

The Society's Casework in 2008-9: Selected Cases

by

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Local authorities 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 partial or total, in England and Wales since 1972. In recent years the number of part demolition cases has settled to about 5,000 a year and those for complete demolition to around 100. The exact number of listed buildings threatened by application for total demolition in 2008 (the last full year at the time of writing) was ninety-two, nine of them in Wales. This compares with 108 in 2007 and 125 in 2006. The unscientific impression, here in the Vestry Hall, is that the Recession is dampening the more ambitious redevelopment proposals but that schemes of adaptation and extension are largely unaffected, at least in terms of numbers. A full list of total demolition cases can be obtained from the Society's office or downloaded from the website. The cases discussed here, which go beyond formal consultations to cases drawn to our attention by other means, are among the most interesting, although in making our choice we are circumscribed by the availability of illustrations suitable for reproduction. The drawings have been kindly supplied by the architects of the various schemes and have been reproduced with their permission. More regular casework reviews appear in the AMS newsletters.

Right at the end of 2009 we were very heartened to hear news of a new set of Directions issued by the Secretary of State to all English planning authorities. Until then certain of the more important cases could not be decided autonomously by such authorities but had to be referred to the Secretary of State (at the Department for Communities and Local Government). This wasn't necessarily for determination but so that a decision could be taken on whether to 'call-in' the application in question for public inquiry. Hitherto referral had been triggered by whether the application fell into given *a priori* categories, centred on the degree of demolition. The Directions laid down that for applications lodged after 1 December 2009, referral of cases in these total or substantial demolition categories would only be triggered where there have been objections from English Heritage or one or more of the National Amenity Societies. This has granted the AMS, and its sister organisations, a power to influence that we have not hitherto enjoyed.

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SECULAR CASES

THE MARKET HOUSE, CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX



Fig. 1
The Market House, Chichester.

Figure 1 might be used to illustrate just how well an historic building can be extended. For although there is a feel of stylistic unity, this elevation is in two horizontal halves divided by a century. The Tuscan loggia and the rather severe astylar sentry boxes at either end are the work of John Nash himself in 1807 (at a cost of £1,522). It was the city's replacement for the magnificent Market Cross, just a couple of hundred yards away where North, South, East and West Streets meet, which thereafter became, as it is now, a place of assembly rather than commerce. Pevsner doesn't volunteer the name of the architect who, in 1900, provided the first floor – but he deserves to take a bow. The gentle contrast with the Nash, the setback, the use of Bath Stone not render, the employment of the more delicate Ionic, all set to the tune of Nash's rhythm of a-b-b-b-b-a, confirm just how subtle the Classical language could be in the hands of someone whose architectural training had given him the confidence to understand its rules and flexibility.

The present interior of the Market Hall, reopened as such in 1955, is rather rundown. The owners wish to revive its commercial fortunes by glazing in between Nash's columns. But we felt that the effect would be very unfortunate and the proposal has been

withdrawn. The view out, into North Street, shown on Figure 2 would be impeded, whilst, presumably, the rather ingenious semi-circular cages which protect the inner face of the columns from the knocks of the trolleys unloading stock, would have to go completely.



Fig. 2

The Market House, Chichester.

NOS 53-56 HANS PLACE, BELGRAVIA, KENSINGTON

Only very few Boroughs have the social cache and the economic base to throw up rather remarkable schemes like this one. You have to concentrate hard to differentiate between the existing elevation and the proposed. Figure 3 is as existing, Figure 4 is as proposed.

None of these four buildings is listed but all are protected by falling within a Conservation Area. The Survey elevations show, in the four properties on the far right, the present syncopation within the townscape between Nos 53 and 55, in a version of Osbert Lancaster's 'Pont Street Dutch' and Nos 54 and 56, lonely and rather mauled survivors of the original and much simpler Georgian terracing which preceded the late Victorian aggrandisement. The architects, Barrett Lloyd Davis and Associates, proposed,



Fig. 3

Hans Place, Belgravia, Kensington, existing.

in a scheme which won consent in May 2009, to carry on where the Victorians had left off. It was Henry Holland who started laying out Hans Town in 1771, taking out a lease from Lord Cadogan. Almost exactly a hundred years later it was the Cadogan (and Hans Place) Estate which began the redevelopment and gave rise to the varied and richly appointed elevations seen in Figure 3. Only Nos 54 and 56 survived in this stretch although other, and better, fragments from Holland's project remain at Nos 15 and 33-4. With quite remarkable self confidence, Barrett, Lloyd, Davis proposed to replace Nos 54 and 56 with entirely new structures that would not have disgraced Ernest George, the chief



Fig. 4

Nos 53-56, Hans Place, proposed.

protagonist of Lancaster's 'Pont Street Dutch'. The corner is now to be turned with a flamboyant Dutch Gable complete with a barley-sugar twister for a chimney. And No 53, with a top floor lost to bombing, is reinstated with almost as much panache. Permission to build is one thing. Constructing it is another and we shall have to see the effect of the present recession.

