

# The Society's Casework in 2001: A Review of Selected Cases

by

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*Local planning authorities in England and in Wales have been obliged to consult the Ancient Monuments Society and the other National Amenity Societies on all applications for listed building consent involving demolition, either total or partial, since 1972. In recent years the number of part demolition cases has settled to between 5,000 and 6,000 a year and those for complete demolition to around 200. The exact number of listed buildings threatened by application for total demolition in 2000 (the last full year at the time of writing) was 183 (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 but also some that are typical. In choosing cases we are necessarily limited by the availability of good quality reproductions. Not surprisingly, architects whose work we criticize are reluctant to allow their drawings to be used to lambast them. The drawings used have been kindly supplied by the architects of the various schemes and the names of the practices are given in the text.*

At 183, the number of buildings menaced by total destruction is still far too high. However the bulk of casework is now taken by proposals to alter, extend or part demolish and it is there that differing philosophies are manifested. Some of the cases below show the different approaches.

## BANK HOUSE, 4 BANK PLACE, FALMOUTH, CORNWALL

The first case to be considered is an old one revisited. In Volume 45 in 2001 we described the proposal to demolish this substantial and prominent building of 1788, remodelled and refronted in 1868 after a fire. We showed there the audacious new build planned for the site. Given the consistency of the townscape at this point and the availability of funds through a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) for conservation work within the town centre, we opposed the application and it was rejected.

The same architects, the Hendra Toy Partnership of Truro, have come back with a new scheme which, as you can see on the drawing (Fig. 1), keeps the listed

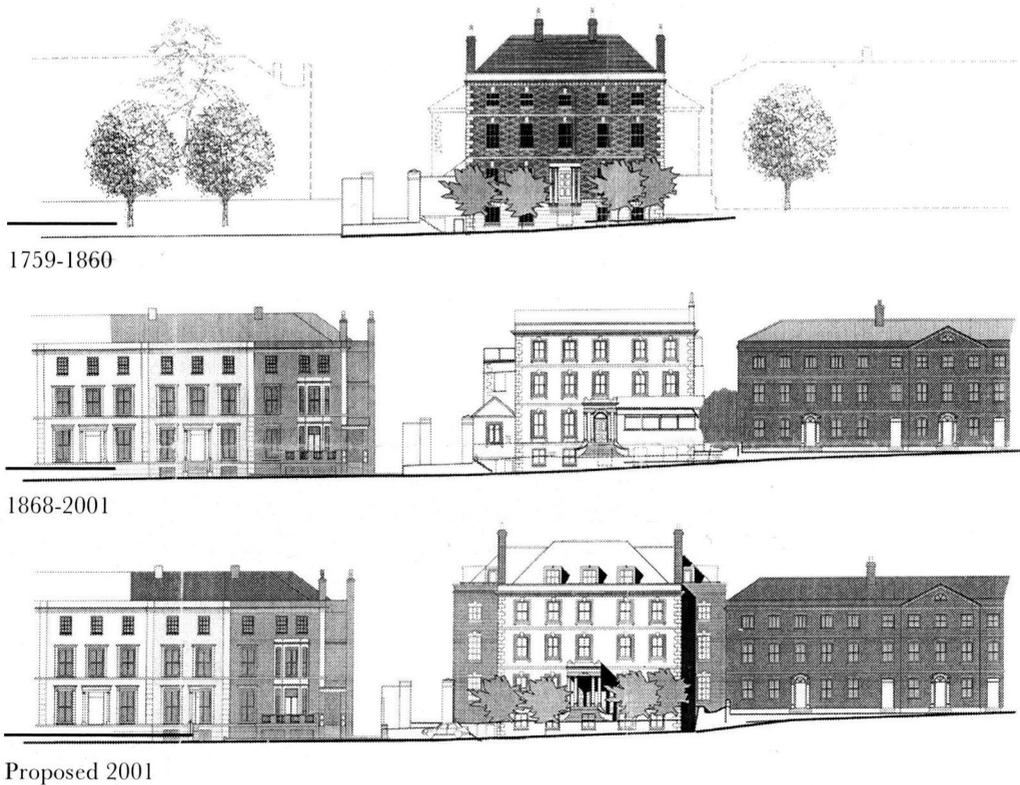


Fig. 1

At the top is Bank House as constructed, in the middle is its present rather mauled condition, at the bottom is how the current proposal envisages it will appear

building, heals it by removing the ugly ground floor addition and then extends it in an exactly symmetrical manner. Two three-storey single-bay wings widen the original mid-Georgian footprint but help to throw into relief the front elevation which is then again given its original eighteenth century form to the hipped roof (with the addition of three new dormers). There has, however, been no attempt to peel off the mid-nineteenth century stucco front.

In the circumstances, we considered this to be an acceptable compromise.

#### WESTERN VILLA, MERTHYR ROAD, ABERGAVENNY, MONMOUTHSHIRE

Charles Donovan, former Conservation Officer to Leominster, is one of the doughty fighters of the Conservation Movement. He has not only fought hard to save buildings from demolition but has assisted in the republication of eighteenth century copy books like *The Builder's Jewel*. He also happens to live in a charming listed building – Western Villa, built in a delicate Gothick. He now proposes to extend it



Fig. 2

Western Villa, an extension with a little touch of Vanbrugh

in a design by Peter Brown, RIBA who works from the town. Their joint solution, as shown on the drawing (Fig. 2), has a touch of Vanbrugh in its articulation of a blind brick wall by the use of niches and recessed panels. The new build would provide garage space in lieu of the established parking space, with living accommodation above. The brickwork would be handmade and bedded in traditional lime mortar. At the time of writing, listed building consent had not been forthcoming but it is confidently expected.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, BOUGHTON, NORFOLK  
'Reordering' has become synonymous with second-rate alterations working against the grain and character of an historic church. We were therefore delighted to receive notice of a scheme which 'lifts' a church rather than neuters it.

All Saints is not a great building. Apart

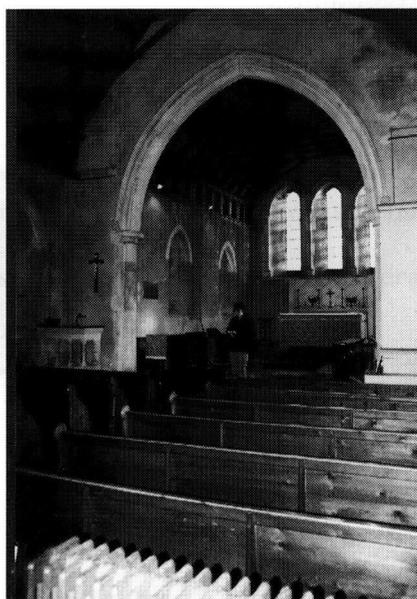


Fig. 3

General view east, All Saints, Boughton



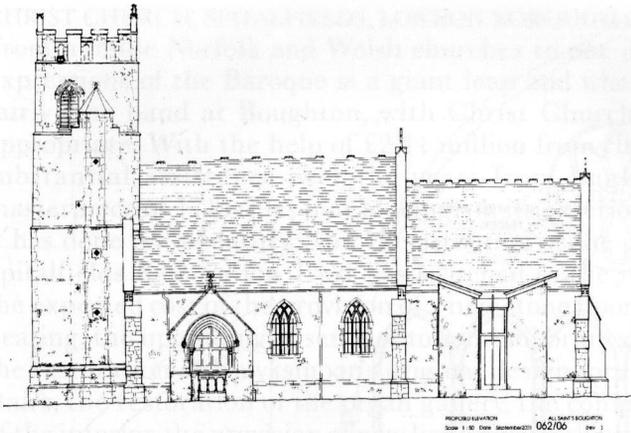


Fig. 6  
Proposed south elevation  
Drawing, Jeremy Stacey

with occasional flights of fancy, and with an architectural imagination that, dare it be said, outranks that of Withers. The place of worship is now relegated to the east end with the altar set equidistant from a ring of chairs. Some may baulk at the prominence given to the piano on the current site of the altar but there is a delicacy in the way that the new font is set permanently within a new semicircular niche, constantly connected to the water supply and

