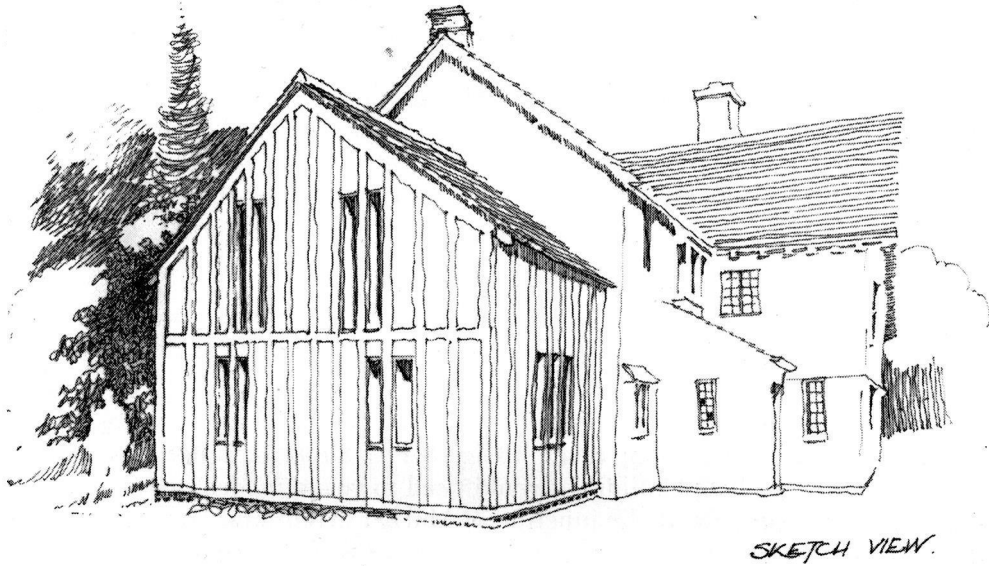


Fig. 14
The Chantry House, Bunbury, Cheshire

individuality by the use of very close studding and vertical windows disciplined by the uprights. The proposal is still causing some friction locally but it does seem an intelligent and reasoned response. The Chantry House itself was put up in 1527 as the house for a chantry priest and possesses closely-set framing. It was last restored by Cecil Wright.

OLD RECTORY, HEDGERLEY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

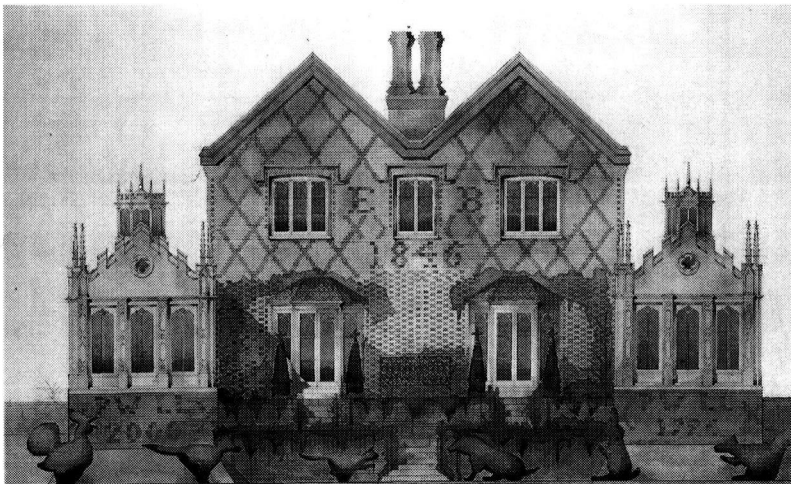


Fig. 15
The Old Rectory,
Hedgerley,
Buckinghamshire,
drawn by
Eric Throssell

Another variation on the theme is shown by Eric Throssell's scheme for extending the Old Rectory at Hedgerley (Fig. 15). As the beautiful drawing shows, this building is clearly dated 1846 and derives its principal character from the use of strongly diapered brickwork in Tudor Gothic style. The building has already been extended in an early eighteenth-century Gothick manner to the south. The application we were consulted about in June proposed an identical version to serve as a library to the north. The materials are stone painted timber with a cast aluminium alloy for the lantern.

INNER RELIEF ROAD, BRECON, POWYS

Much of the inner relief road in Brecon has been constructed but the most controversial arc, facing the river and the castle, has been left to the last. The map (Fig. 16) shows how traffic approaching from the south is deflected in a new stretch of road which roughly follows the alignment of Market Street, cuts across Castle Street and then turns in a swoop to meet High Street Superior at the junction with Mount Street. Three listed buildings would need to go – a modest building rather ruined by plastic windows at the junction of Market Street and Watergate (No. 1 Watergate), No. 14 Castle Street which has also been unkindly treated over the years, and Berkeley Place, by far the most important. As the photograph (Fig. 18) shows, this is an early-nineteenth century Regency terrace with curved corners defined by pilasters rising through the top two storeys. The return, with the sign 'Berkeley Place' very prominent as it faces the river and the castle, is more ill disciplined but, again, the designer has tried to introduce some coherence by a centralizing pilaster and two matching pairs of blind windows at either end (Fig. 17).