TRURO HOUSE, NO. 176 GREEN LANES, ENFIELD, LONDON N13

Tucked away in Palmers Green, classic North London suburbia, among the streets that bred the poet Stevie Smith ('not waving but drowning'), is a Regency property calling itself Truro House (named after Lord Truro, a former Lord Chancellor). The exterior is pleasant but unexceptional and yet the interior is anything but. The house was acquired in c.1897 by George Emile Davis, a civil engineer born in 1873. It was he who seems to have been responsible for the remarkable transformation of the interior. The influence of his French wife lies behind the French Empire style of the Drawing Room (Fig. 5), but Viollet le Duc mixes with slightly understated William Burges to produce the hooded medieval fireplace of the Normandy Room (Fig. 6). The little girl shown in the half light adjacent to the fireplace in the Entrance Hall (Fig. 7) is Miss Charlotte J. Davis, George's daughter, who lived on in the house until she died, unmarried and childless, in 1995 at the age of ninety-eight. The new owner found he couldn't carry on and, very sadly, the contents were soon dispersed. The house then entered the most insecure period in its history with theft and vandalism taking its toll. It is now argued that raising the funds for repair depends upon an enabling development in the extensive grounds overlooking the New River. Whilst we might have to accept the principle, we were concerned at the detailing and bulk of the latter. There is an extensive but unpublished English Heritage assessment of the house by Emily Cole and Andy Wittrick.



Fig. 5
Truro House, Enfield, drawing room.

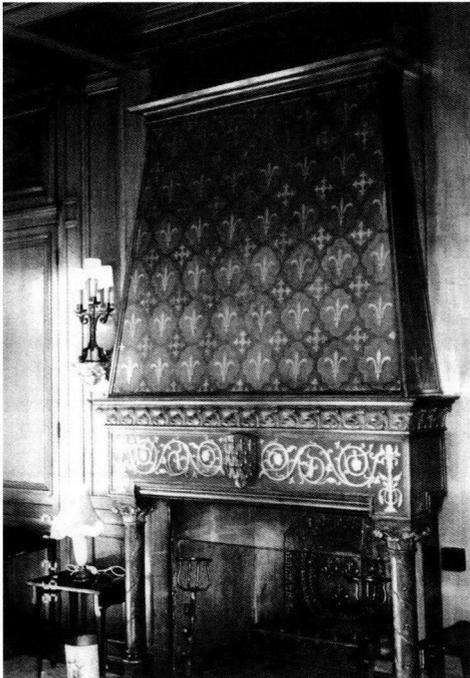


Fig. 6
Truro House, Enfield, Normandy Room.



Fig. 7
Truro House, Enfield, entrance hall.

NO. 2 VICTORIA PLACE, HAVERFORDWEST, PEMBROKESHIRE

At present No. 2 is a poor post-war intruder into William Owen's ambitious late Georgian approach into the town from New Bridge (Fig. 8). We were therefore able to welcome in principle a redevelopment by Pembroke Design which sought to contextualise it by replacing the upper floors in a manner borrowed from the precedent of its neighbour, this being paid for under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (Fig. 9). We challenged annotation that referred to the possibility of the upper floor windows being in plastic not timber but otherwise the scheme seemed benign.



Fig. 8

No.2 Victoria Place, Haverford West,
existing elevation.



Fig. 9

No.2 Victoria Place, Haverford West,
proposed elevation.

THE ASHES WEDDING CENTRE, ENDON, STOKE ON TRENT

The Ashes is one of the finest examples of a farmstead in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The deeds go back to 1570 although the present fabric is slightly later.

It is surrounded by a set of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century outbuildings including cowsheds, bullpen, stable, barns and a cartshed with granary over. These are all listed Grade II, the farmhouse itself, Grade II*. Everything remains in single ownership but two substantial cowhouses or shippens, the bullpen and the cartshed have been adapted as part of an exclusive wedding and hospitality venue, which opened for business in May 2008. At present the junction between the two main buildings, providing shelter for the bride before she enters the ceremony room, is marked by an open structure in galvanised steel with vinyl roof and side panels (see Fig. 10). There is more than a touch of ad hocery. Now the owners have approached CTD Architects of Leek to design a more permanent replacement. The present dwarf wall in matured masonry would stay but the new structure is in painted steel with glazing over (see Fig. 11). Much of it will remain open. We thought that the designers had risen to the challenge of a difficult brief and we raised no concerns.



Fig. 10
The Ashes Wedding Centre, Endon, existing.



Fig. 11
The Ashes Wedding Centre, Endon, proposed.

THE WICKETS, BOUGHTON PARK, BOUGHTON, NORTHANTS

The first thing to say about this case is that this Boughton, if we can be forgiven for saying so, is not the famous Northamptonshire Boughton – the great house of the Duke of Buccleuch. The Wickets is a mid-eighteenth century house (formerly two) built in the local ironstone and with a view from the rear into Boughton Park, the estate of the Earls of Strafford and Wentworth (where the present house of 1844 is by William Burn). We were consulted in September on a scheme to demolish an inappropriate single-storey extension built only five years ago and construct a replacement in local stone of two storeys composed externally of two overlapping gables (Figs 12 and 13). The Wickets was intended to double as an eye-catcher from the park with its fake crenellations and a single ogee-headed Gothick window to the north elevation (which does not appear to be *in situ*). The latter was resited as part of the present scheme. Concern had been expressed over the greater prominence of the new wing from the Park but the AMS Casework Committee felt that this was not a matter for disquiet, as the newcomer seemed to fit well with the character and composition of the listed building. Late in 2009 the french window proposed for the new northern gable was reduced in size.