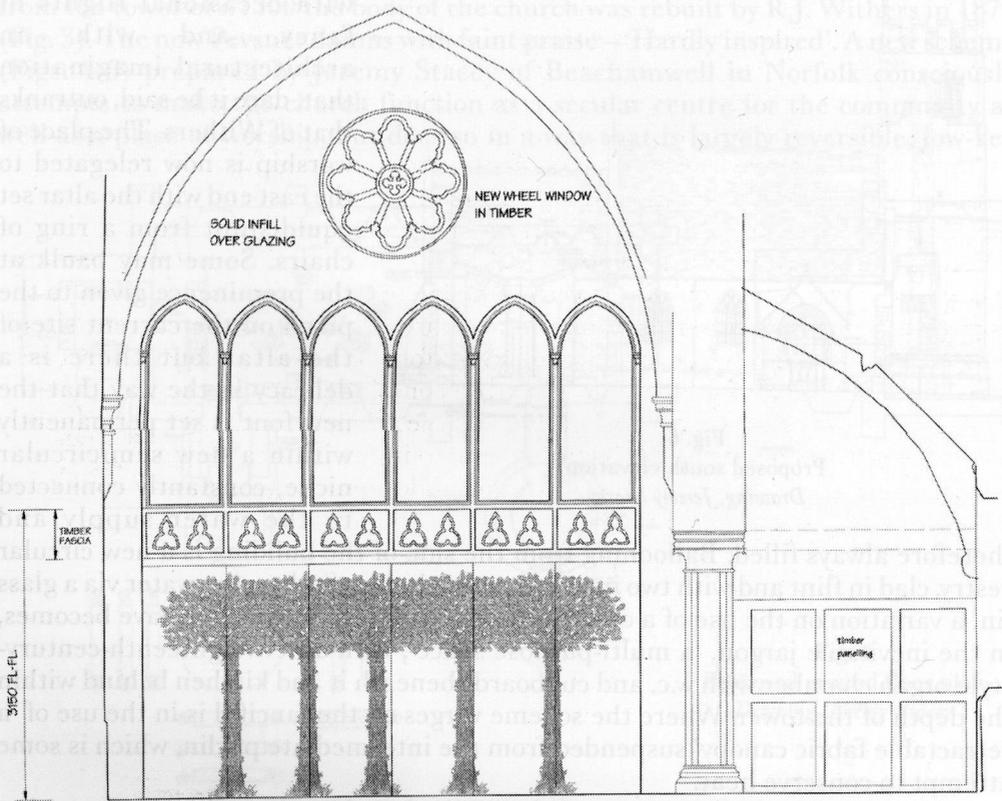
therefore always filled. Ballooning from the side of the building is a new circular vestry, clad in flint and with two inverted monopitches discharging water via a glass fin, a variation on the use of a chain as a substitute drainpipe. The nave becomes, in the inevitable jargon, 'a multi-purpose space', with a new eighteenth-century-style organ chamber with w.c. and cupboards beneath it and kitchen behind within the depth of the tower. Where the scheme verges on the fanciful is in the use of 'a retractable fabric canopy' suspended from the intermediate purlin, which is some attempt to conserve heat.

The treatment of fittings appears brusque but the annotation confirms that the stone pulpit is to be resited externally as a vantage point at the south entrance, providing a balustrade to a platform. Nine reclaimed pews overlook a sensory garden 'incorporating aromatic plants, water and a central paved area reflecting the floor plan of the vestry'. The existing font and altar are displaced without relocation but we have urged that the former be conserved.

There is a touch of the New Age about this scheme but also an architectural flair that is refreshing.

#### ST JOHN'S CHURCH, POOL QUAY, WELSHPOOL, POWYS

An interesting comparison with Boughton is the work planned for Pool Quay where the Victorian architect was one of greater imagination than Withers and the product altogether in a different league. St John's dates from 1863 and is the work of Pountney Smith of Shrewsbury. The Diocese of St Asaph in which Pool Quay lies has of late been pursuing a pro-active policy in extending and multiplying the uses of churches as a way of avoiding closure. As at Boughton, the key to Pool Quay was the introduction of extended facilities for the broader community. There is an existing meeting room with suspended ceiling at the west end. Now it is proposed to extend it by a single bay which also allows the creation of a kitchen. What made



ELEVATION A

Fig. 7

Glazed screen with sandblasted images of trees on the lower section, St John's Pool Quay

*Drawing, Peter Roscoe*

the scheme memorable was the new infill, as shown on the drawing (Fig. 7). As designed by Peter Roscoe who like Pountney Smith is based in Shrewsbury, the infill is not drably utilitarian as so often but overtly Gothic in its language on the upper floor and almost Art Nouveau in the etching of trees onto the glazing beneath. Whilst nature's own untidiness is reflected in the unequal spacing of the trees which runs counter to the discipline of the six-bay arcade above, the scheme displays patent thought and sensitivity. Given that Building Regulations require transverse marks on glass doors to make them 'visible' and therefore unlikely to be walked into, visual virtue is made out of legal necessity by substituting a veritable etched forest for mundane lines.

CHRIST CHURCH, SPITALFIELDS, LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

From humble Norfolk and Welsh churches to one of the country's greatest ever expressions of the Baroque is a giant leap and whereas an architect can enjoy a fairly free hand at Boughton, with Christ Church it is only reverence that is appropriate. With the help of £2.44 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and substantial assistance over the years from English Heritage, Hawksmoor's masterpiece of 1714-29 is now looking, on its exterior, as sound, crisp and clean as it has done for a century. Now the attention of the parish and the Christ Church Spitalfields Restoration Trust has switched to the interior. Six million pounds is the expected cost of the provision of a new stone floor to the church and underfloor heating, the upgrading of services to contemporary standards for public buildings, the restoration of Hawksmoor's original design for the galleries, and their access stairs, the restoration of the organ gallery, the complete redecoration and repair of the interior, the provision of new lighting and the reinstatement of the sanctuary. And, very controversially, the applicants intend to introduce double glazing. Apart from this and the services, the conservation philosophy will be to reinstate the

