

The Society's Casework in 1998

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 on all applications for listed building consent involving demolition, either total or partial, since 1972. This duty has been reaffirmed in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Circular 1/97, issued on 29th August 1997. In recent years the number of part-demolition cases has settled to something like 6,000 a year and those for complete demolition to about 250-300. The exact number of listed buildings threatened by applications for total demolition in 1997 was 271 (the full list of such 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 to illustrate we are necessarily limited by the availability of good quality reproductions. The drawings and the photograph of the model have been kindly provided by the architects of the various schemes whose names are given in the text.

CEFN MABLY, NEAR CARDIFF, GLAMORGAN

The drawing, reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, shows the principal, south-east, elevation of Cefn Mably, one of the most important listed buildings under threat in Wales, on which the Society was consulted on a scheme of consolidation, repair and conversion (Fig. 1). The house was the seat of the Kemeys family until 1923, when it became a hospital for tuberculosis. The earliest sections, immediately to the left of the pedimented doorcase, date from the sixteenth century, the seven bays to the right from the seventeenth and the chapel, on the extreme left, of uncertain origins, but heavily restored in 1858. A full account of its history, with survey drawings, is given in the RCAHMW *Greater Houses of Glamorgan* and a shorter one in the newly published Pevsner for Glamorgan.

In September 1994 the house was hit by a devastating fire, which began in the oldest part of the building. The panelled hall, the only really impressive internal space, was lost. The painted landscape panels over the doors had been removed before the fire, and will be reinstated in the projected reconstruction.

In July we were consulted on a proposal put forward by Meadgate Homes

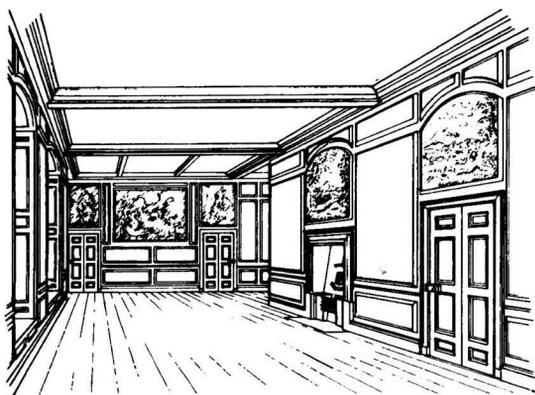
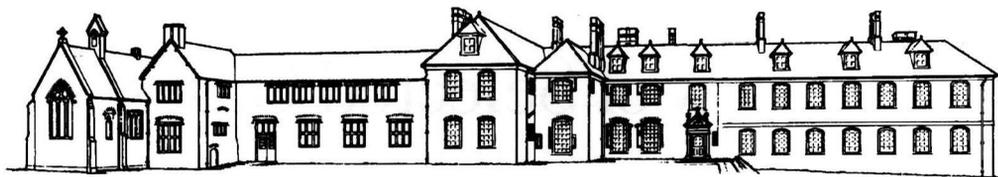


Fig. 1

Cefn Mably, Glamorgan

The principal elevation and the panelled hall

(architects: Davies Sutton Architecture) to restore the house externally, including new stone tiles for the roofs, laid in random widths and diminishing courses. The proposed project falls into two phases. Under the first, the external shell is to be rendered sound and weathertight and under the second, the interior is to be subdivided in a multiple residential conversion. A number of new houses will be built in the grounds, although these already have been spoilt by the inevitable myriad of new buildings which followed the hospital use. In these very difficult circumstances we felt this was probably the last chance for the building and thus felt able to acquiesce.

CASTLEGATE AND PICCADILLY, YORK

Few sites in the North can match the sensitivity of what is now a large carpark immediately adjacent to the 'Eye of York' at the heart of this World Heritage Site. Two very different views of it are shown. The first is a close-up of a small part of the huge bird's-eye view of the city prepared by Nathaniel Whittock in the 1850s. The second is another bird's-eye view this time from the east (an unsigned artist's impression issued as part of the public consultation), showing the projected extension to the Coppergate Shopping Centre, on which we were consulted in April (Fig. 2 a-b). Easily detectable in both is the thirteenth-century stone keep known as Clifford's Tower, gutted in 1684 and a ruin ever since. The imposing square to

the south-east is composed of the Debtors' Prison, 1701-5, probably by William Wakefield, the Assize Courts of 1773-7 by Carr of York and the Female Prison of 1780 designed by Atkinson and Prince, but executed under the supervision of Carr (the end pavilions dating from 1802). The Whittock shows clearly the extraordinary transformation carried out in the ten years up to 1835, which ringed the site to the west with huge medievalising walls and a gatehouse as part of a project for a further prison. The original intention had been to complete the transformation by



Fig. 2

Castlegate and Piccadilly, York

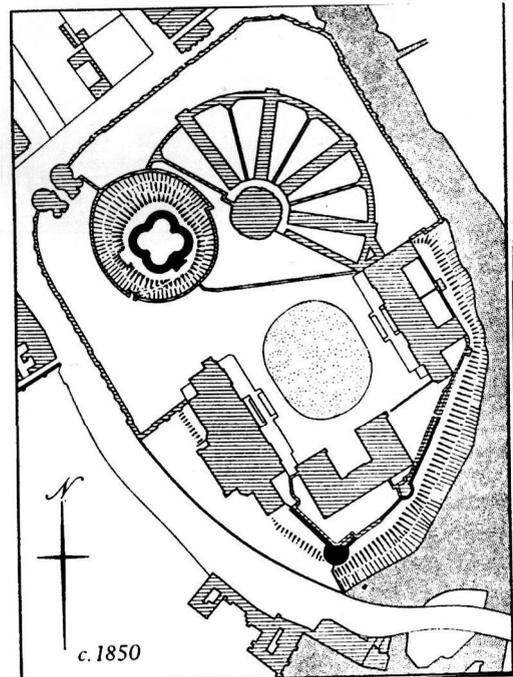
a. Mid-nineteenth-century bird's-eye view from the west

