

The Society's Casework 1986-87: A Sample

by

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BELGRAVE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, DARWEN, LANCASHIRE
Belgrave Chapel is listed Grade II*. It won this accolade very largely because of the scale and detailing of the west front with its dramatic



Fig. 1
Belgrave Independent Chapel, Darwen, Lancashire

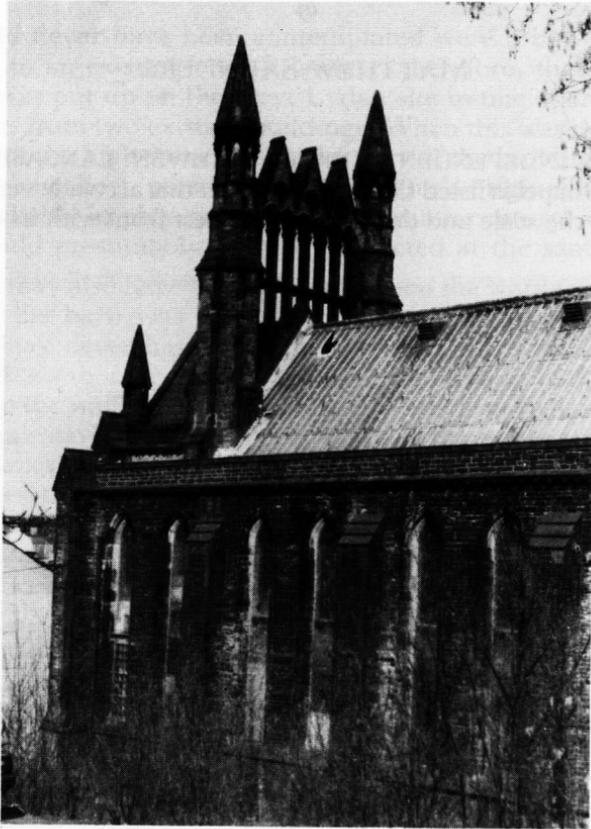


Fig. 2
Belgrave Independent Chapel, Darwen, Lancashire

porte cochère crowned by two huge pinnacles joined by an openwork screen. This extraordinary display contrasts with the far more conventional and simple Early English Gothic of the return elevations (Figs 1 and 2).

The building was opened on 21 October 1847. It was designed to accommodate 1,000 adults and 400 children and the total cost, exclusive of the purchase of the ground, was about £6,000. The architect was Edward Walters (1808-72). His most famous work is perhaps the Free Trade Hall of 1853 in Manchester.

The chapel physically abuts the huge complex owned by Crown Wall Coverings Ltd which is the principal employer in the town. For a time they had used the chapel itself (the interior having been completely remodelled in reinforced concrete, sparing only the

chancel arch and some monuments). The Company maintains the adjacent burial ground very well but decided in the summer of 1986 to apply to demolish the chapel itself. The case was called in for Public Inquiry in March 1987 and the Society gathered a great deal of evidence to be presented at the hearing. However this never took place as Crown realized they had little chance of winning consent until they could prove that they had explored all possibilities of conversion. Although disused the building is surprisingly sound.

FORMER COUNTY OFFICES, WAKEFIELD, WEST YORKSHIRE

The closure of the GLC and the six metropolitan county councils has created problems and challenges in the re-use of the offices formerly occupied by these authorities. Just such an example is the essay in spectacular late Victorian Baroque designed in 1894-98 in Wakefield for the West Riding Council by Gibson and Russell, architects of Debenham and Freebody's and the Middlesex County Offices in Parliament Square. Among the spaces released was the former Court Room (Fig. 3).

The photograph shows the dock with steps up from the cells, the witness stand, looking like a pulpit, and the particularly fine



Fig. 3
Court Room in Council Offices, Wakefield, West Yorkshire

Justices' Bench and the panelling behind. The Society was concerned at a proposal to adapt this space to provide a visual display area. Although far better than gutting, much of the room would still be broken up. Listed building consent was granted.