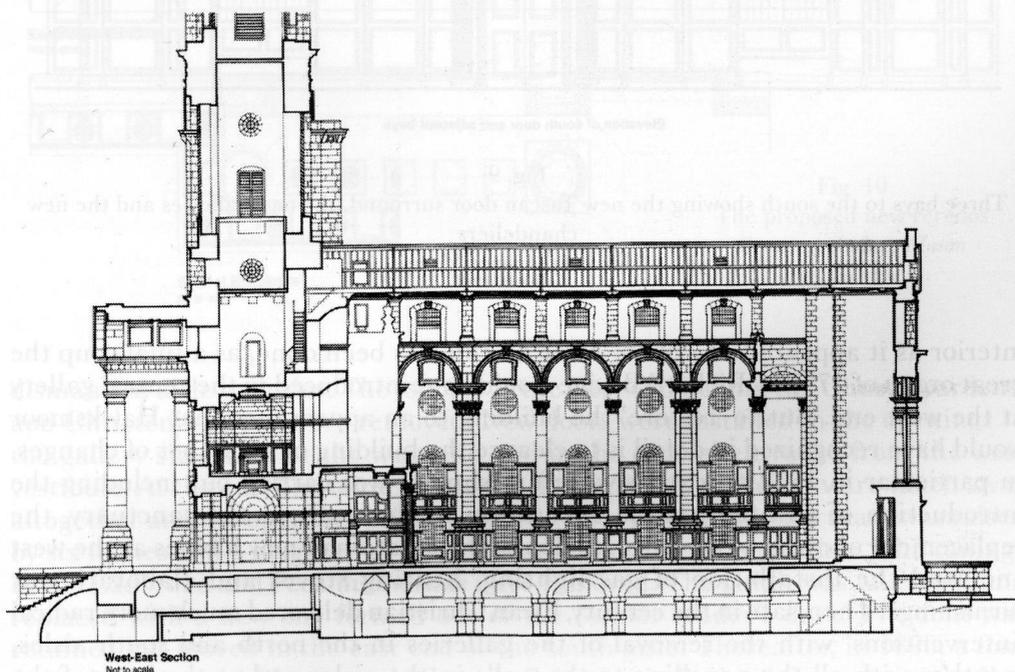
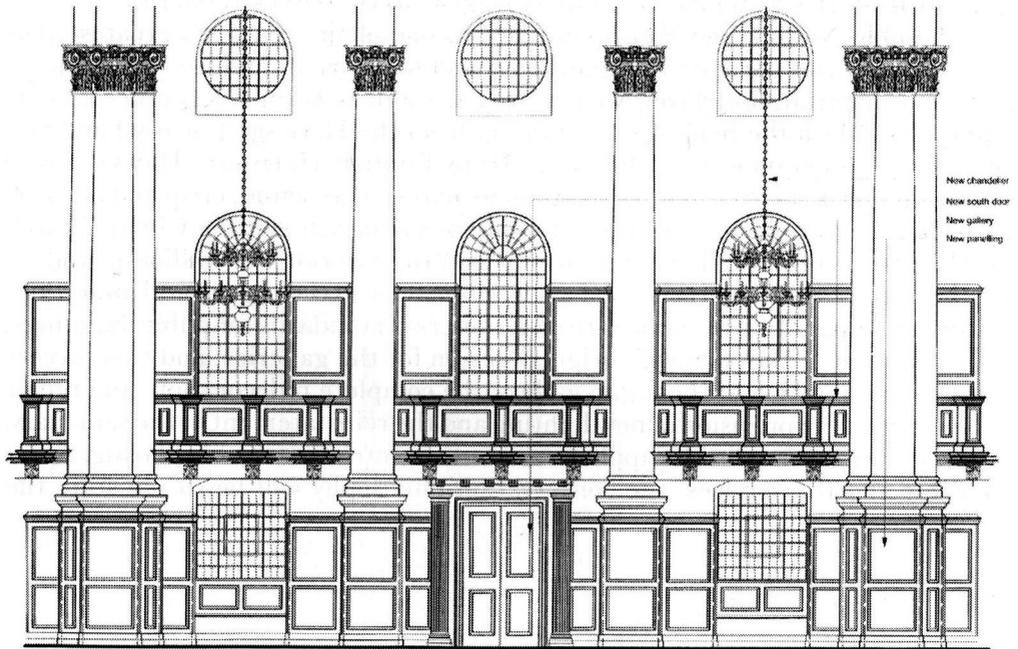


Fig. 8

Christ Church, Spitalfields. Long section showing reinstated galleries and panelling around the base of the columns

*Drawing, Andrew Mason of William Whitfield*



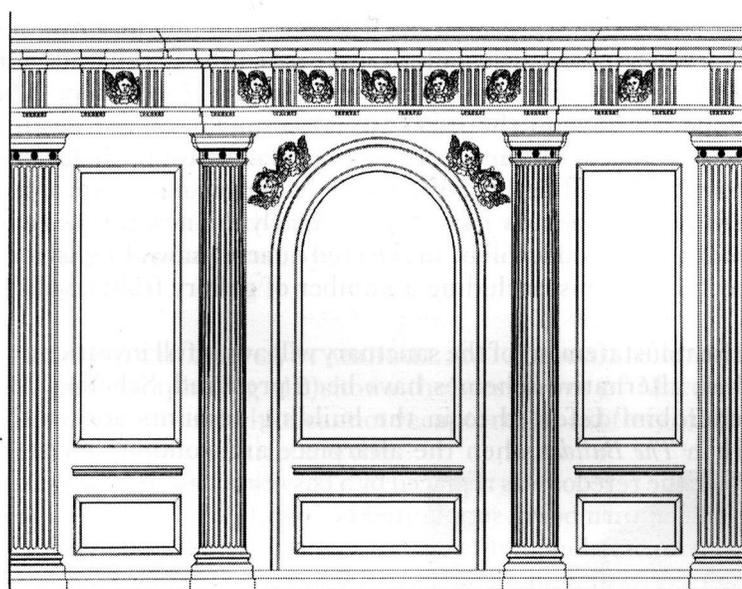
Elevation of south door and adjacent bays

Fig. 9

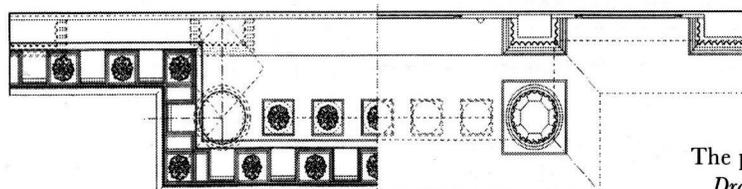
Three bays to the south showing the new Tuscan door surround, the new galleries and the new chandeliers

*Drawing, Andrew Mason*

interior as it appeared *c.* 1729-45. After all this has been done, as a final coup the great organ of 1735 by Richard Bridge would be reintroduced in the central gallery at the west end. But to 'restore' the building to an appearance that Hawksmoor would have recognized in detail is to cleanse the building of a number of changes. In particular in 1822 an extensive refurbishment was carried out including the introduction of painted marble decoration to the walls in the sanctuary, the replacement of many of the internal doors, the creation of new lobbies at the west end, and the installation of gas lighting, heating stoves and elaborate soft furnishings. Then, late in the century, Ewan Christian delivered much more radical 'interventions' with the removal of the galleries in the north and south aisles, together with all the panelling to the walls in the aisles and at the back of the galleries. The box pews at floor level were removed together with the panelling around the pedestals of the columns. The aisles between the pews were rearranged and new bench pews installed. The galleries at the west end were dismantled and re-erected at a lower level. The four small balconies at high level were removed and new ones erected in their place, their front being made up from sections of the