demolishing Clifford's Tower itself, but local protests prevented that and the prison with its distinctive spayed arms was laid out immediately to its north, the new rotunda housing the Governor's House jostling with it and requiring the demolition of some of its mound, to the east (Fig. 2c). This situation persisted for exactly 100 years when the prison closed and was bought by the City Corporation which proceeded to demolish the surrounding walls and the prison, with the intention of constructing, on the site of the latter, new municipal offices. Work started in 1938 but was stopped by the war. The site has remained undeveloped ever since. Various



Fig. 2
Castlegate and
Piccadilly, York
b. Bird's-eye view from
the south-east
illustrating the 1998
proposals

Fig. 2
Castlegate and Piccadilly, York
c. Development plan showing the new prison
next to Clifford's Tower c. 1850
RCHM, City of York, II, 1972



abortive schemes have been drawn up and the latest which reached the planners this year was prepared by Terry Farrell & Partners on behalf of Ravenscroft Properties. Without any exceptions, the conservation world including the Amenity Societies and English Heritage reacted with great concern. The new build was considered an unworthy neighbour to the historic buildings both in its elevational treatment and in the hard-edged geometry which caused it to jut out at such an angle as to obscure views of the Female Prison from Castlegate, which runs away to the west. The two very long blocks of development lacked any sense of the civic presence given to the site by the grouping of public, and mostly Grade I, adjacent buildings. The picture of unacceptability was completed by the proposed demolition of No 31, Castlegate which is architecturally modest but of considerable historic interest as probably the earliest surviving purpose-built architect's office. It dates from 1825-6 and functioned as the office of G. T. Andrews from then until his death in 1855 and by subsequent partners in the practice until 1891. It is only one and a half storeys high, the drawing office being located on the upper ground floor. It must have looked particularly dramatic when its diminished squeezed form was located against the towering, but now demolished, prison walls designed by Andrews and on which work began almost as soon as No 31 was complete. The volume of protest has led the applicants to reconsider their position.

SOUTHGATE, BATH

One of the more remarkable phenomena of recent years in casework has been the extent to which redevelopment in many cities has been concentrated not on sites occupied by listed or historic buildings but on those where the victim is housing, offices or shops constructed in the 1960s and '70s. Paternoster Square immediately adjacent to St Paul's Cathedral is the most publicised example, but the process is being carried on apace elsewhere. In Bath, the chance to obliterate some of the post-war architectural mistakes has been offered by the projected redevelopment of a very substantial site bounded by Southgate to the west and Manvers Street to the east. For thousands of people arriving each year at Bath Spa Station, immediately to the south, the shopping centre, by Owen Luder, and the notably depressing multi-storey carpark and bus station are their introduction to this Augustan city, recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The land fell outside both Roman and medieval Bath and, until the nineteenth century, was largely made up of a water meadow lying between the city wall and the river Avon. Many of the structures that were put up in the nineteenth century, particularly after the coming of the railway in 1840, were destroyed in the Baedeker raids in the war and in subsequent clearance. Abercrombie's Plan for Bath of 1945 envisaged a new bus station with surrounding buildings in a *Beaux Arts* idiom. The appearance would have been much like that of the only classical building on the site which the current scheme requires to be demolished, Churchill House, in the present Dorchester Street (which is to be built over). This was designed by N. A. Williams in 1931 for the Bath Electricity Works.