FORMER CLOTH FACTORY, NEW PARK STREET, DEVIZES, WILTSHIRE

This large, late Georgian, design of 1785 testifies to the source of Devizes' wealth in the eighteenth century. It also shows, particularly in the lunette windows and the cornice, (the fourth floor is later) the desire of the Anstie family, which built it, to lend Classical gravitas to their structure. Its historic and architectural importance earned the building, known latterly as 'Longs Stores', a Grade II* listing (Fig. 4).

Application was made to demolish in 1985 but swiftly refused by Kennet District Council. An Appeal was lodged but later withdrawn and in 1987 application has been made to convert the building to multiple residential occupation. Although some demolition will be required at the back this should preserve the exterior intact. It is to be hoped that the oak beams and elm joists inside can also be safeguarded.



Fig. 4

Former cloth factory, Devizes, Wiltshire
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

NUMBER 1 BISHOPGATE STREET, YORK

This building is unusual not just in its concave mini-crescent form of only three bays but its late date (1860). A date perhaps forty years earlier would have been plausible (Fig.5).

Application was submitted in February 1987 to demolish number 1, which is listed Grade II and also lies within the Central Historic Core Conservation Area of the city. Wimpey Homes proposed 138 dwellings on this site and that of adjacent unlisted buildings. Fortunately the proposal was not pressed forward and number 1 now seems to be safe.



Fig. 5
Number 1, Bishopgate, York
York City Council

TROY STATION VIADUCT, MONMOUTH

An aerial photograph of *c.*1930 shows this substantial viaduct striding across the River Wye and the Wye Valley with Monmouth in the background. It was built by the Coleford, Monmouth, Usk and Pontypool Railway Company and finished by February 1861. There were twenty-three stone arches each of thirty feet width and a span over the river itself in wrought iron of some 150 feet, designed by T.W. Kennard, engineer to the great Crumlin Viaduct of 1857 (Fig. 6).

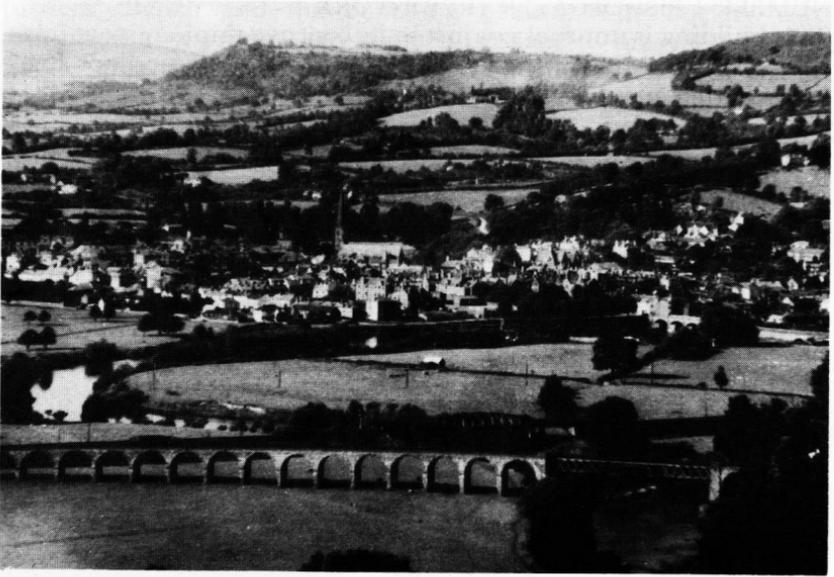


Fig. 6
Troy Station Viaduct, Monmouthshire

To some, viaducts must seem eyesores; to others they are dramatic incidents in the landscape and important evidence in the history of civil engineering. This particular example was proposed for complete demolition in 1986 by British Rail. The station building itself at Troy had already been sold in 1985 to the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway Group to be re-erected at Winchcombe. Monmouth District Council served a Building Preservation Notice but Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments) recommended against confirmation. By the time these *Transactions* are read the structure will no doubt have been destroyed.

BARN, BOOTH HALL FARM, IPSTONES, STAFFORDSHIRE

This is one of the longest running cases of recent years. Successive applications to demolish in whole or part prompted by partial collapse, a fire and partial disuse were at first supported by the local authority then opposed by it. As long ago as February 1983 the Secretary of State pronounced in favour of retention but at the time of writing nothing definite has been completed on site (Fig. 7).