Elevation of Reredos  
Not to scale



Soffit of Entablature  
Not to scale

Plan of Reredos

Fig. 10  
The proposed new reredos  
Drawing, Andrew Mason

dismantled aisle galleries. The lobbies at the west end behind the Churchwardens' and Christening pews were removed. New doors were installed in the openings to the gallery staircases at the west end and in the central entrance from the west vestibule. At the east end of the aisles the doors into the galleries were taken away altogether and the openings bricked up. The floor level in the sanctuary was raised by six inches and a heightened floor laid down in the east cross aisle. The railings to the Ladbroke and Peck memorials were removed. The pulpit was taken out and replaced with a new one formed out of the former reader's desk. The font was retained but moved to the east end of the south aisle. Thereafter, in 1898, a font from the Episcopal Chapel to the Jews in Palestine in Bethnal Green was installed in the centre of the apse at the west end of the nave and memorial tablets in the vestibule rearranged. Electric light followed in 1935 and two residential units were created at the east end in 1972.

The work of repair and reinstatement is being entrusted to William Whitfield and the long standing partner in charge at Christ Church, Andrew or 'Red' Mason.

The drawings (Figs. 8-10) show the ambition of the forthcoming programme, in particular the reinstatement of the aisle galleries, the panelling to the walls and pedestals and the reredos and communion rail as intended by Hawksmoor. The door leading to the imperial steps to the south would be put back and given a Tuscan surround on the inner face. The acoustical double glazing would be located almost flush to the existing leaded light and would only marginally compromise the depth of the current reveal. The new joinery, particularly the new reredos and the restored staircases at the east end, will be in selected quarter-sawn English oak air dried and seasoned. Some items, including a number of gallery fronts, will be salvaged.

Although the precise reinstatement of the sanctuary will await full investigation of the surviving finishes, alternative schemes have been prepared. Scheme 2, as shown, repeats the 'cherubim' referred to in the building accounts and in the advertisement of 1851 in *The Builder* when the altarpiece and communion table were sold off. (In that year the reredos was replaced by a bas relief based on Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, this in turn being supplanted in 1896.)

One of the most controversial elements of the cleansing of the building is the removal of the existing east window of 1876.

#### ST PETER'S CHURCH, STRUMPSHAW, NORFOLK

It is rarely possible to stomach radical work within a medieval church but sometimes it can be contemplated. Just such an occasion arose, in our view, at St Peter's. The church is listed Grade I and dates mainly from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the existing roof to the nave and chancel is a considerable disappointment. Although said to date from 1817 closer inspection found it to be



Fig. 11

St Peter's Strumpshaw – a rare proposal for a new roof on a medieval church

at least a century later than that with timbers new and old assembled in an unworkmanlike manner. The former differentiation between the nave and the chancel had also been eradicated in the rebuilding. None of this would matter in historic buildings terms if it were serviceable. It is 'part of the history of the building' and the presumption would normally lie with retention. But serviceable it was not. Following its condemnation, Nigel

Sunter of Purcell Miller Tritton has prepared an interesting scheme for reroofing the nave (but keeping the existing in the chancel) in a style that has historical references but also clearly modern comparisons (Fig. 11). Two parallel brackets, rather in the manner of a hammerbeam, clasp the contoured base of the round-arched ribs. The trusses are triangulated by the thinnest of metal ties. The timber which is oak is to be laminated in a form already used by Sunter for new work at St Andrew's, Eaton, in the suburbs of Norwich. The new roof covering would be clay pantiles. Planning permission for the new roof has been granted and fund raising has started.

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE  
The photograph (Fig. 12) shows the west front of Macclesfield Parish Church, although black and white cannot recapture the subtlety of the textures and colours of the stonework, particularly the difference between the darker stone of the tower and the Cheshire sandstone for the nave. We have consistently opposed the scheme to construct a modern canopy at this point and doubt that we will be ever reconciled to the principle.

The church, perhaps surprisingly for a building with so many fittings of outstanding quality, is only listed Grade II\* but placed prominently within the centre of the old town. The tower dates from the fourteenth century and there are two memorable chapels, the Legh of 1442 rebuilt in 1620 and the Savage of 1504-7 built as a chantry chapel by Thomas Savage, Archbishop of York. In 1740 all but the two chapels and the lower stages of the tower were taken down and the church enlarged northwards by the construction of a broader nave. A chancel was added in 1819 and further extended in 1883. A hundred years ago the radical decision was taken to sweep all

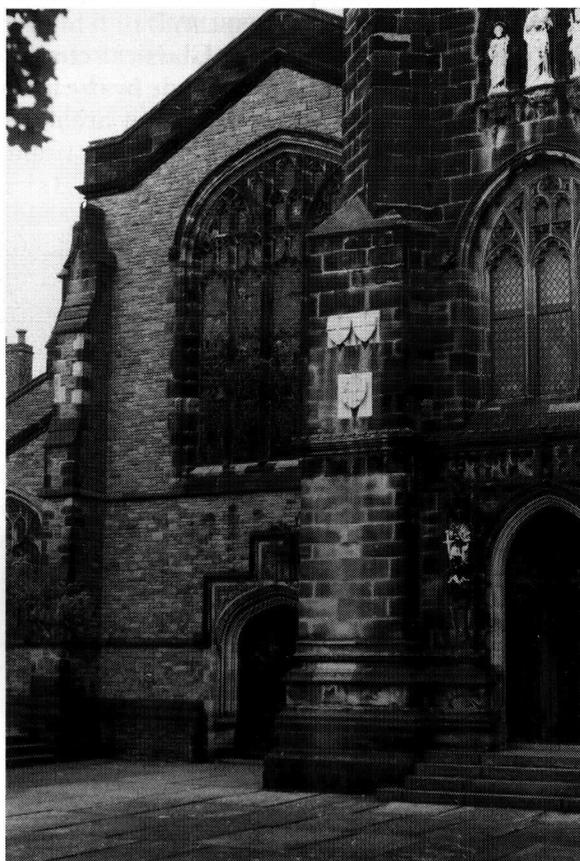


Fig. 12  
Macclesfield parish church – a large nave porch (not in stone) seemed unacceptable to us

this away with the exception of the tower and chapels to construct a new church designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield which opened in 1901 (two years after his death). Blomfield's work is noble but the darkness of the stone and the use of comparatively dark stained glass does convey a late Victorian religiosity too brooding for some. For Simon Jenkins 'The nave interior is all Blomfield gloom' and it was that verdict which was quoted by the Chancellor when he recently granted permission for extensive internal works, most particularly a two-storey narthex at the west end which, by common agreement, will impede the present open appreciation of the great west window by Powells of Whitefriars installed in 1902 in commemoration of the reign of Queen Victoria. We made observations on, but did not formally oppose, the internal work (designed by Peter Wright), the principal objector to that being English Heritage. We hope the proposal for the new external canopy is on permanent hold.