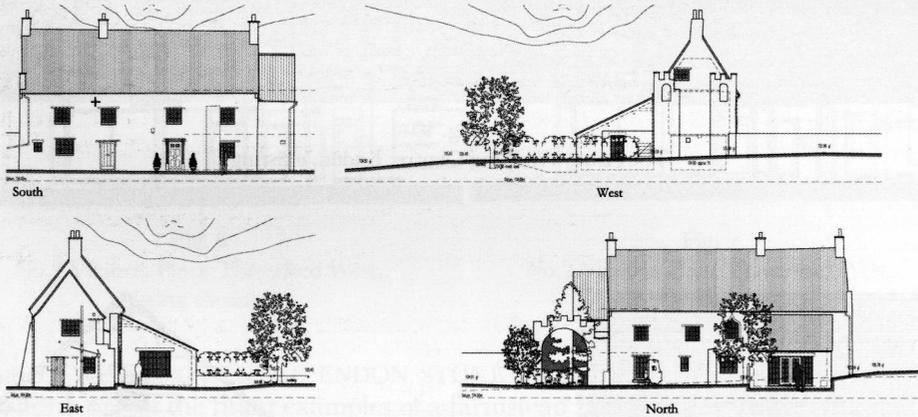


Fig. 12
The Wickets, Boughton, existing.

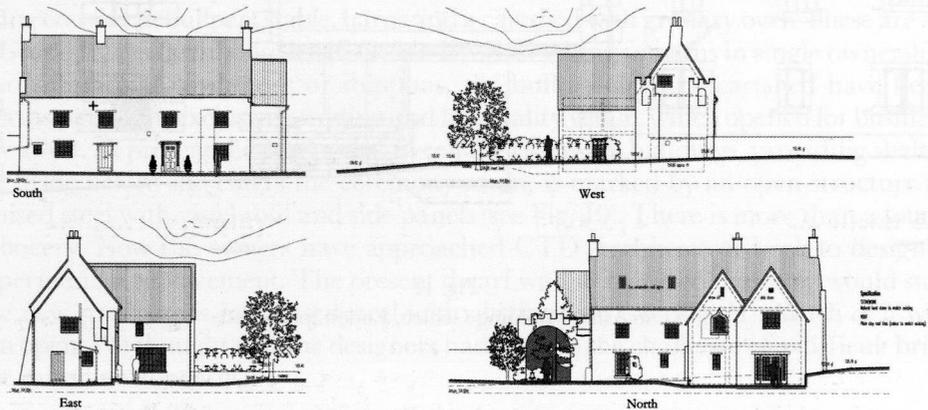


Fig. 13
The Wickets, Boughton, proposed.

NO. 4 MARKET PLACE, NORTH WALSHAM, NORFOLK



Fig. 14

No.4 Market Place, North Walsham, existing north elevation.

This is the story of a townscape reinstated. The site lies right in the heart of North Walsham and concerns the pleasing jumble of buildings which used to close the view down Market Street on one side and frame the churchyard on the other. A fine eighteenth-century building on the latter site came down in the 1950s and was replaced, in joyless utilitarianism, by the banal public convenience shown on the left, and set back, in Figure 14. This drawing gives the present position. It also shows a blank expanse at the other end of the sequence which was occupied until 2007 by the modest and altered No. 4 Market Place, listed less for its intrinsic qualities than for its group value. It had been intended to keep it but it came down under a Dangerous Structures Notice. Now the local architectural practice of Reynolds Jury, acting for the owner, Mazpro Ltd, is proposing to heal the townscape at both ends. Figure 15 portrays their intentions for the site of No. 4 – an approximation but not a replica of what has been lost with, it has to be said, a great improvement in the design of the shop-front. They also introduce a harmless, indeed welcome, eccentricity in the design of the segmental arch over the first and second floor windows (something repeated on all the new build). The slight sprocketing at the eaves is



Fig. 15

No.4 Market Place, North Walsham, proposed west elevation.



Fig. 16
No. 4 Market Place, North Walsham,
proposed east elevation.

new. There was little evidence of the town house that used to face the church, but we thought that the risk of arid Neo-Georgian was avoided by the subtle variation in window size, the slight asymmetry and the utilisation of 'soft reds' for the bricks laid in lime mortar (see Fig. 16). We urged the avoidance of a Stretcher Bond. The public toilets are to be rehoused in the left-hand room on the ground floor (and accessed from a door at the side). The last drawing (Fig. 17) gives the view that will serve as the counterpart, after completion, to that in Figure 14. One common element is the 1820s doorcase within the truncated single-bay three-storey block that is subsumed together with the sash above into the new town house. The retained three-bay two-storey block adjacent loses a terrible fake bow-window and two neighbours that are little better on the ground floor to permit

two new traditional shop-fronts. The shell is re-rendered in lime. As we have shown in some of the other cases illustrated in this piece, there is a place for the frankly modern in historic contexts but it would be a drab society that did not recognise the parallel need for some exercises in considered but not slavish emulation rather than deliberate, if neighbourly, contrast. We thought that this was a case where contextualism worked. Planning permission has been granted



Fig. 17
No. 4 Market Place, North Walsham, proposed north elevation.