The unrevised listing schedule dates the barn to the seventeenth century although some of the internal timbers in the roof may well be earlier. The external shell is in stone and retains doorways with chamfered lintels.



Fig. 7

Barn, Booth Hill Farm, Ipstones, Staffordshire
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

PLATTS HALL, WORKS LANE, NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE

Platts Hall, dated 1655 externally, has the misfortune to lie immediately adjacent to ICI's huge Lostock Works. In August 1986 application was made to dismantle and re-erect the building in the town centre of Pontefract in West Yorkshire adjacent to an indigenous half-timbered structure. The cluster chimneys either side of the gabled dormer would be rebuilt to their full height and the twentieth century half-glazed door removed. The two-storey early nineteenth-century brick wing to the rear would be demolished and not re-erected. This scheme was promoted by Malcolm Lister RIBA assisted by David Michelmore, a nationally acknowledged expert on timber framing (Fig. 8).

The alienation of an historic structure from its original setting is necessarily a controversial matter. This is particularly so where the re-erected structure (if in use rather than an exhibit in a museum) is considered to be a new structure and therefore made to comply with modern building and health regulations on window sizes, staircase angles and ceiling heights. Nevertheless resiting of timber-framed barns and houses was by no means uncommon in the Middle Ages so it cannot be denounced as another conservation fad of the twentieth century.



Fig. 8
Platts Hall, Northwich, Cheshire
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

CRIMBLE MILL, CRIMBLE LANE, HEYWOOD, LANCASHIRE

Although bearing the inscription, 1886, this mill certainly seems to pre-date the 1840s. Like so many of the building type it is a landmark in the area and was in fact chosen for the poster at the recent exhibition held by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit on Mills in Greater Manchester. The drawing is taken from the poster (Fig. 9).

The previous application to demolish submitted in 1983 was refused by the Secretary of State in the following year. Following a second application a further Public Inquiry was convened for July 1987 but never took place as the applicants withdrew. The Society's doughtiest fighter in the North-West, Brian Blayney, ARIBA, FLI, had intended to represent us. We entered into direct contact with the owners of the Mill in the Autumn to help in reaching an amicable solution to the problem.

THE CHAPEL, DONINGTON HALL, CASTLE CONINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE

Donington Hall used to possess one of the finest private chapels of its date, designed, like the house, by William Wilkins the Elder in 1790-93. The photo shows the beginning of the effects of water