#### ST CHAD'S CHURCH, SHREWSBURY

St Chad's is one of the great Classical churches of the West, constructed with a painstaking geometrical exactitude by the architect George Steuart in 1790-2. It is fortunate in having as its inspecting architect Andrew Arrol of Arrol and Snell Architects based in the city. The visitor's first experience of the church is the oval

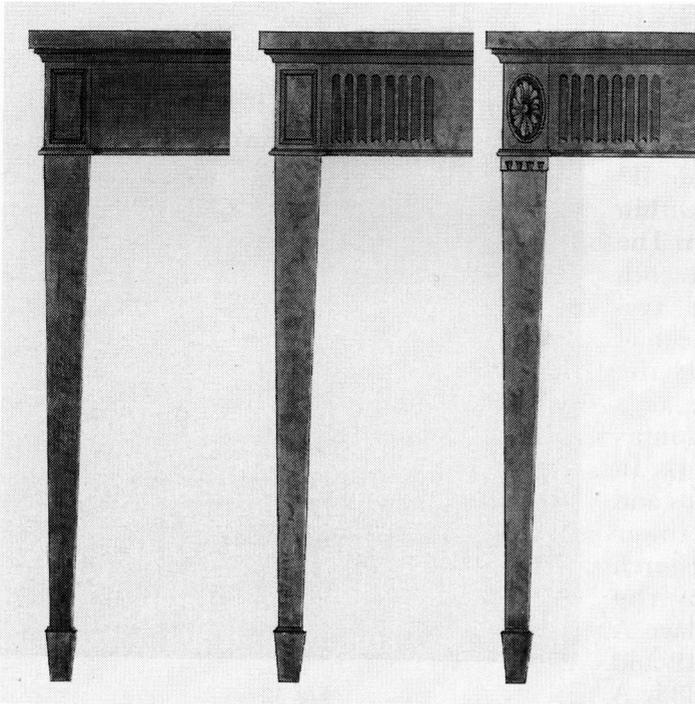


Fig. 13

Three variations on the possible pier-table proposed at St Chads

vestibule, an anteroom both literally and in terms of experience, preparing the tourist and worshipper alike, for the spectacular circular and galleried nave beyond. At present the furniture within the vestibule is by common consensus a clutter. Andrew Arrol has now prepared a scheme which replaces all that with four curved pier-tables in Regency style set against the wall to provide display space for postcards and books. Even the hymnbook cabinets will be banished to the store rooms below the stairs flight. The

existing cast-iron radiators and two matching lecterns which stand at the feet of each stair and which contain the Commemoration Volumes of the Roll Call of First World War Dead will remain. Everything else is subordinated to the clarity of the new design. The drawings (Fig. 13) show the three alternatives for the pier-tables prepared by Peter Vidal, a distinguished local cabinet maker based in Oswestry.

#### WYMONDHAM ABBEY, NORFOLK

It is perhaps a brave parish which embarks upon a scheme to extend one of the great medieval buildings of East Anglia. They propose to commemorate the 900th anniversary of the foundation of the Abbey of St Mary the Virgin and St Thomas of Canterbury in 2007 through completing by then the provision of brand new accommodation. This is done by extending the south aisle and inserting a two-storey glazed capsule of accommodation within the base of the great Abbey Tower (Fig. 14). The latter was originally at the centre of the composition but following the Dissolution in 1538 everything beyond it to the east was demolished. Its pivotal role in marking the transition from the nave to the chancel was further diminished by the insertion of a full-height wall within its western arch (against which Comper's east end altar is abutted).

In many ways the parish is a model of achievement. The sound financial status of the Wymondham Abbey Preservation Trust has ensured that the fabric of the building is well maintained with a small shop manned by volunteers contributing to the running costs. The Friends of Wymondham Abbey also help to meet the provision of one-off items such as choir robes and vestments. Now, however, given the frequent use of the building for concerts and art exhibitions, the parish has decided to advance boldly into the Millennium with notably ambitious plans. The existing 'temporary' structure in the south aisle which serves as sacristy, vestry and music library, and yet is seriously detrimental to the internal appearance of the building, is to go. Also proposed for removal is the shop which presently blocks access through the west door. New heating and the introduction of toilet facilities are planned. The designs prepared by Henry Freeland of the Freeland Rees Roberts practice propose

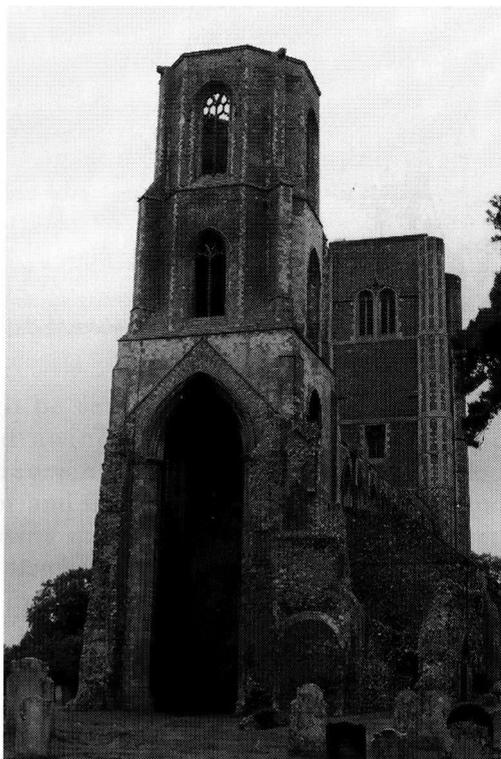


Fig. 14  
Wymondham Priory in 2001

two new builds – one at the eastern end of the south aisle (Fig. 15) where the predecessor of the existing aisle was cut back during the demolitions after the Dissolution. The idiom here is minimalist Gothic with Y-shaped tracery for the large window set in the gable. Here would be housed the new music room, sacristy, lavatories, boilers and lifts.

The other newcomer (Fig. 16) eschews virtually all historical references, its audacity helped by the fact that it will be visible only

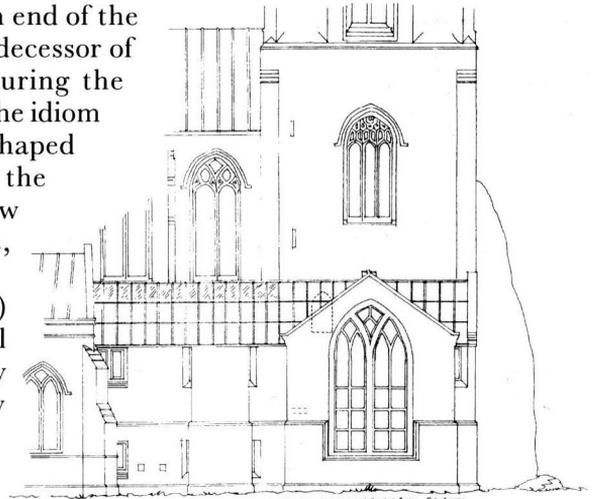


Fig. 15  
The south aisle extension  
Drawing, Henry Freeland



Fig. 16  
Drawing by Henry Freeland showing the two-tier new build at the base of the crossing tower in schematic form only

from the east, being concealed within the depth of the base of the Abbey tower. There are vague references to the spikiness of Gothic in the use of triangulated legs with suction pads holding the frameless glass of the shell in position, but the new capsule is unashamedly and self-confidently 'modern'. This will provide new display facilities linking through to the new shop to be built within the former St Margaret's Chapel at the east end of the north aisle. The existing encumbrances within the south aisle and the shop at the base of the west tower would thereafter be removed. All work would be informed by the need to safeguard and record archaeological evidence.