GRANGE COURT, LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE

In 1855 Leominster Market House was taken down and rebuilt a few hundred yards away, becoming Grange Court, a gentleman's residence (Fig. 18). Its public use was reclaimed in 1939 by Leominster Council and it has since been the home of the council offices. In 2009 there were proposals for substantial remodelling of the Grange and new building in its setting. The architectural significance of the building is twofold. First, the original building of 1633, by the carpenter John Abel, is remarkable both for its formal composition and its exuberant detail and inscriptions. In 1846 John Clayton, in *A Collection of the Ancient Timber Edifices of England*, described it as 'without doubt the most interesting building of the kind remaining in the kingdom'. Its recognition as an outstanding monument did not save it on its site in central Leominster but did lead John Arkwright, owner of the nearby Hampton Court, to rescue the building and move it to a new site with a new use. The changes made then (and some more after a fire in 1909, which include terracotta panels by the local sculptor Storr Barber, see Figure 19) allow Abel's design and craftsmanship to be appreciated but give the building a domestic character, especially inside. The mid-nineteenth-century conversion is well documented and Grange Court's character as a Victorian gentleman's residence is part of its special interest

Improved public access can be welcomed. But the Society joined the Victorian Society in expressing concern that the manner in which it was to be provided meant



Fig. 18
Grange Court, Leominster.

the destruction of much of what gave Grange Court its present character, including its present main staircase. This was no simple case of removal of later fabric in the interests of the reinstatement of original form for there is no attempt to reinstate the Market Hall. The present building exemplifies a characterful fusion of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries which will be lost, but leaving Grange Court as neither one thing nor the other. We regret that the Secretary of State did not feel it appropriate to intervene.

The Ancient Monuments Society owes its origins in part to the concerns of its founder, John Swarbrick, about buildings being moved; in the 1920s the rebuilding of Agecroft Hall, Lancashire, in Richmond, Virginia, USA, was one of Swarbrick's early

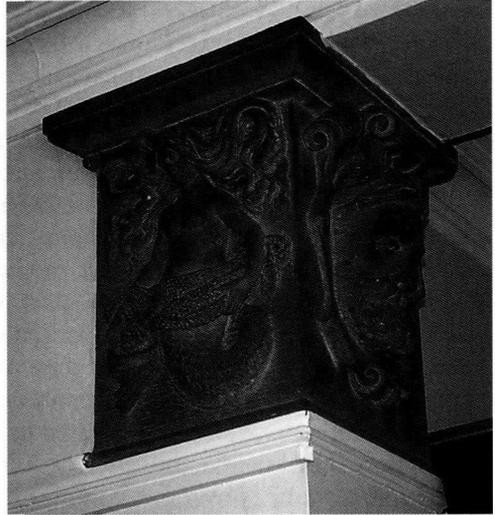


Fig. 19

Grange Court, Leominster, terracotta panel.



Fig. 20

Grange Court, Leominster, main staircase.

concerns. Rebuilding on another site is sometimes put forward as mitigation when demolitions are proposed, especially in major infrastructure projects such as airport runways. We would like to gather examples of historic translations comparable to that of Grange Court (not those to open air museums) where a moved building is now listed on its new site. S. W. Daukes' church moved from central London to Kingsbury or Grayson and Ould's Hill Bark, moved across the Wirral, are examples of nineteenth-century buildings so treated, but it must be more common for earlier buildings. Readers are asked to send information to the Society's office.

We are grateful to Duncan James for reporting on this case and allowing us to use his photographs.

ECCLESIASTICAL CASES

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, BARMOUTH, GWYNEDD

Holidaymakers making their happy way through central Barmouth may occasionally look away from the sea. When they do so, they will see a mighty church in the town's higher reaches, tucked so deep into the hillside that its north side is close up against the hewn rock of the cliff (Figs 21 and 22). The new Pevsner for Gwynedd has no doubt in proclaiming St John's as 'one of the most splendid churches of Gwynedd'. It was built between 1889 and 1895 to the designs of the great John Douglas of Chester (as Douglas and Fordham), the money coming from Mrs Perrins, widow of the man who gave the world Worcester Sauce. The building is appreciated (and the subject of grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund) but, following a clear trend, the parish wish to reduce the amount of masonry for which they are responsible by selling the rather delicate Church Hall of 1910, which is almost certainly also the work of Douglas. Whilst such retrenchment may have its own logic, the Hall shares the church grounds and the two were clearly designed to be complementary. And already smashed windows at the Hall do not augur well. If it has to be sold, it must be for benign conversion.