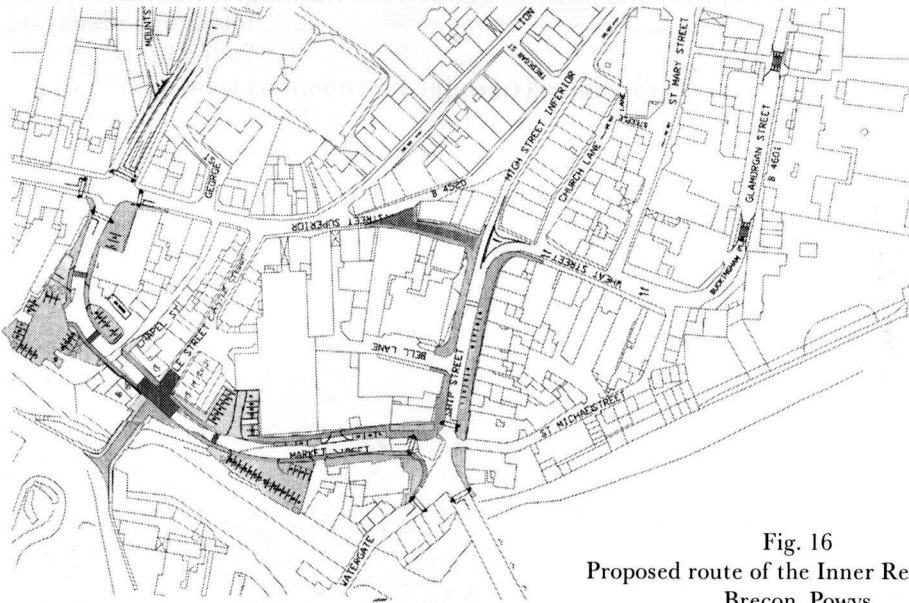


Fig. 16
Proposed route of the Inner Relief Road,
Brecon, Powys



Fig. 17
Berkeley Place, Brecon, Powys

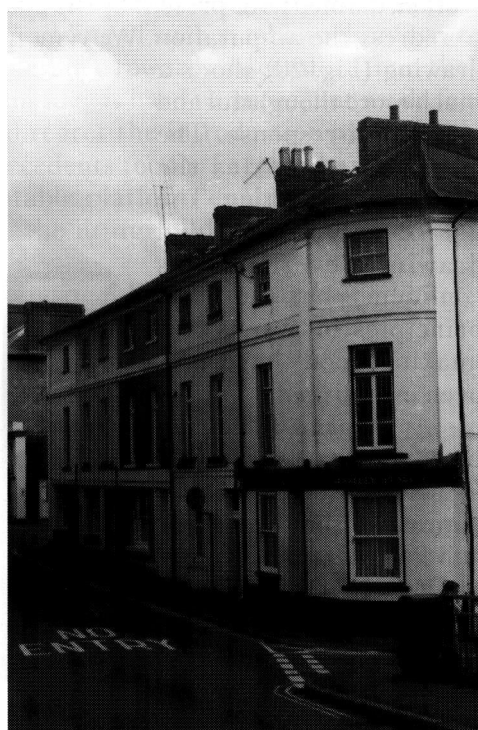


Fig. 18
Berkeley Place, Brecon, Powys

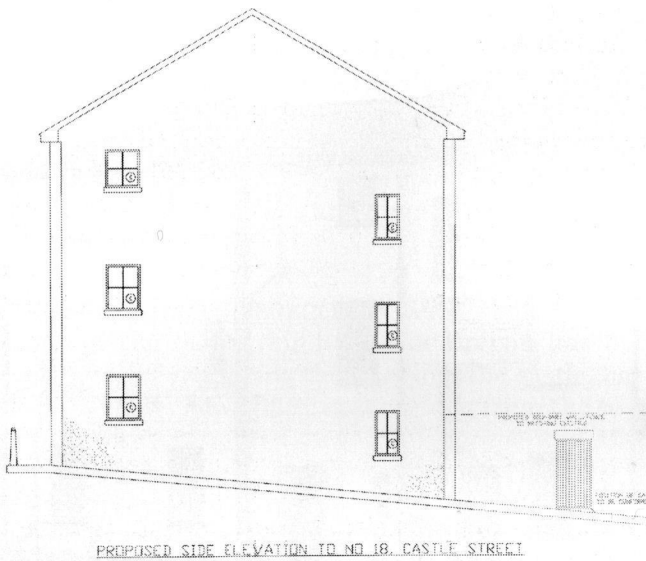
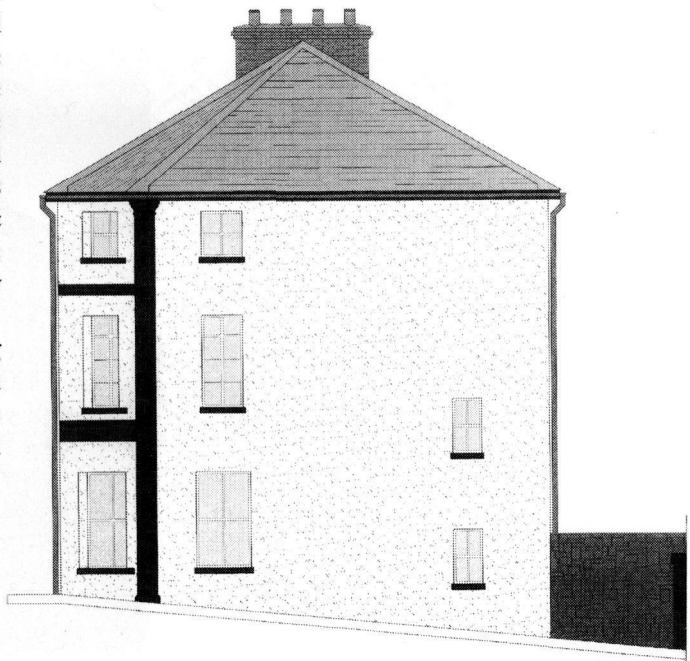