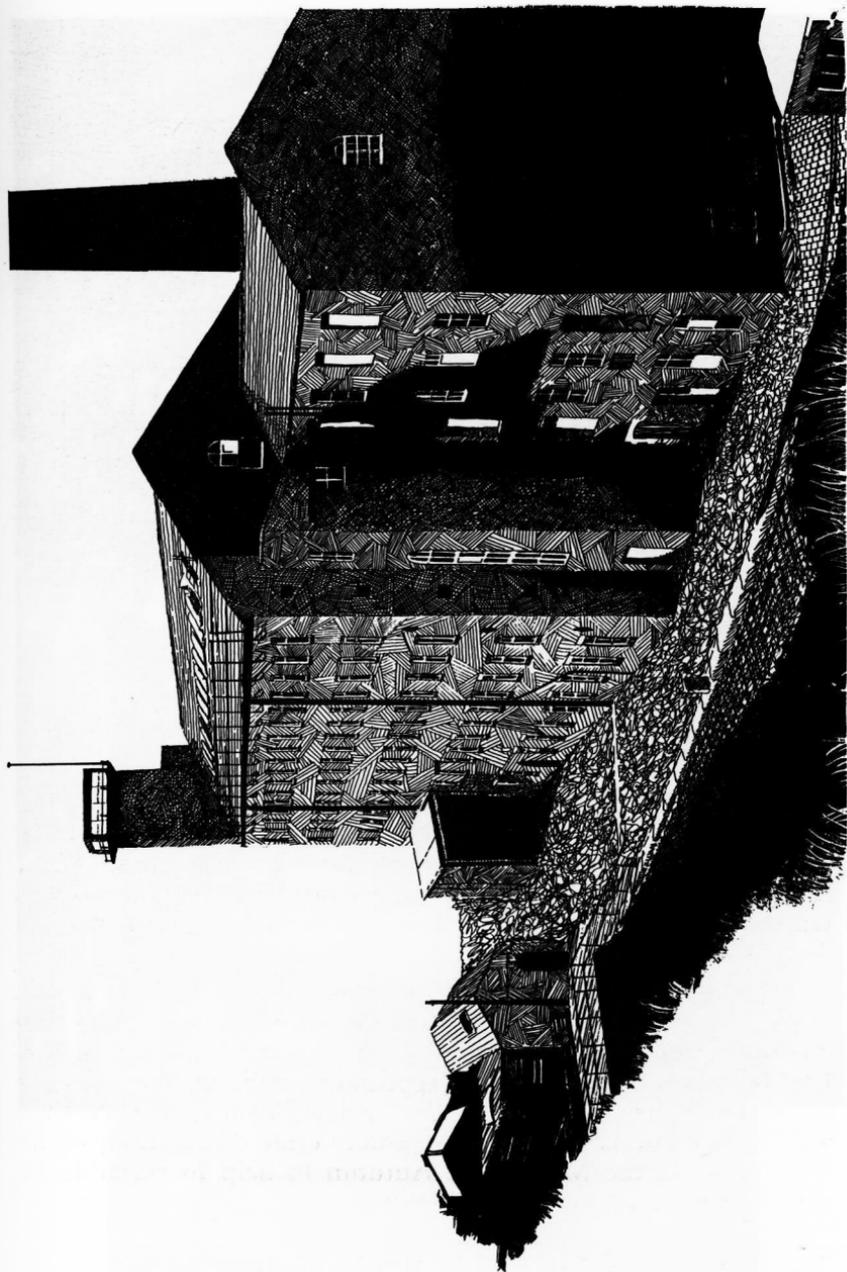


Fig. 9
Crimble Mill, Heywood, Lancashire



Fig. 10
The Chapel, Donington Hall, Leicestershire
Christopher Dalton

penetration and dry rot which soon rampaged through the building, crumbling the delicate plasterwork and destroying many of the armatures around which it was moulded. In 1984 the Secretary of State reluctantly gave listed building consent for a scheme to strip out the interior, remove and rebuild the roof and insert a small mezzanine floor. The Inspector had recommended a delay in the decision until a solution put forward by the Ancient Monuments Society, that would have involved far less destruction could be explored, but this was rejected. Three years later that scheme had still not been carried out (Fig. 10).

In 1987 the owners of the Hall, British Midland Airways who use it as their offices, came back with a revised proposal to provide a staff canteen within the remaining shell complete with goldfish bowl lights, a suspended open grid ceiling and seats in the sanctuary. The western screen, one roof bay and the east end including the sixteenth-century Flemish stained glass window were earmarked for retention although the former would be resited. The Society remained distressed at this approach and entered direct discussions with the applicants' architect.