The redevelopment scheme, on which we were consulted in March, has been

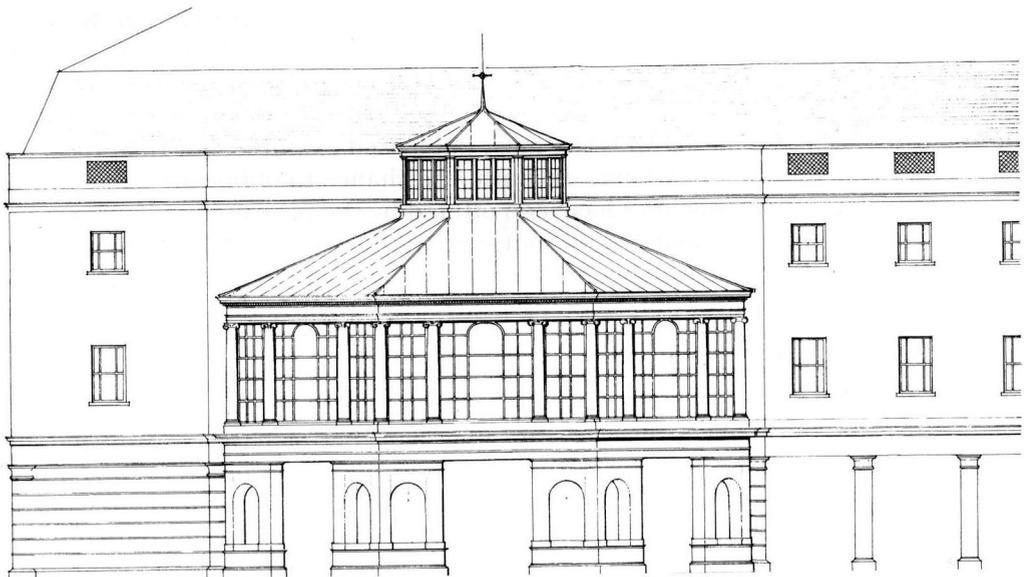
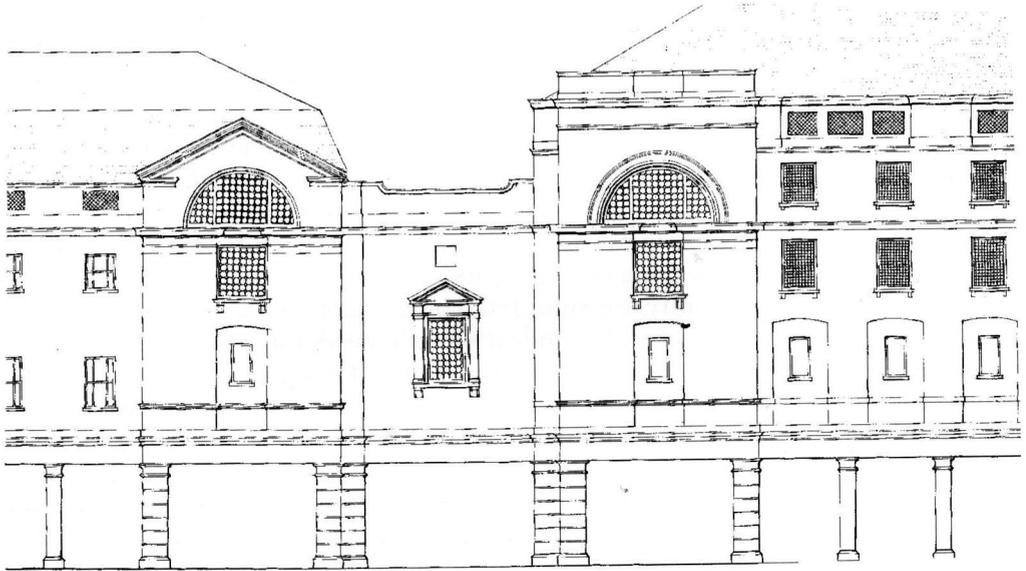


Fig. 3
Southgate, Bath
a & b. Redevelopment scheme

prepared by Chapman Taylor (architects: Bob Chitham, formerly of English Heritage, and Rodney Carron) on behalf of General Accident Life Assurance and Shearer Property Holdings. The drawings clearly demonstrate that the classical tradition in Bath is not dead (Fig. 3 a-b). The Casework sub-committee of the AMS was able to support the application for redevelopment and decided in the circumstances not to oppose the demolition of the unlisted Churchill House. The drawings illustrate the penultimate scheme prepared by Chapman Taylor. The latest scheme, submitted in October, is still classical but reduced in scale.

COUNTY HALL, ST MARY'S GATE, DERBY

There is no exact science, nor indeed art, in casework. Whenever we oppose an application for the conversion or alteration of a listed building, we cannot be sure that a more benign alternative will emerge from the wings. Such a judgment was one which we and other conservation agencies had to make in 1995-6 when faced with an application to reinstate the court use within Derby's County Hall, but at the price of enveloping it within a substantial new building. These misgivings were shared by others including the City Council and the scheme was abandoned. The most immediate result is that the building remains empty and appears in the English Heritage 'Buildings at Risk' report, although it does state therein that a Conservation Plan is being prepared to inform decisions on any future uses.



Fig. 4
County Hall, Derby
a. The shirehall of 1660

So far as this goes, this is comforting for as the photograph shows and as Pevsner states this is 'a remarkably interesting building' (Fig. 4a). It is one of the earliest shire halls to survive in England, dating from 1660. Designed by George Eaton of Etwall, it was built by Robert Morledge (carpenter) and a Mr Reeve (mason). It is in the style that Sir John Summerson categorised as Artisan Mannerist and was originally freestanding, something which used to render the very individual use of the Roman Doric order more visible as the pilasters were canted around the angles at forty-five degrees. In 1772 the High Sheriff of Markeaton, F. N. C. Mundy, whose bust by Chantrey used to be on display within but has now been removed for safekeeping, commissioned a Grand Jury Room to the north side to designs by Joseph Pickford of Derby, with plasterwork by Abraham Denstone and carving by George Moneypenny. Pickford also added the roof balustrading. Once the Assembly Rooms had been built on the Market Place in 1774, most county events transferred there and the building was increasingly given over to holding the Assizes which continued until 1971 when it became the Crown Court.

In 1828 two more courts were fitted within the walls of the Grand Jury Room and more offices constructed to the north, including the block facing Walker Lane (Fig. 4b). This was the work of the London architect, Matthew Habershon, the builder being Robert Bridgart, a descendent of Abraham Denstone. It is one of the



Fig. 4
County Hall, Derby
b. The offices of 1828

buildings which would have been demolished as part of the 1995-6 scheme which we opposed. Despite the unfortunate infilling of the central door and the asymmetrical blinding of the windows, this is a handsome if severe neo-classical design which deserves better than to be bulldozed. We shall be pressing for its retention in any new scheme which might emerge. However, we feel far less strongly about the King's Arms County Hotel, built in 1790 at right angles to, and on the south side of, the County Hall. Subsequent institutional use as the county library and police headquarters has virtually destroyed any internal interest and externally it is very plain and rather gauche in its fenestration. The pressing need is to find an acceptable new use for the County Hall itself, a building correctly listed Grade I and of national importance.