Fig. 19
Berkeley Place, Brecon, Powys.
First proposal

section, defined as at present by the pilasters, the new elevations made little attempt to redress the amputation. We remonstrated in the strongest terms and the new drawing (Fig. 20) shows a much more thoughtful and considered response. The elevation re-creates the curve of the existing. The use of computer aided drawing never inspires confidence but the basic principles of a sensitive 'making good' have now been established.

At the time of writing there is some expectation locally that the whole matter will be considered at a Public Inquiry.

Fig. 20
Berkeley Place, Brecon, Powys.
Amended proposal



There are arguments in favour of the road, not least the diversion of heavy traffic away from other listed buildings in the town centre. Provided the landscape was 'healed' in an appropriate manner, the proposal could be one with which the Society might rest content. However we were appalled by the first efforts of the County Council. Figure 19 displayed appalling insensitivity. The demolition embraced the first two bays nearest the photograph, but rather than re-create the gentle curve on the retained

JOHN WESLEY'S CHAPEL, NEW ROOM, BRISTOL

The 'New Room' is one of the Methodist shrines, ranking alongside the Epworth Rectory and City Road Chapel in London. Its iconic significance is the greater for its having survived the Second World War when the area around was blitzed. The present-day context is a Post War shopping precinct. It is acknowledged as the first Methodist meeting room in the world, bought by Wesley and Whitfield in 1739 and enlarged in 1748. The building has been altered since, both by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists who took over the building in 1808 and by Sir George Oatley, Bristol's greatest architectural son of the twentieth century, who carried out a very sensitive restoration in 1929 (helped by a correspondence over matters of detail with the biographer of Inigo Jones, J. A. Gotch, FRIBA).

The present interior is dominated in the central 'nave' immediately in front of the dramatic pulpit by box pews. It is these which are the issue. The Trustees of John Wesley's Chapel are now proposing to remove all of these (although the six pews in the same style in the balcony would remain untouched). This is on grounds of their discomfort and their inflexibility, particularly in a building which 'presents a varied programme throughout the year of music, drama and worship'. The pews are slightly canted to direct attention towards the preacher in the pulpit.

We join English Heritage and Bristol City Council in expressing very great concern at this proposal. Whilst it now seems that most of the pews are the work of Oatley, his approach was clearly historically driven and remarkably sensitive, with the apparent use of handmade oak nails as a method of making his joinery appear seamlessly traditional. We felt too that in a building of such symbolic significance as the New Room people have a greater tolerance towards discomfort than they would in a brand new functional property. This idea is hard to prove, but we do feel that visitors to this remarkable space would regret the introduction of stackable chairs, however well designed. There are precedents too for keeping box pews and covering them temporarily with a demountable platform enabling an audience sitting in the gallery looking down to enjoy the liturgical drama or other events taking place on the new flat surface.

This case will be a key test of the Ecclesiastical Exemption and we will keep members informed of its development.

WATER TOWER, BALKERNE PASSAGE, COLCHESTER, ESSEX

This case was last written up in these *Transactions* (40) in 1996. The scheme shown there for converting this huge building of 1883 into flats was rejected. Now, in an almost miraculous turn of events, a private businessman has been found who is prepared to take on the structure as a single house – not just that, but concurrently to allow public access to enjoy the spectacular views of the town from the top. The architects for the scheme, Plater Claiborne of Tollesbury in Essex, have consulted widely before submitting the latest application (Fig. 21) and have the broad support of the Victorian Society, English Heritage and the Casework Subcommittee of the AMS.

The great challenge in design terms is what to do with the water tank which

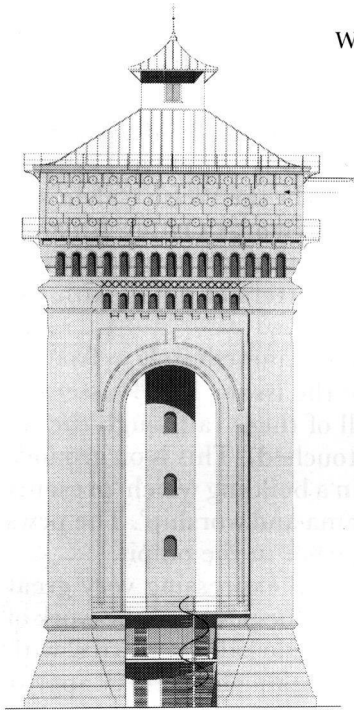


Fig. 21
Water Tower, Balkerne Passage,
Colchester, Essex

would be very hard indeed to reuse as it stands and is not in the best condition. A number of options have been put forward, but the accompanying listed building consent now shows, with the encouragement of Colchester's Conservation Officers, a glazed box on three of the four sides but with that facing the High Street being allowed to retain the expanse of metal with three rows of blind portholes as at present.