Full permission was granted for this scheme in January 2002.

#### WAKELINS, GENESIS GREEN, WICKHAMBROOK, SUFFOLK

Wakelins is described in the listing schedule as 'a seventeenth-century timber-framed and plastered house renovated in the twentieth century'. In the hands of

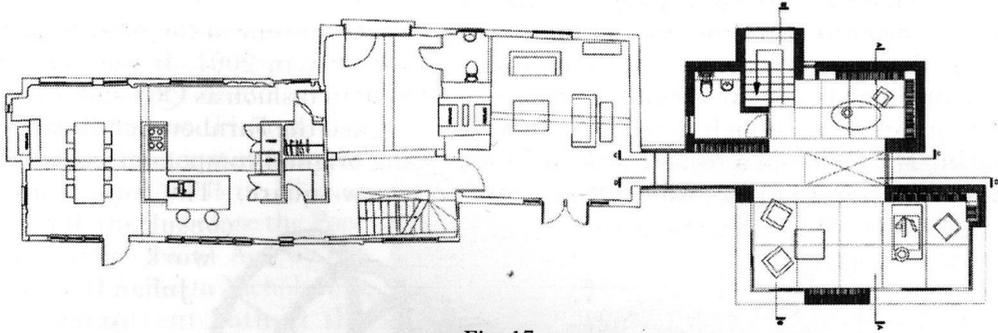


Fig. 17  
Wakelins, showing the bold geometry of the proposed extension  
*Drawing, by James Gorst*

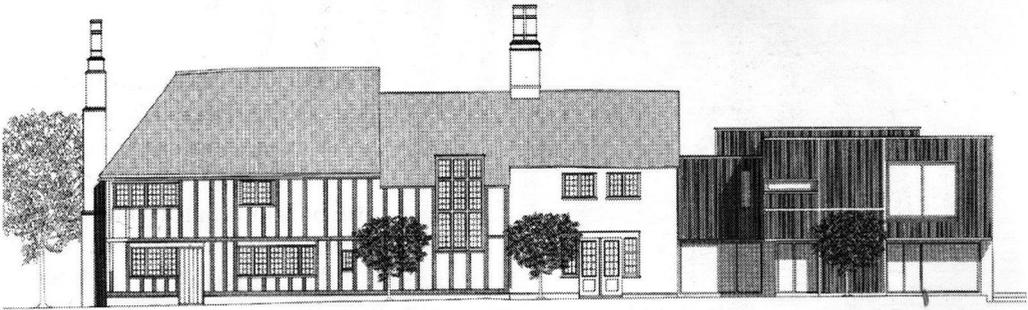


Fig. 18  
Wakelins – the equally uncompromising elevations  
*Drawing, by James Gorst*

the architect James Gorst it stands to be remembered for an exercise in uncompromising juxtaposition. The drawing (Figs. 17 and 18) show the unmistakable new build of two flat-roofed rectangles, largely windowless and clad in timber, joined by a connecting corridor and flat roofed. The proposed ground floor plan (Fig. 17) shows the elongated living spaces that would result. The listed building itself is safeguarded – indeed it has been agreed that the timber frame would only be exposed according to the found condition of the oak frame upon removal of the existing cement render. If it is in a poor condition it is agreed that the frame will be covered with lath and lime plaster (as it almost certainly would have been at the time of construction). James Gorst is a sensitive architect with an established reputation for new designs in historic contexts, some of them self-effacingly contextual, others – as here – freewheeling in spirit but respectful in scale and composition.

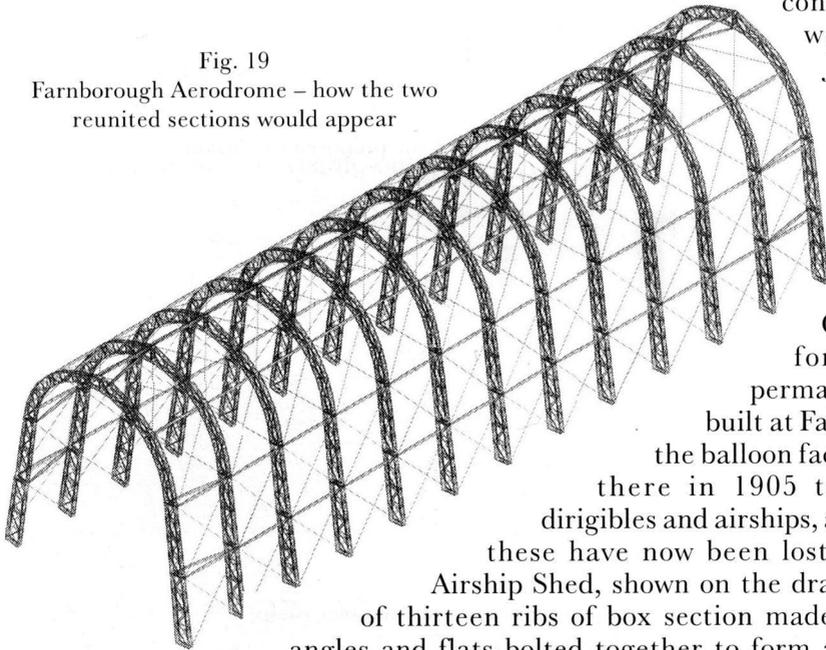
Listed Building Consent was granted by the council in January 2002.

## FARNBOROUGH AERODROME, HAMPSHIRE

This drawing (Fig. 19) by Hockley and Dawson represents one of the most bizarre 'total demolition' cases to be referred to the Society in 2001. It was for the dismantling of two listed buildings known in Orwellian fashion as Q65 and R51 at the former Farnborough Aerodrome (now rechristened the Farnborough Business Park). The frame of a former airship hangar using original components salvaged from the two buildings will be re-erected in a new square. The conservation

consultant for the work would be Julian Harrap.

Fig. 19  
Farnborough Aerodrome – how the two reunited sections would appear



At the start of World War I there were only six airship sheds of importance in the UK, Germany having forty-two. Two permanent sheds were

built at Farnborough after the balloon factory had moved

there in 1905 to house early dirigibles and airships, although both of

these have now been lost. The Portable Airship Shed, shown on the drawing, consisted

of thirteen ribs of box section made up of rivetted angles and flats bolted together to form an approximate

catenary arch springing from the ground. There were tubeless

steel longitudinal ribs and wire rope bracing and guy ropes (omitted from the isometric). The whole was covered by canvas sheets. As the name implies, the shed

was designed to be easily dismantled and re-erected and following its first guise between 1901 and 1911 it was indeed dismantled *c.*1914 and recycled some two

years later. The straight lower lattice frames were cut in two and used as the main structure for a new fabric and balloon workshop Q65, the arched top frames performing a new role in R51. As the listing schedule for both buildings, which are

now relatively undistinguished externally, states – 'The two parts of these sheds together make up the oldest surviving airship shed in the UK'.