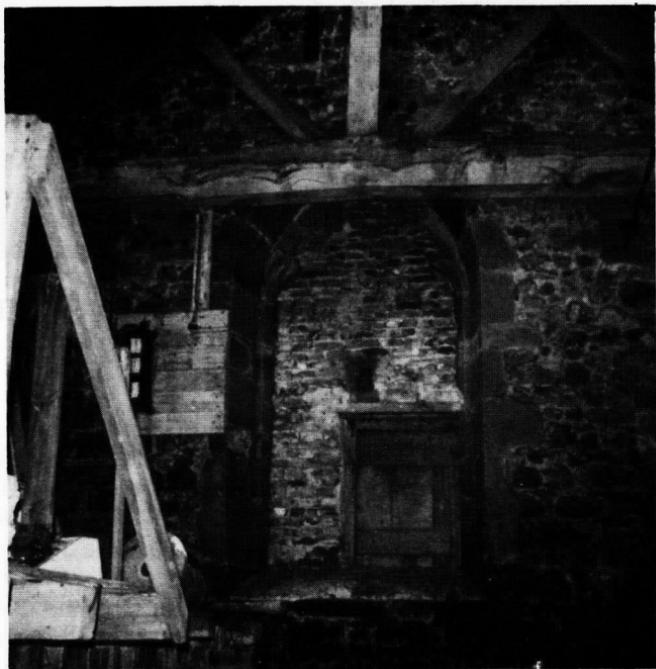


Fig. 11
Former chapel, Thrintoft Grange, North Yorkshire
Former East Window



Fig. 12
Former chapel, Thrintoft Grange, North Yorkshire
Piscina in the south wall

FORMER CHAPEL, THRINTOFT GRANGE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

This building, in a state of extreme dilapidation, incorporates a substantial amount of early medieval stonework, particularly a simply detailed piscina and south doorway. After a Public Inquiry in 1983 listed building consent to demolish was refused but as far as we are aware the building remains in a parlous state (Figs 11 and 12).

BARCOMBE HOUSE, PAIGNTON, DEVON

This particularly eclectic villa of 1838 designed by Edward Davies (died 1852), a pupil of Sir John Soane, has been repeatedly refused the protection of listing by the Department. Fortunately it seems that the local planners have been successful in persuading a development company to build on the grounds alone and keep the villa, but the building can still be demolished at any time. Its Classical Italianate and Gothic dress is enlivened by the use of the rich red local stone for the shell with white stone for the trim (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13
Barcombe House, Paignton, Devon

BENTALL'S DEPARTMENT STORE, KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES, SURREY

One of the grandest department stores in London, designed in 1931-35 by Maurice Webb in what Pevsner termed 'Hampton Court Wrenaissance'. Following a proposal to gut the interior which includes a neo seventeenth-century staircase lined with portraits of the Bentall family, a request was made for the building to be listed. The D.o.E. has, however, decided against (Fig. 14).

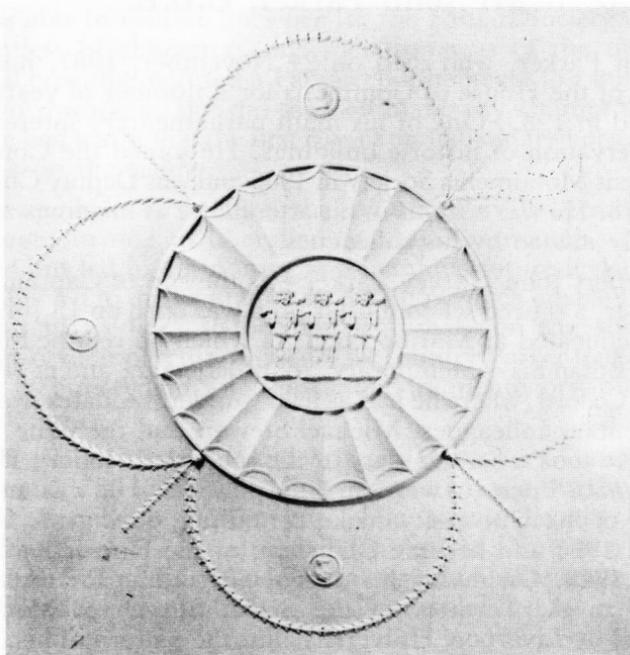


Fig. 14
Bentall's, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey

PATELEY BRIDGE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

No doubt it is sometimes imagined that the raw material for the study of historic buildings is finite. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. Almost every day brings new clues to the dating and design of buildings in long concealed or long forgotten features.

One such recent discovery, completely unsuspected behind an unprepossessing cottage—like exterior was this fine plaster ceiling denoting the former courtroom of this small town. Three matching putti each with a wreath around the midriff, carrying a cudgel and with a coat of arms with cross on its stomach, lie at the centre of a symmetrical pattern. Identical roundels with Classical heads in relief are placed at the centre of four encircling lobes (Figs 15 and 16).



Figs 15 & 16
The fine plaster ceiling at Pateley Bridge, North Yorkshire