ST WERBURGH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,
GROSVENOR PARK ROAD, CHESTER

St Werburgh's (Fig. 22) dates from 1873-5 and is the design of the prolific Catholic architect, Edmund Kirby. The west end is of 1912-3, but very much in character. It is a finely proportioned, rather sombre, design which will now live in text-books less as a work of architecture than as a test case

for Ecclesiastical Exemption. Between January 1999 and January 2000 the Historic Churches Committee for the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford and Shrewsbury dealt with three separate applications for radical changes, mainly at the east end of the building, submitted on behalf of the parish by Hulme Upright, architects of Manchester. (The partner in charge, David Ireland, being that rare bird, a priest-architect, who combines professional life as an architect with that of a minister in the United Reformed Church.)

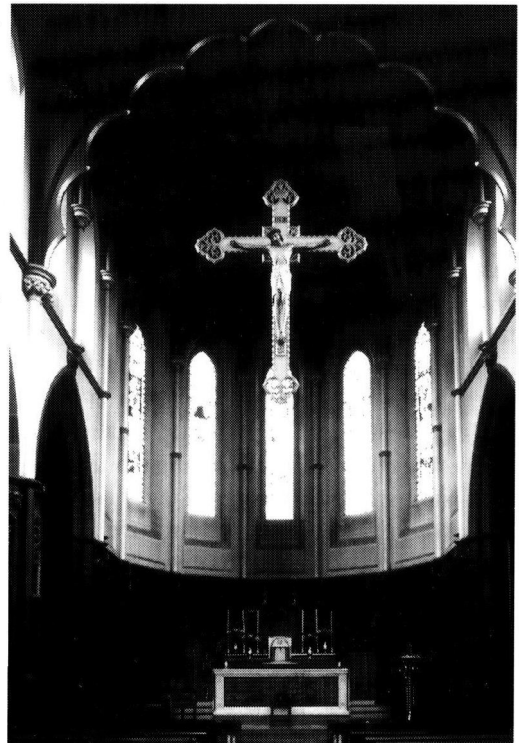


Fig. 22
St Werburgh's Roman Catholic Church,
Grosvenor Park Road, Chester

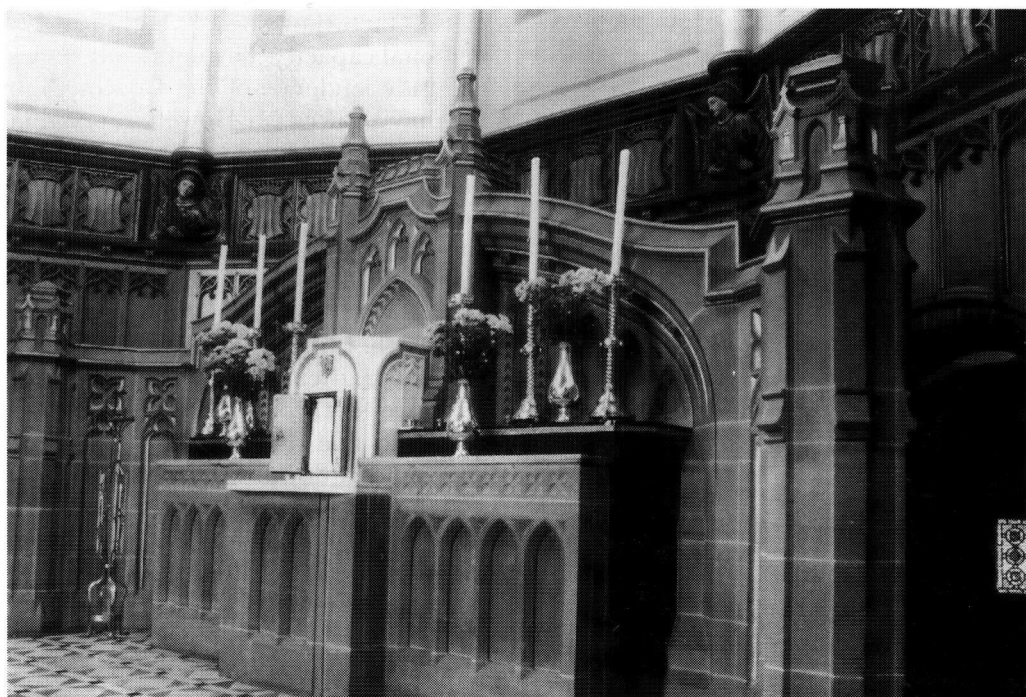


Fig. 23
St Werburgh's, Chester.
Reredos proposed for destruction

The first proposal was ruthless in its approach to existing fittings, proposing the destruction of the reredos of 1926 (Fig. 23) (which was clearly indebted to Giles Gilbert Scott's design for Liverpool Anglican Cathedral), the altar rails of 1927 and the choir stalls of 1936 (Fig. 24). The pulpit of the 1890s was also to be hacked about and the font, which seems to be original to Kirby and tucked into a difficult location at the west end, was to be resited deeper within the worshipping community, but divorced from its fine cover and elaborate railings. Much of this was driven by the proposed construction of a new organ within the apsidal sanctuary, filling much of it and framing the sides