On balance we thought that the reuniting of the two sections and reassembly as a giant sculpture was acceptable although there remain concerns over the extent

to which early industrial buildings of historic and architectural interest are to be lost as part of the broader development of the Park.

THURGARTON HUNDRED WORKHOUSE, NEAR SOUTHWELL, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Sometimes consultations, although extensive, need little input or approval from us as they are transparently acceptable. Just such was the scheme by the National Trust to create one of its most potent if unselfconscious exhibits in the former

Workhouse at Thurgarton (Fig. 20). Built just outside the city of Southwell in 1824, a good ten years before the Poor Law Amendment Act, by the architect William Nicholson it was important both at the time and today. It was publicized by the Reverend Becher in 1828 and was highly influential at a time when Parliament was considering making the provision of workhouses compulsory. But it was also identified by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England as being probably the least altered workhouse in England.

Subsequent generations seem to have maintained its spartan regime with a museum curator's eye. Thus, with a grant of over two million pounds from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the NT has taken the building into care and will open it to the public, but letting the bare walls largely speak for themselves in displaying a social structure now wholly gone. The divisions within the building were both horizontal and vertical, with the three wings allocated to men, women and children, but the adults then subdivided into first and second class inmates, those of 'good character and conduct' and those deemed 'idle, immoral and improvident'. Evidence of all this survives, as does even more remarkably the original laundry and bakehouse, cowhouse and cell for the noticeably recalcitrant. All this will be displayed by the Trust once the repair campaign by Rodney Melville has been finished.



Fig. 20  
Thurgarton Workhouse

BEAUMONT BARRACKS: VETERINARY LINES AND RIDING SCHOOL, ALDERSHOT, HAMPSHIRE  
 The death of the Duke of Wellington and the experiences of the Crimean War led to a major reorganisation of the army and the establishment of Aldershot. The general history is well set out in the recent book for English Heritage, *British Barracks 1600-1914*. Most of Aldershot has been rebuilt but some of the surviving original buildings include parts of the special accommodation for the cavalry – the veterinary lines and the riding school. The Lines are the only surviving example of a nineteenth century military horse hospital and the Riding School, now listed Grade II\*, one of the best examples of an indoor riding school, certainly the finest military one (Fig. 21). The whole complex is of outstanding interest for its significance to the history of the British Army and in particular to the role of the Cavalry.

The buildings of the Lines and the Riding School have been sold on for private development. The Society has objected to two proposals for conversion to offices and residential accommodation, largely on the grounds that many of the features that make them special would be lost. The plans include the insertion of a mezzanine into the riding school. We have been encouraged in this opposition by the knowledge that a local group (REHAB – Reinstatate Equestrian Heritage at Beaumont), in association with the Hampshire Building Preservation Trust, is actively pursuing schemes for continued use of the buildings as originally intended though not now for military purposes. Of all the cases notified to us there are few where the PPG15 principle that the best use for an historic building is probably its original use seems more appropriate. At the time of writing Rushmoor Council has rejected the first application. The amended scheme which makes some improvements to the setting of the buildings and reduces the extent of the mezzanine still does not address the fundamental question, set out in PPG15, about the ‘optimum viable use’ as defined in the PPG.

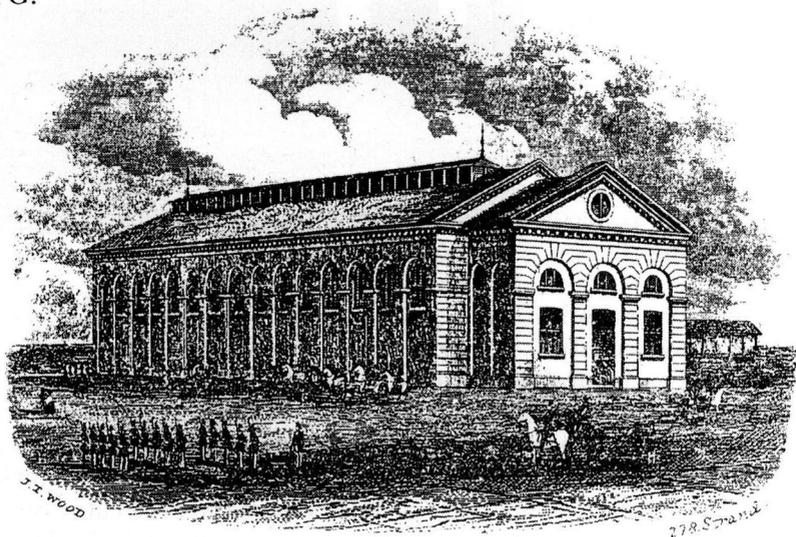


Fig. 21

Beaumont Barracks: Aldershot, Hampshire

ROYAL WILLIAM YARD, PLYMOUTH, DEVON

The rapid changes in defence requirements, as at Aldershot, have perhaps had more effect on historic dockyards than anywhere else. One of the most unified in design and intact in its survival is the Royal William Yard at Plymouth. This was a Victualling Yard designed by John Rennie, built between 1825 and 1831, with formal classical buildings set round a dock basin. The warehouse buildings were complemented by industrial buildings such as the bakery for ships' biscuits. The yard was abandoned in 1992 and has been a problem ever since. The advent of the South West Regional Development Agency has given a new stimulus and proposals are in hand for a scheme of mixed use. As part of this a conservation plan has been prepared by Alan Baxter Associates and the Society was able to offer comments on this. Fortunately in broad terms there was little to worry about and we gave a broad endorsement though we issued some caveats about fenestration and the treatment of the spaces between the buildings. We have subsequently been consulted over the public realm proposals.



Fig. 22

Royal William Yard, Plymouth, Devon

The consultation over Royal William Yard has been one of an increasing number of cases where draft conservation plans have been sent to us. Wide consultation is recommended in the Heritage Lottery Fund's guidance on plans. It is an excellent way of identifying and dealing with contentious issues at an early stage in the

formulation of proposals for altering buildings which are in many cases among the most important in the country. Among others sent to us in the last year are those for **Danson House** (English Heritage); **Oxford Castle** (Oxfordshire County Council) where we had some reservations about the capacity of the former prison buildings to take a hotel conversion and especially about a new building which would mask views of the castle mound; **Mrs Gaskell's House** in Manchester, a building as important for its associations as its architecture; and **Torr Vale Mills** in Derbyshire where we liked the proposals for the mills themselves but expressed concern at the conclusion in the plan that any necessary conservation work should be paid for by enabling development.

#### ST GEORGE'S HALL, LIVERPOOL

This is one of Britain's great buildings, described by Norman Shaw as 'the finest building in the world'. It has been difficult to use, almost from the beginning when Harvey Lonsdale Elmes had to combine separate designs for a great public hall and for assize courts into a single building. But at least the courts offered regular use and maintenance. After their departure the building became a major problem with little sign of a viable



Fig. 23  
St George's Hall, Liverpool

future though much European Objective 1 money was spent on securing the outward fabric. The advent of the Heritage Lottery Fund has now offered greater hope for a long term future. The HLF guidance on conservation plans now recommends wide consultation but the plan for St George's Hall was not widely distributed. A proposal for alterations to the south front which proved contentious when the subject of a listed building consent application, not only to provide very necessary level access but also to reinstate the podium and platform as it had been after C. R. Cockerell had changed Elmes' plans in what proved to be a short lived and unsatisfactory arrangement, appeared only after the architects had drafted the plan. Further research on the evolution of the south front by Frank Salmon and Peter de Figueiredo, published in *Architectural History*, provided an opportunity for a rethink and we are delighted that the solution now evolved by the architects, Purcell Miller Tritton, is essentially that supported by the Society. This provides for the change to be a new level access through a doorway in the platform as designed by

Elmes, though on the frontage line created by Cockerell, and for the podium to be left more or less intact. This seems to be a good compromise between current needs for access and use and the principle of 'conserve as found'. It also shows the benefits of detailed research, even on such a well known building, as set out in the recent English Heritage document *Informed Conservation*.