COLONIAL CHAMBERS AND ROLAND HOUSE, PRINCES DOCK STREET, HULL

Some schemes still retain the capacity to shock and one such was that submitted to redevelop a large chunk of central Hull, facing the water of Princes Dock. The photographs show the two most important buildings affected: Colonial Chambers, a beautifully proportioned late-Georgian design of 1846 by William Foale, and the adjacent Roland House, which was built as the Ferries Almshouses of 1822, to the



Fig. 5

Princes Dock Street, Hull

a. Colonial Chambers



Fig. 5
Princes Dock Street, Hull
b. Roland House

design of John Earle (Fig. 5 a-b).

The scheme, prepared by David Lyons & Associates, on behalf of the Corporation of Trinity House, proposed to demolish all but the façade of Colonial Chambers and demolish and rebuild the front elevation of the almshouses in replica. Both façades would then be tacked on to what would otherwise be the side entrance of a wholly modern shop. The exquisitely proportioned, huge ground floor windows of Colonial Chambers would look onto a modern staircase serving the upper floors and cutting across all the bays. What is now the main entrance to the almshouses would become the deliveries access point.

This is one of the worst examples of 'façadism' in recent years. We have entered a strong objection.

THE IMPERIAL PUBLIC HOUSE, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER

This was the sort of exuberantly detailed and jolly late Victorian gin palace which helped to enliven many a British street (Fig. 6). Although exuberant in effect, the composition was disciplined and symmetrical, with two end bays vaguely indebted to the baroque, framing two wider central bays with a more direct indebtedness - to the Ancient House or Sparrowes House in Ipswich. In turn, four Ionic pilasters, two of them coupled, helped to create an exact mirror symmetry.



Fig. 6
The Imperial, Piccadilly, Manchester

Our objections to the application to demolish were unsuccessful and the building has now been destroyed even if it has been perceived as for the greater good. The site is to be taken by a new entrance to a hotel planned in the adjacent office and warehouse block which has been derelict for many years and a blight on the area, immediately opposite Manchester's Piccadilly Station.

TIDGROVE WARREN, OVERTON, HAMPSHIRE

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 on 'Planning and the Historic Environment' enjoins owners, and their architects, to think in terms of modesty and self-effacement when it comes to extending listed buildings, and rightly so. Generally speaking, it is safer to render new work as clearly subordinate especially where the architect concerned demonstrates little or no sympathy with the existing structure. However, there are always exceptions and we did feel that Tidgrove Warren was one. The present house is an attractive but unexceptional farmhouse of the early eighteenth century, refenestrated in the twentieth. When first built it had a private domestic end and a working farm end, the latter with views of farm buildings, the former with uninterrupted vistas over the farmlands to the north-west and south-east. Application was lodged in June, by the owner, Mr Raleigh Place, and his architects, Favonius & Co. of Salisbury (architect: Sean O'Mahoney),

to construct a new wing inspired both by the local vernacular and the language of polite classicism, particularly that of Lutyens (Fig. 7). The architect's love of the Arts & Crafts Movement should guarantee a high quality of execution and materials.

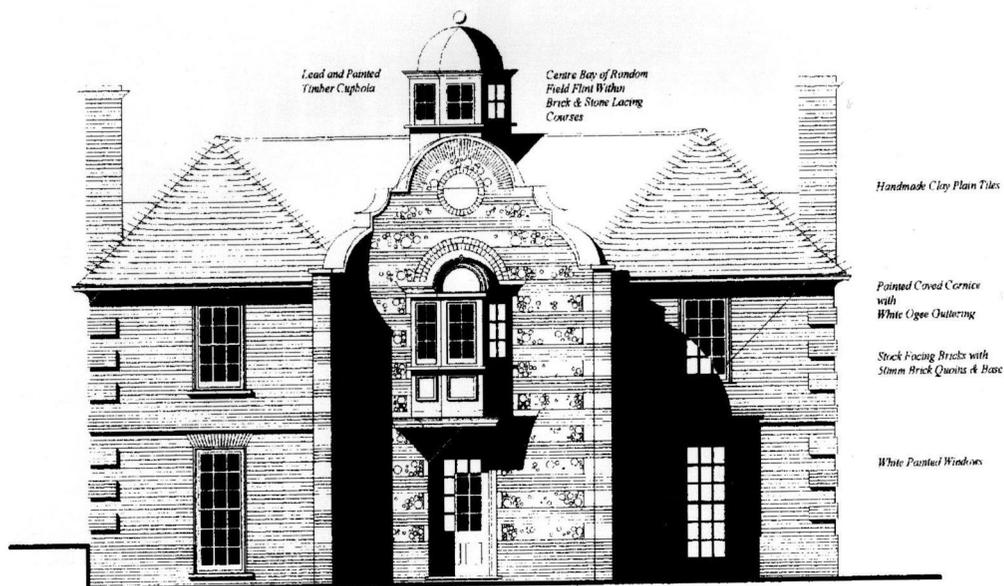


Fig. 7
Tidgrove Warren, Overton, Hampshire
Proposed extension

As the eighteenth century in particular is littered with examples of vernacular farmhouses made grander by new wings and façades, this seemed a traditionally endorsed method of expressing in emphatic terms the enhanced status of the building in question. Nothing of any quality in the existing building would be demolished or obscured by the new build. In the expectation that the new block would be a beautifully crafted design of strong but appropriate character we felt able to acquiesce.