of the lancet windows. Very considerable misgivings were expressed by the AMS and by the Victorian Society, but the Historic Churches Committee chose to give the whole scheme a positive steer, but then spent the next year and more amplifying and changing its views as it began to realize that such a positive steer had been a mistake. The whole scheme ended up at an Appeals Commission composed of the Chancellor to the Archdiocese of Liverpool, the Very Revd Canon Alan Griffiths, member of the Roman Catholic Historic Churches Committee for the Southern Dioceses, and Ian Stewart, the distinguished conservation architect from Messrs Carden and Godfrey. The appeal had been triggered by the sustained objections of Peter Howell, former Chairman

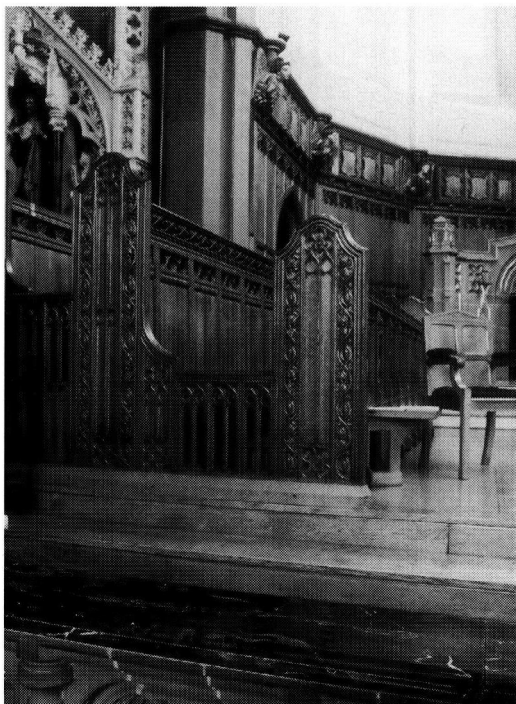
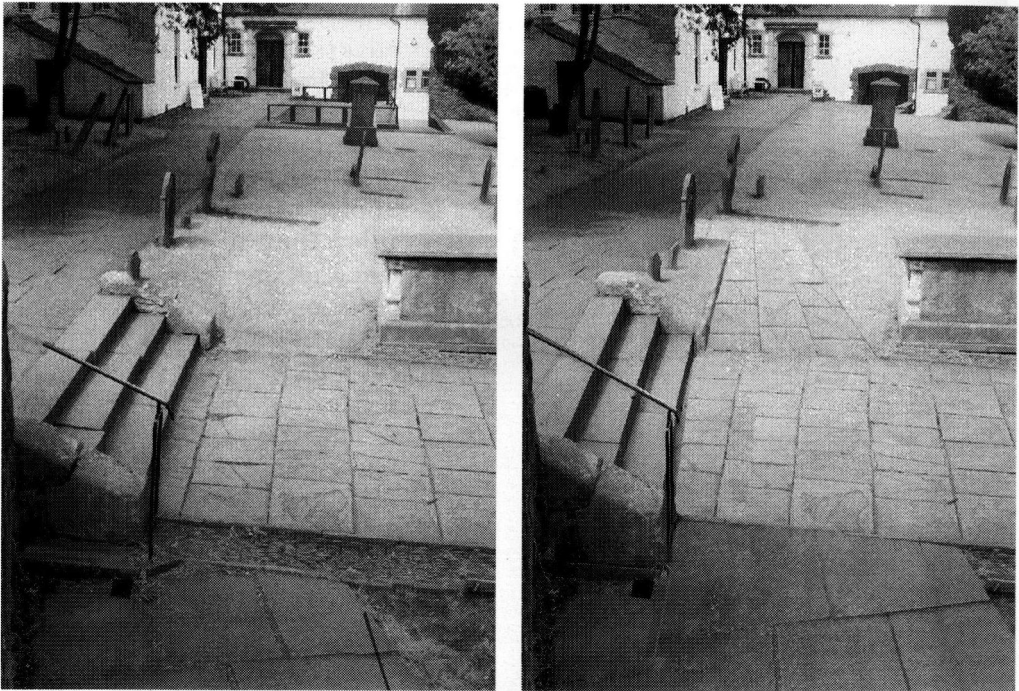


Fig. 24
St Werburgh's, Chester.
Choir stalls

of the Victorian Society, acting in his personal capacity. The net result shows the independence of the Commission for they allowed Mr Howell's appeal in respect of the proposed siting of the organ at the rear of the sanctuary and determined too that the 1926 reredos should not be destroyed but should remain in situ. They found against him on the other matters, but the treatment of the other fittings had been rendered far less radical over the months of controversy through the objections of the AMS and others. The judgement was handed down on 8th March 2000 and the parish reacted in an application of September which accepted the decision over the organ, proposing to site it instead in a newly constructed western gallery, but complying only with the letter rather than the spirit of the judgement on the reredos. This is to remain concealed behind a new screen, which will make it completely invisible.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL, CARDIFF, GLAMORGAN