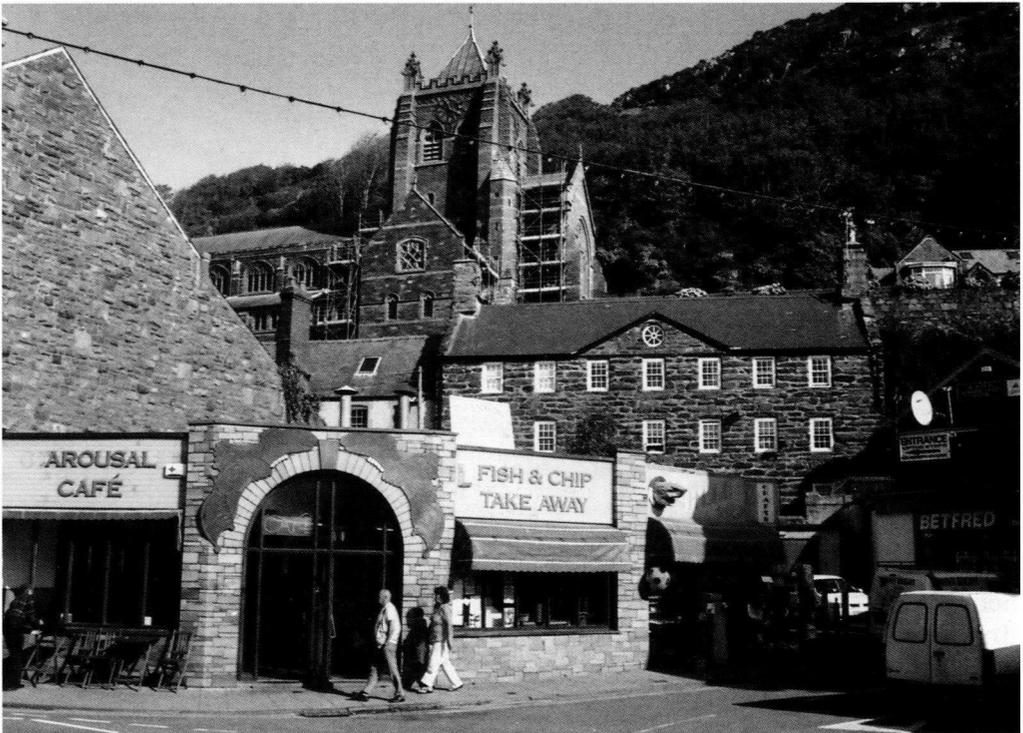


Fig. 21
St John's Church, Barmouth.

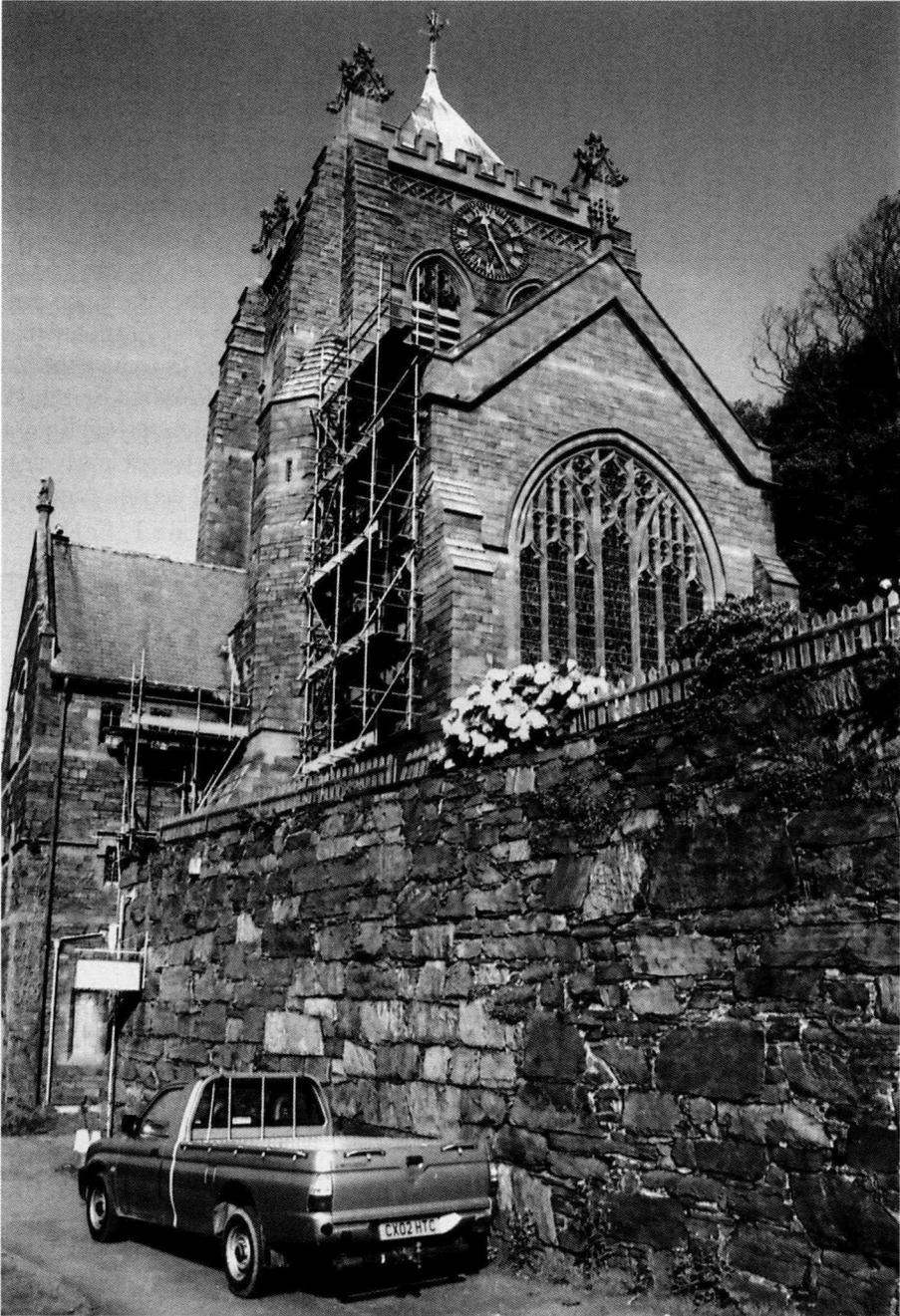


Fig. 22
St John's Church, Barmouth.