#### SMELTING WORKS, CANONSTOWN, CORNWALL



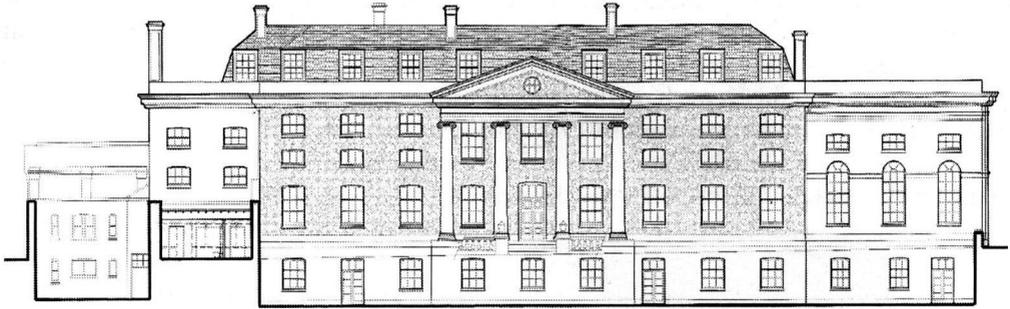
Fig. 24  
Penwith Smelting Works, Canonstow, Cornwall

Redundant industrial buildings if they are storeyed and well windowed are relatively easy to convert to other uses. But a building whose interest is in part its open nature and lack of windows (like a barn) presents more difficulties. We received notification from Penwith District Council of proposals to convert the former tin smelting works at Canonstow into holiday cottages. While such a use might avoid

the domestic paraphernalia of a permanent residential conversion and some effort had been made to look creatively at the building we felt that the initial proposals were too intrusive and too destructive of what made the building special. We objected to the proposals and Penwith Council agreed with us. The applicants showed a willingness to revise their scheme and the Council's staff put a lot of effort into advice and negotiation to secure a scheme which would be much better for the building but would still offer a viable new use. This seemed to us a good example of co-operation rather than confrontation and we did not object to the second application.

#### ICKWORTH, SUFFOLK

Georgian houses owned by the National Trust are not usually ones where there are applications for significant change. But we were consulted by St Edmundsbury Council about the proposal to convert the east wing of Ickworth house into a hotel (Fig. 25). As planned by the Earl/Bishop the central rotunda of Ickworth was to be his home and the wings were to be his galleries. His son decided to continue this unfinished temple of the arts but to live in the east wing, of which only the foundations had been laid, and fresh building began in the 1820s to the designs of



NORTH ELEVATION

Fig. 25

Ickworth House, Suffolk. East Wing

*Drawing, Childs and Sulzmann*

the little known John Field. He provided a relatively small but manageable house, linked to the rotunda by the quadrant wing. This was very significantly altered by A. C. Blomfield in 1909-12 and remained the family's home when the freehold passed to the Trust. This arrangement has now ceased but the Trust, for architectural and financial reasons, did not believe that there was any gain in adding the accommodation to the publicly accessible house, especially when work on the west wing seemed more pressing. After lengthy consideration hotel use seemed the best option for a long term use and after equally lengthy searches a user was found who could work within the constraints presented by the unique nature of the site. This was made possible by the use of Ickworth Lodge, about three quarters of a mile away across the park, as additional accommodation.

We could see no objection to these proposals as they affected the main house to which scrupulous attention in research and preparation of proposals had been given. However, we expressed some concerns about the Lodge, a complex and accretive building, which until recently had been in use as a nursing home. This had not been given such great attention and there remained a number of architectural puzzles. While we were able to accept the general principles of the scheme we urged the Trust to do more research on the Lodge before committing themselves to detailed plans.

#### FORMER WINDMILL, PORTISHEAD, NORTH SOMERSET

We were consulted about two applications on this building (Fig. 26). They were supported by more historical information than usual which, unfortunately from the applicant's point of view, tended to undermine his case. The mill was built in 1832 and, having gone out of use, became part of a new club house for a golf club in 1908. At this time both buildings were given a uniform roof covering of clay tiles though there is evidence that at one time the turning boat-shaped cap of the mill was thatched. The applications proposed to thatch the tower, but not to reinstate the cap, so that the proposed form of the building had no historical precedent, and



Fig. 26  
Former Windmill,  
Portishead, North  
Somerset

to remove the tiles from the clubhouse in favour of artificial slate. We believed that the unified nature of the roof covering did not really mask the clear distinction between the two parts of the building and had now become part of the building's history. In view of the lack of authenticity in the replacement of the windmill's roof in thatch and the belief that the artificial slates were inappropriate we objected to both applications and the council agreed with us.

#### CUSTOM HOUSE, PENARTH, VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Penarth developed in the second half of the nineteenth century when a dock was built to take overflow traffic from Cardiff. Its major monument is a church by Butterfield. The Custom House is the most spectacular of Penarth's secular buildings, built 1865 in a vigorous baroque manner, probably to the designs of G. E. Robinson of Cardiff. It stands on a prominent site. The closure of the docks made this very much a building at risk; it was boarded up at the time of listing in 1992 and has remained so until this year. At last a proposed use has come forward, partly as a restaurant so there will be some access, and we have welcomed the proposals,

which seem sympathetic to the character of the building, while expressing some concern about the details which were vague. The council have approved the application and imposed many conditions which should mean that the work is kept under proper control.

#### MARVELL'S COTTAGE, RADIPOLE, DORSET

We responded to a notification from Weymouth and Portland Borough Council on Marvell's Cottage because the drawings, and their annotations, seemed to indicate a building much earlier than that described in the statutory list (where it is said to be late eighteenth/early nineteenth century in date) and because the proposed interventions seemed drastic, with much underpinning and new blockwork walls to which surviving features were to be refixed. Our suspicions about the date proved well founded when further information showed that the house had internal features clearly datable to the later sixteenth century – moulded beams and a plank and muntin partition – and that these were not primary fabric.

Marvell's Cottage has been a problem for a long time, vacant for some twenty-five years. It is in a remote position with no road access. The borough council has made considerable efforts to solve the problem, agreeing to improved access and to an extension of the cottage in a place where there is evidence that there was earlier building. But there has been little progress on the nature of the works to the listed building itself, despite the serving of notices by the council and advice from an English Heritage structural engineer that underpinning is not necessary. We continue to encourage the council and hope that the owners will come to share the view that their old building does not need to be so thoroughly rebuilt, with all the loss of interest involved, in order once again to become an attractive house.