The Society was represented directly at a consistory court held to consider another highly contentious matter – the rearrangement of the paved and stepped area immediately outside the west front of Llandaff Cathedral. The photograph (Fig. 25) shows the present delightful informality, some of it deliberately created by George Pace who reconstructed the cathedral after wartime damage, combining as it does eighteenth-century chest tombs, traditional drainage channels using pitch stone and the delightful meandering path leading down from the lychgate, faced by Pace with pebbles. The initial proposals advanced by the cathedral architect were for the almost unthinkable – the construction of an open modern canopy tacked onto the west front itself. This was dropped, but even so we had grave misgivings over the impact of the other changes, particularly the creation of a new square and the corralling of most of the tombs into a smaller area. Whilst in the end we were reconciled to the refacing of the path with a surface less conducive to tripping, particularly in wet weather. Jeremy Lowe, RIBA, represented us at the three-day marathon of the consistory court (Fig. 26). Evidence was also given by Ken Powell, Executive Director of the Twentieth Century Society, and Robin Simon, son of the former Dean who now works for the *British Art Journal*. The Chancellor



Figs. 25 (*left*) and 26 (*right*)

Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff, Glamorgan.

The present situation is shown on the left;

Jeremy Lowe's minimalist suggestion for ramped access on the right

found almost wholly in favour of the cathedral but the judgement was gracious enough to offer a backhanded compliment to Jeremy Lowe with the statement that 'If the result is not as he would wish it, it is not because he failed to illuminate the problems or failed to help me understand the complexities of architecture, design and conservation. I am deeply in his debt'.

GOLDINGS, WATERFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

Goldings is George Devey's largest country house (Fig. 27), started in 1871 for the banker Robert Smith. It is listed Grade II*. It was built on the site of an earlier house from which listed stables and walled gardens survive, the latter with a gardener's cottage built on the line of the wall by Goodhart-Rendel, one of his earliest works. In 1921 the house was sold to Dr Barnardo's and in 1969 it became offices for Hertfordshire County Council who subsequently sold the estate for development. The conversion of the house into flats proposed in 1999-2000 was fairly benign, including the demolition of some flat roofed extensions and removal of tarmac parking areas, which would be an improvement. But we went to public inquiry to support the Garden History Society which felt that the whole of the



Fig. 27
Goldings, Waterford, Hertfordshire

registered landscape would be adversely affected. Our views were directed mainly at opposing a proposed enabling development (described as 'compensatory' by the applicants) which would have filled the walled gardens with lines of terraced houses. We believe that this would have a very adverse impact on the immediate setting of the gardens and Goodhart-Rendel's gardener's cottage and would also impinge on the longer views of the main house. This was an early opportunity to test *Rescued or Ruined? Dealing with Enabling Development*, the document prepared for the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies, and *Enabling Development and the Conservation of Historic Assets*, the policy statement from English Heritage. Members who wish to acquire a copy of *Rescued or Ruined?* should contact the Georgian Group. The Secretary of State has granted consent and accepted that the development

was 'compensatory'. Little attention was given to the recent publications.

HAWKSWORTH HALL, GUISELEY, LEEDS, WEST YORKSHIRE

Another enabling development case which is going to public inquiry affects Hawksworth Hall (Fig. 28), a Grade II* building of many dates, but most obviously of two separate building periods in the seventeenth century. The house was built for the Hawksworth family and has good interiors, especially a great chamber with elaborate plaster vaulted ceiling. In the twentieth century it became a school but this use has now ended. Current proposals are to convert the Hall into three houses, demolishing extensions and unlisted subsidiary buildings and replacing these with five large new houses in the immediate setting of the historic building and very damaging to the setting. The financial appraisal supplied suggests that the new development is only necessary because the applicants paid an excessive price for



Fig. 28
Hawksworth Hall, Guisely, Leeds, West Yorkshire

the site, presumably in the expectation that they would get planning permission for development. We have encouraged Leeds City Council to resist this encroachment into the setting of the hall and to use their statutory powers if there is any suggestion that the hall will become derelict if planning permission is not granted. The applications have recently been withdrawn and we hope for new and better proposals.

STABLES AT PRESTON CANDOVER, HAMPSHIRE

The Society was also represented at an inquiry which heard an appeal from Lord Sainsbury against the Council's refusal of listed building consent for the conversion of part of the Grade II stables (Fig. 29) at Preston Candover House into an art gallery and studio for occasional use. Although the stables would appear unaltered from the outside, half the building would have been totally reconstructed inside, losing historic structure of interest and many internal features. The Society took the view that although this seemed on the face of it an attractive alternative use the damage outweighed any benefits to a building which, as part of a substantial estate, was in reasonable repair and had a viable use as non-intensive storage. We were the only outside body to support the council's determined stance on this application. The DETR inspector agreed with our views, dismissing the appeal on



Fig. 29

Stables, Preston Candover, Hampshire

the grounds that 'the proposed works would seriously harm the special interest of the stables as part of a Grade II listed building, failing to reconcile the needs of the intended new use with that special historic and architectural interest'.