ST WILFRID'S RC CHURCH, RIPON, WEST YORKSHIRE
This extremely powerful design (Fig. 23), with its dramatic quasi-octagonal tower top-lighting the east end, dates from 1860-3 and is the work of J. A. Hansom, apparently with advice from E. W. Pugin, who provided the elaborate reredos in the chancel. In 1909, the Second Marquis of Ripon donated his father's altarpiece from Studley Park, which is now located in the south aisle. The church is one of only four in the Catholic diocese of Leeds to be listed Grade II*.

We were consulted in October 2009 on a proposal of repair and reordering, the latter trying to undo some of the damage occasioned by the Second Vatican Council. We commented on the detailing. Approval in principle was granted by the Historic Churches Committee of the diocese.

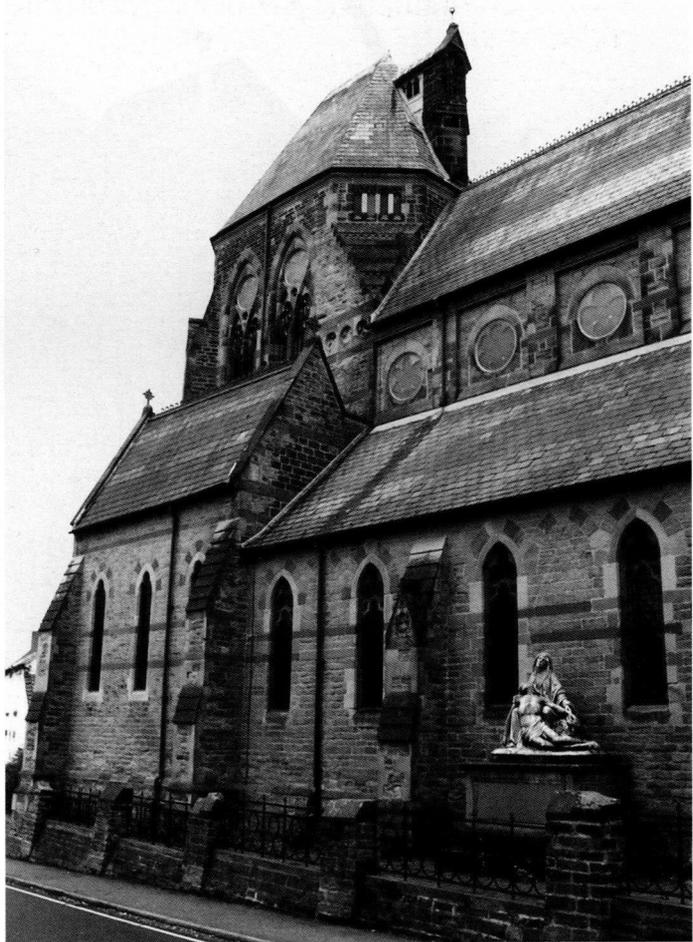


Fig. 23
St Wilfrid's RC Church, Ripon.

TABERNACLE CHAPEL, POWELL STREET, ABERYSTWYTH, CEREDIGION

This Calvinistic Methodist Chapel succumbed to fire, or to put it more precisely to the Dangerous Structure Notice served on it thereafter. By the time the formal listed building consent was issued in September 2009 the building had been levelled and the application was, in effect, retrospective. Figure 24 shows it under demolition. The chapel, the fourth on the site since 1785, was designed in what its architect, Richard Owens, termed 'Italo-Lombard'. The view from the rear (Fig. 25) confirms that the architectural concentration was on the front but also serves to stress the scale of the congregation's ambition. The lie of the land allowed a vast Sunday School on the ground floor below the chapel itself. The photograph, taken soon after the fire, also makes it clear that the fire was at its most devastating at the rear. We remain very queasy that the whole building could be described



Fig. 24

Tabernacle Chapel, Aberystwyth.

as 'dangerous' and fit only for destruction rather than bracing against later repair. And yet the whole lot did come down.

The very fine War Memorial of 1923, in the chapel forecourt, the statue of a winged youth by Mario Rutelli, which is listed in its own right, was mentioned in a condition attached to the listed building consent, requiring it to be 'reinstated on its original site ... within an agreed timetable'.



Fig. 25

Tabernacle Chapel, Aberystwyth.

ST MARY'S RC CHURCH, HIGH STREET, CRICKLADE, WILTSHIRE

St Mary's (Fig. 26) is most unusual in being a medieval church that is in Catholic use. It was not that the parish somehow miraculously survived the Reformation, rather that after it was declared redundant as an Anglican church in 1981 (it is the town's second ancient parish church) the local Catholic community adopted it as their own place of worship in 1984. And it is thriving. So much so, that we



Fig. 26

St Mary's RC Church, Cricklade.