SOUTHILL, BRACKNELL, BERKSHIRE

Tidgrove Warren shows the value of extensions in a traditional historicist idiom. Southill Park demonstrates the opposite approach which in its way is just as acceptable. The existing building, a substantial eighteenth-century house, remodelled in 1853, and again in 1906, by Temple Moore (one of his few secular works) is to be extended in an uncompromising but clean modern idiom by the architects, Allies & Morrison. Nothing of value will be lost and the new work promises to be a design of quality and integrity in its own right (Fig. 8). We did not oppose the proposal and, after some modifications had been made, neither did the Victorian

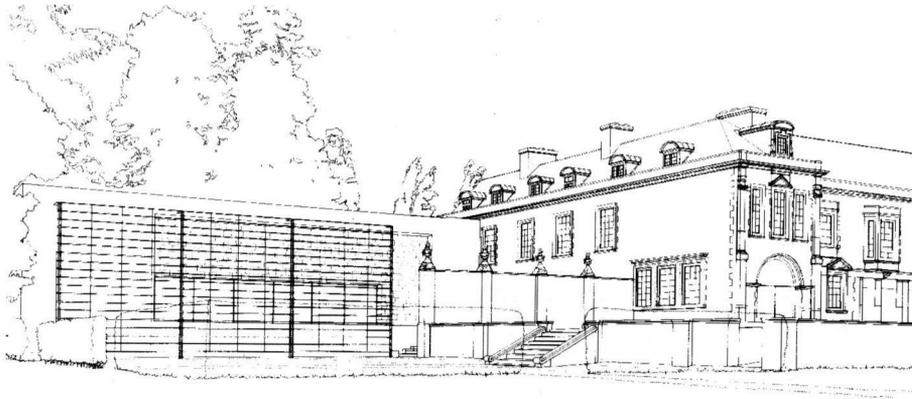


Fig. 8
Southill, Bracknell
Proposed extension

Society. Whether it is built or not depends on an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

BERRY HILL HALL, MANSFIELD, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Berry Hill Hall is a long-standing case with which the AMS and other consultees have been involved over a number of years. In many ways it is a textbook case in how not to treat a listed building. Built in the early eighteenth century, with large scale additions of *c.*1770 and the early nineteenth century, with a good stable block, its story since 1990 when it closed down as a miners' rehabilitation centre has been one of almost unarrested decline (Fig. 9). Ancillary blocks have been demolished and the grounds severely compromised by the laying out of a new housing estate to the west and a nursing home to the east. Instead of encouraging investment in the listed building itself, these newcomers, now

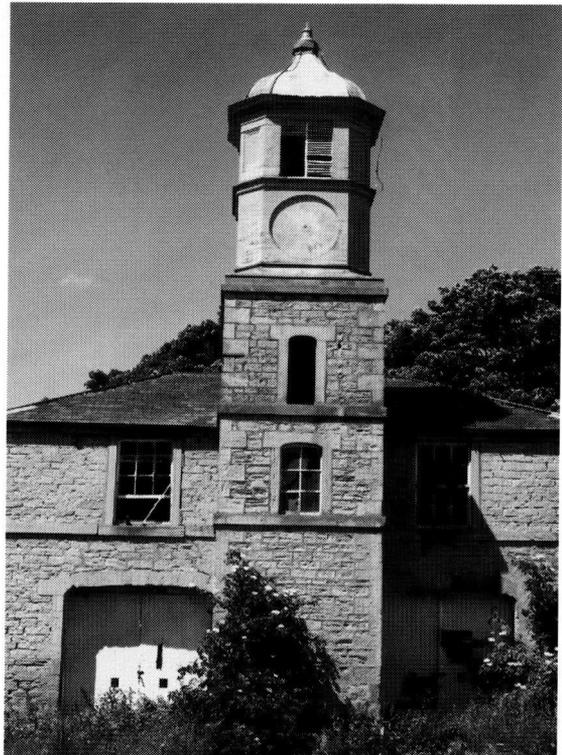


Fig. 9
Berry Hill Hall, Mansfield
Stable block

finished and occupied, stand in marked contrast with the continued dereliction of Berry Hill Hall itself. We opposed an application in 1997 to demolish all but the early nineteenth-century main block and were comparatively comforted to receive notification in August 1998 of a proposal by Paragon Care to repair and convert all the buildings of importance as a residential nursing home and as warden-assisted sheltered housing.