MENTMORE TOWERS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
Mentmore (Fig. 30) has long been a classic in conservation history after the failure of the attempts to keep the house and its collections together in 1977. Built in the 1850s by Paxton and Stokes, the house is a Victorian version of Wollaton Hall, set on an open grassy embankment. After the departure of the Roseberys,



Fig. 30

Mentmore Towers, Buckinghamshire

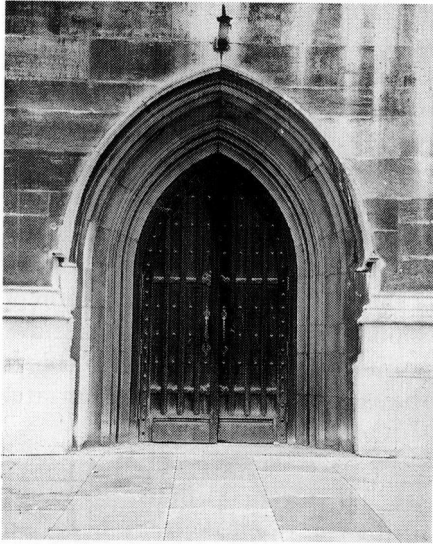
Mentmore was used as the central campus of the Maharishi University of Natural Law, but this use has now ceased. New owners propose to convert the building into a luxury hotel though no hotel operator has yet been identified. Recognising the constraints imposed by the Grade I listing the proposals do not advocate substantial additions to provide extra bedrooms, rather converting all the available space. This includes the basement where new bedrooms will be lit by openings cut into an extended grassy embankment. We have expressed reservations about this idea, partly because the design is not resolved (how do you stop people falling into the openings if there are no railings or other barriers?), but mainly because we believe that the grassy embankment is as much a part of the architectural composition of Mentmore as the built fabric and that this extension and opening of slots will have an adverse effect on the composition and setting of the house as a whole. If this is the only way of making hotel use viable then perhaps such use is not appropriate.

WOODFOLD HALL, LANCASHIRE

Woodfold is a long-running 'building at risk' case. The Grade II house (perhaps undergraded despite its present condition) sits in the open country between Blackburn and Preston. It was built in 1796 for Henry Sudell by Charles McNiven, a very obscure Manchester architect, in a manner which could easily pass as James Wyatt's mature classical style. It eventually came into the hands of the Thwaites family of brewers. Woodfold Hall and its fine iron conservatory some distance away have been empty and increasingly derelict for half a century while remaining in private ownership. A photograph showing its condition in 1989 appeared on the cover of the Society's *Transactions* (34) for 1990. A solution has now been proposed with a planning and listed building consent application for use as a club house for a golf course (to be built over part of the adjoining landscape which is included at Grade II in the register of historic parks and gardens). We have expressed reservations about the proposals as far as they affect the historic landscape and setting but it may be that this is the least damaging scheme which offers any prospect at all of securing a future for Woodfold Hall. The plans include moving the orangery from its present site to form an annexe attached to the house. We suggested that it would be better for the orangery to be repaired and reused in situ and we are pleased that the proposals have been amended to take account of this. At the time of writing no decisions have been taken.

CROSBY HALL, KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA, LONDON

At the 1999 Annual General Meeting members of the Society were able to see the splendours of Crosby Hall, both the fifteenth century hall moved to Chelsea early in the twentieth century and the newer work for the hall's enthusiastic owner, Christopher Moran, as part of his scheme to provide an appropriate setting for the listed building. A new proposal was brought forward to reinstate a screen in the hall; this was based on good archaeological evidence for the hall having had a screen and a detailed design for its replacement. We had no difficulties with this except for the inclusion of a new door with a four-centred arch to replace one with a two-



centred arch on the external terrace (Fig. 31). The existing door was designed by Walter Godfrey when he moved the hall to its present site; it is admittedly ‘unhistorical’ in the sense that its form was consciously earlier than that of the hall, but we felt that this may have been deliberate, in the same way as Godfrey’s decision to use ‘unhistorical’ Portland stone. We are pleased that this element of the scheme was deleted and that we were then able to accept the proposals. At the time of writing a further scheme for the removal of the Godfrey doorway has been received.