October 2009 on plans for two new low-key structures for sites within the churchyard – both located well away from the tightly limited public view of the West End from the High Street. They were for the inevitable loo but also the somewhat more surprising

'meeting space for children during mass and other times'. The great advantage of the external location, and the materials, cedar for the shell and shingles left to weather to a natural grey, is that they disappear against the trees of the churchyard. Figure 27 is of the meeting room. We felt able to acquiesce. The architects come from the Falconer Partnership of Stroud.

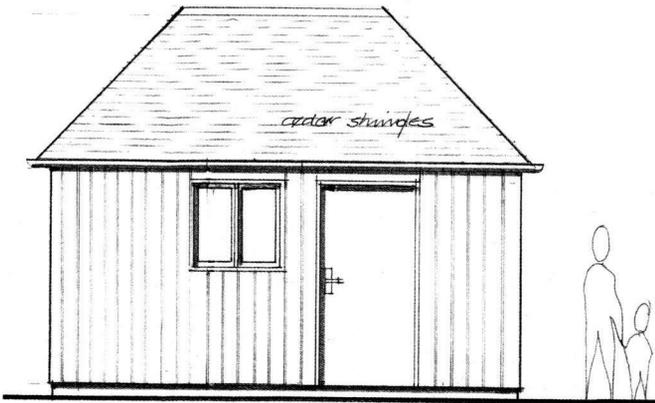


Fig. 27

St Mary's RC Church, Cricklade, proposed meeting room.

METHODIST CHAPEL, BANK STREET,
WETHERBY, YORKS

At present this chapel is a sedate design in ashlar magnesian limestone of 1829, almost domestic in its scale (Fig. 28). The congregation wish to carry out a radical internal reordering and to express that externally by a dramatically uncompromising new porch. Not only would the double doors, Chinoiserie fanlight and splayed voussoirs go, but the widening of the

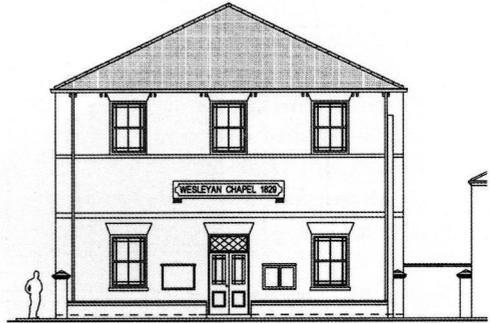


Fig. 28

Methodist Chapel, Wetherby, existing.

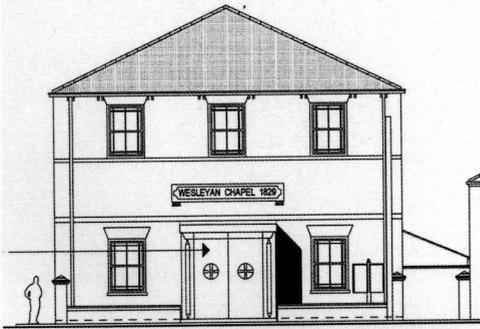


Fig. 29

Methodist Chapel, Wetherby, proposed.

aperture appears disproportionate. There is an intrinsic refinement to the new porch (architect, Stephen Potts of Potts, Parry, Ives and Young) even if some resort to cliché in the beaver-eaten tops and bottoms of the new columns (Fig. 29). But it is altogether too uncompromising, too disruptive. The Methodist Listed Buildings Committee agreed with our concerns and consent was refused.

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH, LUDGATE HILL,
CITY OF LONDON

We felt able to welcome a scheme prepared by Margaret and Richard Davies and Associates (MRDA) (Figs 30 and 31) to unpick some of the alterations carried out in 1894 to Wren's church of St Martin on the processional approach to St Paul's Cathedral. The architect on that occasion had been Ewan Christian, who, apart from altering the gallery above the entrance, also filled in, or stoned-up, the two doors either side of the central entrance. These are now to be unblocked and once more provided with doors. That to the west will access the boiler room (at sub ground level), that to the east will offer a new level entrance, thus avoiding the need to alter the central steps.

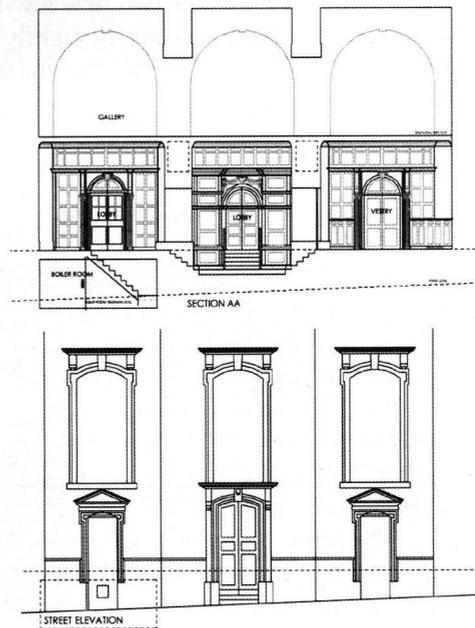


Fig. 30

St Martin's Church, Ludgate Hill, existing.