FREE TRADE HALL, PETER STREET, MANCHESTER

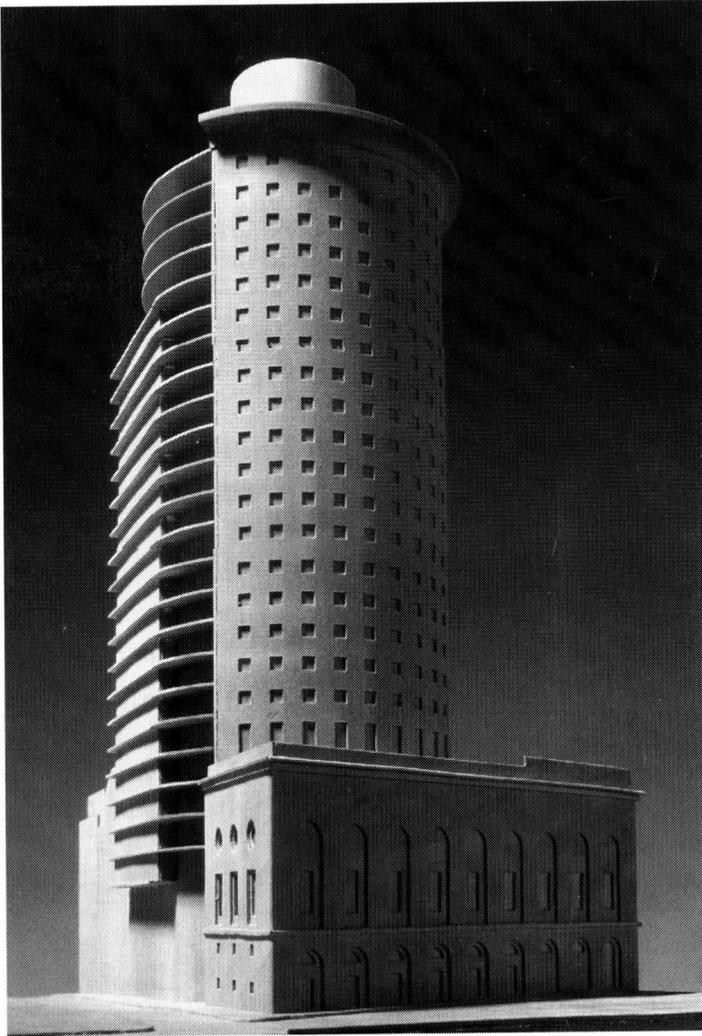


Fig. 10
Free Trade Hall, Manchester
Model of proposed redevelopment

What were we to make of this scheme notified to us in February? Although it is hard to believe from the treatment it receives here, the building at the base is Manchester's Free Trade Hall, a Grade II* listed building by one of Manchester's greatest architectural sons, Edward Walters (1808-72). This façade, shown in the model in schematized form, a masterly reworking of the High Renaissance, and the short return is all that survived the bombing of the Second World War (Fig. 10). The sparsely detailed blind rear elevation and interior is a reconstruction of 1950-1 by L. C. Howitt.

Rendered superfluous by the construction of the city's new Bridgewater Hall, the City Council seemed set in its view that the only possible new use for the site was

as a multi-storey hotel. The model shows the revised version of the scheme prepared by Anthony Blee Consultancy and Kevin Dash Architects where the listed building is reduced to little more than a footstool, a podium from which springs a giant tower which bears practically no relationship with it. There are ghostly classical references in the crowning cove and some borrowing from such megalomaniac neo-classical architects of the late-eighteenth century as Boullée and Ledoux, but the result remains a quite extraordinary architectural mismatch. Lest there be any misunderstanding, the new tower does not sit behind the Hall, but rather lances its way through the interior and roof and makes the front elevation a mere tacked-on façade. Even the symmetrical balance of the latter is offset by the attached service pod.

Not surprisingly, the Secretary of State decided to hold a public inquiry into the proposal and we were jointly represented at a hearing that went on for several weeks by John Archer, latterly a lecturer in the Architectural Faculty of the University of Manchester. In October we heard that the Secretary of State had refused permission for this bizarre scheme, judging that 'the proposal is fundamentally flawed, that it would irretrievably compromise the Free Trade Hall, adversely affect the setting of other listed buildings and fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area'.

1-9 BRIDLESMITH GATE, NOTTINGHAM

All the buildings shown in the two photographs are listed (Fig. 11 a-b). The building at the road junction, No 1 Bridlesmith Gate was designed in 1874 by Lawrence Bright. The double-gabled and more elaborate block at Nos 5-9, dates from 1895 and is by Gilbert Smith Doughty. The threat is to the building between them, No 3, which is such a successful example of 'keeping in keeping' that it is hard to detect at first glance. It is the work of the architect, Albert Nelson Bromley, who made his name as the architect to Boots the Chemists. It shows him in a subdued tactful mood, responding with considerable architectural imagination to the commission. This is the



Fig. 11
Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham
a. Nos 1-9



Fig. 11
Bridlesmith Gate,
Nottingham
b. Nos 1-3

more so when it is realised that this infill block was actually built as an extension to the premises at Nos 5- 9 even though its language is entirely borrowed from No 1. Bromley did this because 5- 9 were symmetrical and if any attempt were made to mimic their stylistic grammar, the result inevitably would have appeared lopsided. Instead he took the language of 1874 and Lawrence Bright with an almost exact correspondence on the first and second floors, four lights answering three, and without the crowning cornice on the top floor where three lights answer two. Two runs of buttresses-cum-pilasters are a direct borrowing from Bright.

The proposal was to demolish No 3 and put up a new plate-glass elevation in its stead. We felt that this was quite inappropriate and, armed with information supplied by Ken Brand of the Nottingham Civic Society, we lodged a strong objection, which we learned in November had been successful.

Final consideration goes to a series of church cases, illustrating in different ways how they might be extended.

ST THOMAS' CHURCH, GOLBORNE, NEAR WIGAN, LANCASHIRE.