Fig. 31

Crosby Hall – door surround onto the terrace

OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL, COLNE, LANCASHIRE

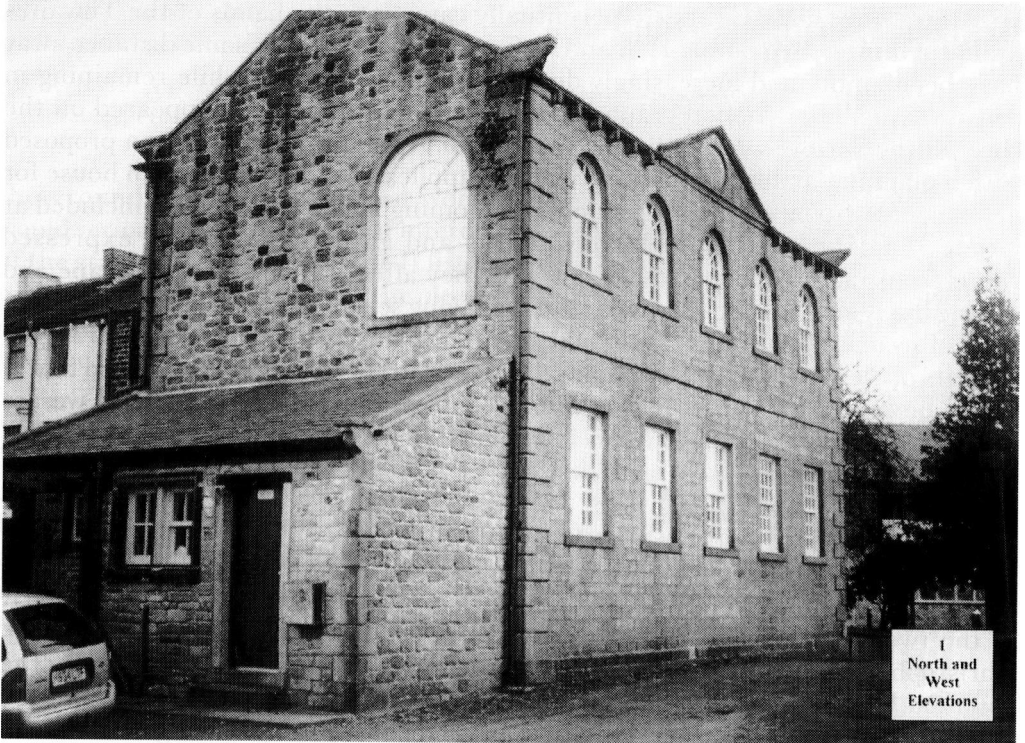


Fig. 32

Old Grammar School, Colne, Lancashire

We were consulted by Pendle District Council on proposals to extend the Old Grammar School (Fig. 32), listed Grade II. It was built in 1812 and is sited on the eastern edge of the churchyard which surrounds the Grade I St Bartholomew's Church, one of Lancashire's finest. In more recent years the school has been a Sunday School and then parish rooms. The church's wish to centralise and develop its activities led to proposals to extend the school in a manner based on the old building, separating old from new work with a glass slot. Pendle Council has taken the view that there should be no development at all on a sensitive site in a conservation area which is receiving grant aid under the Townscape Heritage Initiative on the basis of plans which showed this site undeveloped. We have offered a compromise view, accepting the church's case for development, but suggesting that alterations in the design of the proposed extension could minimise its impact on the listed building to which it would be an extension, on the setting of the church and on the character of the conservation area within which it would be built. At the time of writing our suggestions appear to have had no influence on strongly held local and opposing views.

WITLEY COURT, WORCESTERSHIRE

Witley Court (Fig. 33 and 34) is a spectacular ruined country house, standing roofless since 1937 when it was devastated by fire. Its form was in part governed by, and



Fig. 33
Witley Court, Worcestershire

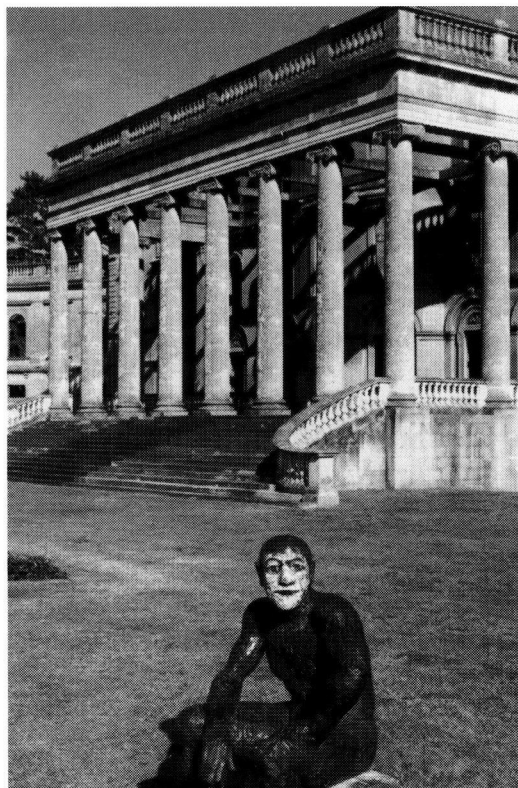


Fig. 34
Witley Court, Worcestershire

fabric survives from, the seventeenth and eighteenth century houses which stood on the site but most of what is seen is the result of the work of the immensely rich first Earl of Dudley for whom Samuel Dawkes remodelled the house in Italianate style in the 1850s. The ruined house is Grade I and the surrounding grounds, parts laid out by W. A. Nesfield, are Grade II* in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The whole is now in the care of English Heritage which has chosen to develop their theme for 2000 as the Year of Public Sculpture by a major addition to the sculpture park at Witley. We have commented on a planning application which would designate the use of about sixty acres of the land around the house as a sculpture park. Our view was that while the scheme in general terms seems a good idea acceptance of the use without conditions might permit sculpture to be placed at will in the setting of the house and in the registered landscape. There could be a danger that the display of sculpture would become more important than the

protection of the house and its setting. It seems likely that an arrangement can be reached under which there would be further consultation about the siting of individual pieces even when no further planning permissions are required. We look forward with interest to seeing how the juxtaposition of modern sculpture and an historic estate develops.