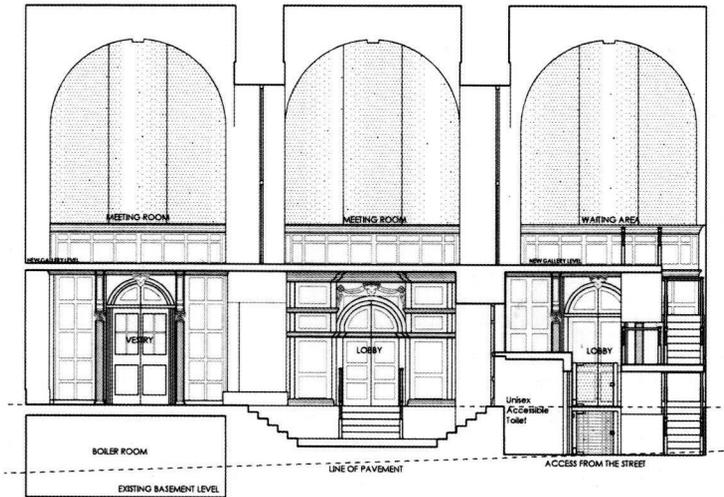


Fig. 31
St Martin's Church, Ludgate Hill, proposed.

ST HELEN'S CHURCH, WELTON,
EAST YORKSHIRE
St Helen's is a fine Grade II* listed church of ancient origin – although virtually everything seen in this photograph (Fig. 32) is by Sir George Gilbert Scott and of 1862. Even the otherwise medieval tower has a corbel table capping by him. The church now proposes an extension to his south porch to provide that ever-increasing necessity, a loo. The design, by Geoffrey Holland, was, we thought, refreshingly discreet. Had Scott received the commission it is the sort of thing that he might have done. The construction is in natural stone chosen to match, with natural slate for the roof. Scott's feel for the exuberant, in the flamboyant design of the rainwater goods, is also carried through into the new. We thought this commendably sensitive and were pleased to be able to say so (Figs 33 and 34).

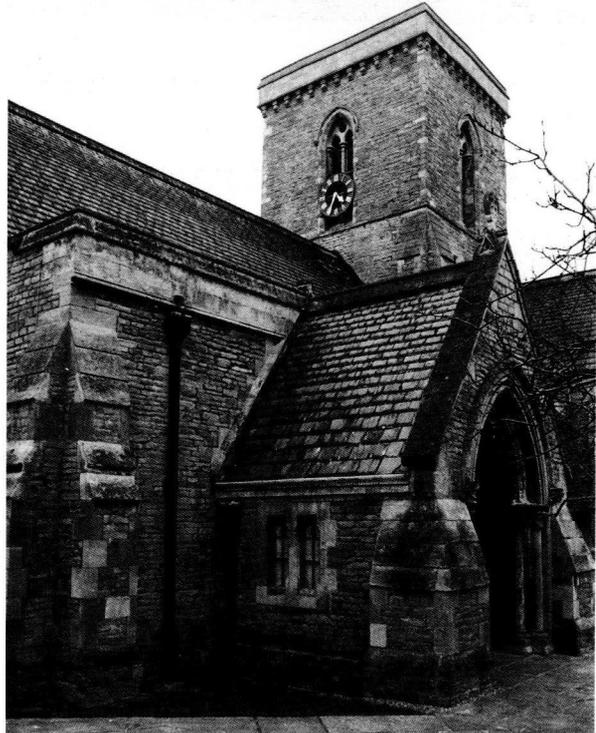


Fig. 32
St Helen's Church, Welton.

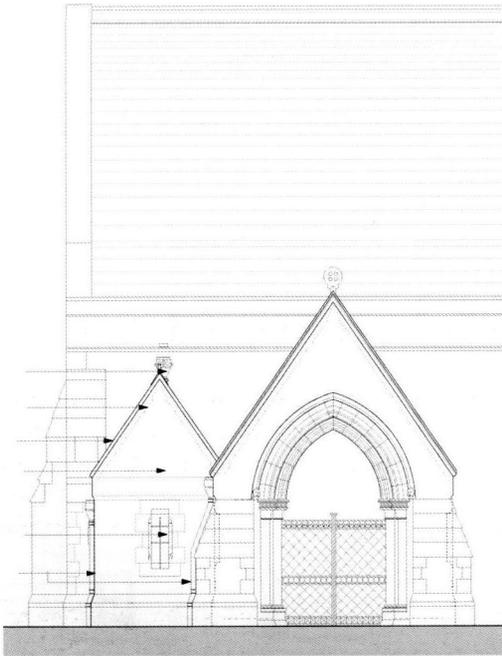


Fig. 33

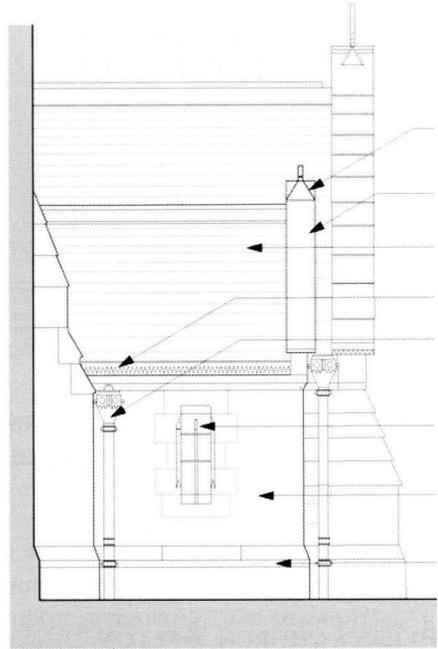


Fig. 34

St Helen's Church, Welton, proposed addition.