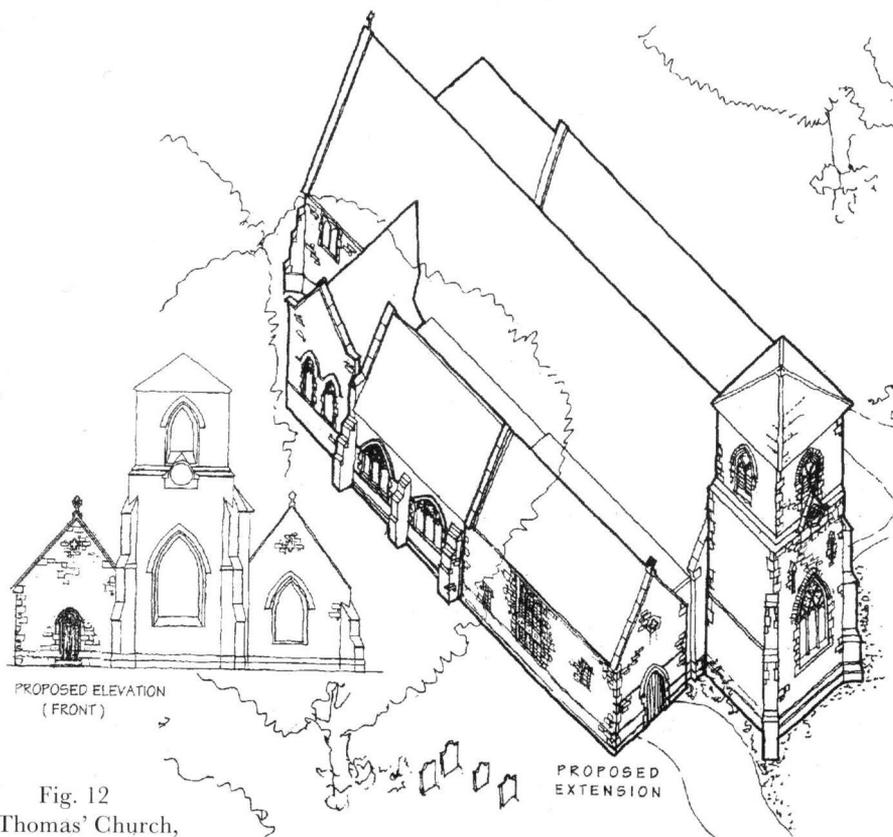
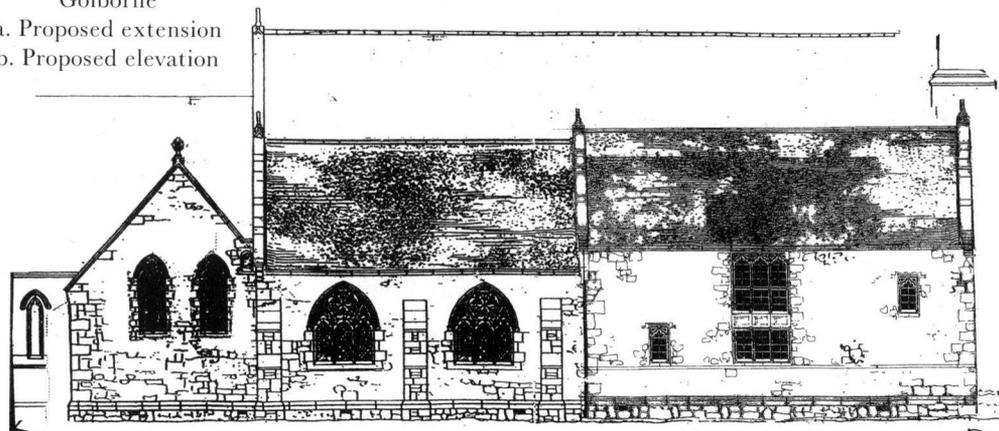


Fig. 12
St Thomas' Church,
Golborne
a. Proposed extension
b. Proposed elevation



St Thomas' dates from 1858-60 and is the work of Joseph Clarke. The Liverpool-based architectural practice of Edmund Kirby, with a long tradition of ecclesiastical design, prepared a scheme for a new meeting room on which we were consulted in July. Very conveniently, Clarke did not provide full-length aisles on either side and the new work sits neatly between the truncated northern aisle and the western tower (Fig. 12 a-b). It thus relates well to the geometry of the existing footprint while the language is that of secular Gothic, appropriate for a place for meeting as opposed to worship. We felt able to support this proposal.

ST PETER'S CHURCH, NORTH HAYLING, HAMPSHIRE

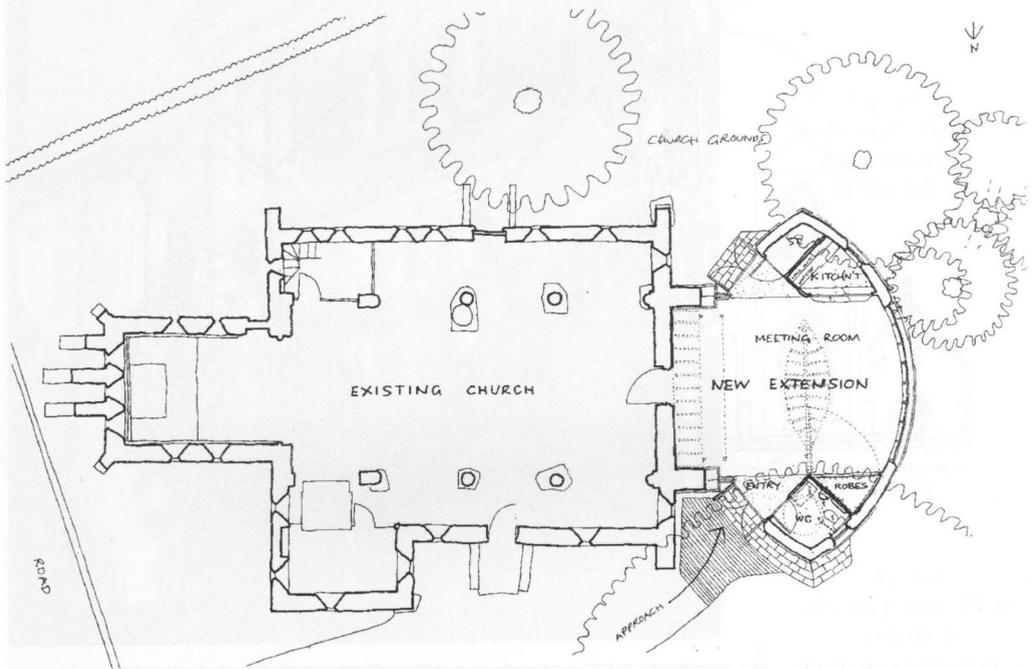


Fig. 13
St Peter's Church, North Hayling
a. Plan

This scheme to extend St Peter's is much bolder in its impact than the extension at St Thomas'. As the drawings show, the new build emerges like a balloon or an almond from the west end of what is a very attractive and largely medieval Grade I listed building (Fig. 13 a-b). This unusual form, entirely unprecedented in traditional church design, owes much to the need to preserve as many trees as possible and minimise the disturbance of burials. It looks eccentric but its positioning amidst the trees and the use of flint and ashlar stone for the external walls and shingles for the roofing should allow it to be seen to nestle, rather than

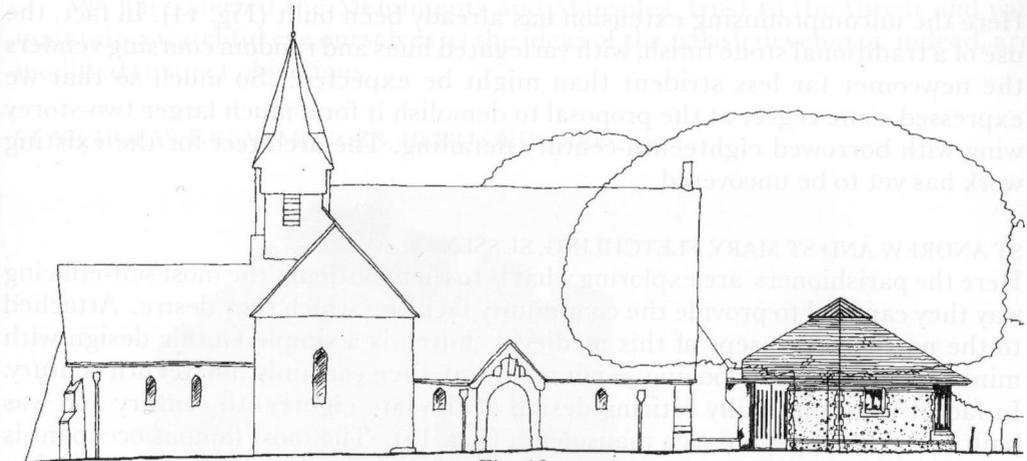


Fig. 13

St Peter's Church, North Hayling
b. Elevation

jostle, with its neighbour. After much thought, we joined English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches in not opposing the scheme. Planning permission and a faculty have been granted and work is likely to start in 1999. The architects are Roger Boyce and Robin Cooper of Roger Boyce Associates.

ST CYNFARCH'S, HOPE, FLINTSHIRE



Fig. 14

St Cynfarch's, Hope

Here the uncompromising extension has already been built (Fig. 14). In fact, the use of a traditional stone finish, with variegated hues and random coursing renders the newcomer far less strident than might be expected. So much so that we expressed some regret at the proposal to demolish it for a much larger two-storey wing with borrowed eighteenth-century detailing. The architect for the existing work has yet to be uncovered.

ST ANDREW AND ST MARY, FLETCHLING, SUSSEX

Here the parishioners are exploring what is to them no doubt the most self-effacing way they can find to provide the community facilities which they desire. Attached to the northern transept of this medieval church is a simple Gothic design with minimal detailing and looking, if not medieval, then certainly nineteenth century. In fact it is an unusually retiring design of the late eighteenth century and was built not as a chapel but as a mausoleum (Fig. 15). The most famous occupant is the historian Edward Gibbon and the entrance from the church itself is marked by a huge sheer and blind wall with a Gothic framed inscription to the great man. His is one of twenty coffins which lie beyond. The work was paid for by the first Earl of Sheffield to contain his own monument and those of his own family but apparently the interior contains coffins only. In the proposed scheme, the mausoleum would be converted and the coffins removed.



Fig. 15

St Andrew and St Mary, Fletchling

We have alerted the Monuments and Mausolea Trust to the threat and will maintain a watchful eye ourselves as the ideas of the parish develop or, indeed, are modified to meet objections.

ST NICHOLAS, GREAT MUNDEN, HERTFORDSHIRE



Fig. 16
St Nicholas,
Great Munden

The last extension, again, is one that has been built. The difference from previous cases discussed is that St Nicholas is redundant and the new build has been commissioned and paid for by the new owner, the film producer, Mr Howard Guard (Fig. 16). Even more unusually, the bulk of the new accommodation provides a small retreat for any visiting clergyman. St Nicholas, a Grade II* building originating in the twelfth century with a south aisle of the fourteenth, and a tower of the fifteenth, was closed for worship in 1989. It was purchased by Mr Guard in 1992 with a view to establishing a small scale cultural and music centre, for the benefit of local people. Having spent something like £250,000 of his own money on the work he has been helped by a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to complete the project in 1998. A charitable trust will be set up to complete the restoration and manage the building. It is an appropriate reward for a private commitment to a building which seemed to fall through official nets. The Church Commissioners had been reluctant to pass the building for long-term care to the Churches Conservation Trust in view of the potential repair cost estimated then at some £180,000. As a result, the building could so easily have faced demolition or an unashamedly commercial use, had not Mr Guard intervened.