



**THE
GEORGIAN
GROUP**

ANNUAL
REPORT
2008



THE GEORGIAN GROUP

The Georgian Group was founded in 1937 to protect and preserve Georgian buildings, monuments, parks and gardens; to stimulate public knowledge of Georgian architecture and town planning; and to promote appreciation of the classical tradition. Its aims and objectives are set out in its governing constitution. The Group runs a case-work programme in England and Wales, fulfilling a statutory duty to advise planning authorities on applications to alter or demolish listed Georgian buildings. It also runs activities for its members which are supplemented by public lectures, seminars and publications. The Group depends on subscriptions, donations and bequests to undertake its work. New members are always welcome. If you are interested in joining, please either ask us for a membership form or download one from www.georgiangroup.org.uk

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, at Christie's in November 2008 for the presentation of The Georgian Group Architectural Awards. He is flanked by (l-r) Mrs Sentamu, Lord Crathorne, Lady Nutting and Lady Crathorne.

Cover: The restored Darnley Mausoleum at Cobham Hall in north Kent. The Georgian Group contributed its largest ever grant towards the restoration project. See page 19 (Photo: Robert Bargery)

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Chairman's foreword

Lady Nutting OBE

2008, the year after our own Platinum Jubilee, saw two further significant anniversaries: the quincentenary of Palladio's birth (on 30 November) and the sixtieth birthday of our Patron, The Prince of Wales (on 14 November). Both being highly worthy of commemoration, we organised a unique two-week Palladio Quincentenary Festival in November, as part of which The Prince of Wales presented the prizes for our measured architectural drawing competition.



We had several motivations in holding this competition. We wanted to celebrate His Royal Highness's birthday and, in doing so, honour his huge achievements in keeping alive and reviving traditional skills and rebuilding respect for traditional wisdom. Where many people would have said their piece and moved on, he has time and again backed up his words with actions that do practical good. The example he has set us all by his hard work, selfless devotion to duty and unswerving practical commitment to helping young people and nurturing talent is remarkable. As a nation, we have a great deal to thank him for.

We wanted to reward excellence and encourage drawing skills in young people. We know that *older* architects and draughtsmen, schooled in traditional methods, have the skills for the difficult and challenging art of measured architectural drawing. But young people have been schooled differently. How many had the necessary skill, dedication and patience?

And we wanted to encourage the understanding and close study of historic buildings, which as we know have enough depth to them to merit such study and enough layers to reveal more of themselves with each reading. But like many such ventures, this competition was a leap of faith. We had no idea whether, or how well, it would work. At the Royal Fine Art Commission, on which I served, we ran a project called Learning to See. We knew, and still know, that most people can *look* at buildings. But *seeing* build-

ings is a skill of a different order. For this competition we needed people who could see.

In the event, we need not have worried. A large number of high quality entries came in, some from people who were clearly relieved to have found an official outlet for skills that they might have been told were outdated and unfashionable in an age dominated by computer-aided drawing. They are neither of those things. The meticulousness, precision, discipline and dedication of those who entered deserves high praise. And I can say with gratitude that in having the conviction to organise the competition, we were in no small way following a path that The Prince of Wales, as founder of his own drawing school and longtime proponent of traditional arts, had opened for us.

Lady Nutting with HRH The Prince of Wales at the presentation ceremony for the Georgian Group Measured Architectural Drawing Prize, held at The Ritz in Piccadilly in November 2008.

Scraptoft Hall on the eastern edge of Leicester, showing the extent of recent deterioration.

As a statutory consultee in England and Wales, The Georgian Group is consulted annually on around six thousand applications to alter or demolish listed buildings dating from 1700–1840. Many of our concerns, where we have them, are dealt with satisfactorily through discussions with owners and architects at pre-planning stage, and we always try to encourage such early dialogue. At the other extreme, a few cases are pursued to public inquiry. Summarised below is a representative sample of cases reviewed in 2008.

Country Houses

Scraptoft Hall, on the eastern edge of Leicester, remained firmly on our radar in 2008. A late seventeenth century country house altered and recased in around 1720, it had been converted to university use after the Second World War but was now disused and decaying with clear evidence of vandalism which, though petty, was persistent enough to be having a significant cumulative effect. At the same time, the setting had been badly degraded with the building of a large housing estate on the former campus. In this kind of case the best answer is usually to get the property back into use and it can be tempting to jump at the first opportunity that presents itself; tempting, but sometimes misguided. Here we were faced with a proposed conversion to a 97-bed care home allied to demolition and rebuilding of the service range, conversion of the remaining outbuildings and further extensive new building in the grounds. The effect would have been ruinous, a blighting of the historic building masquerading as salvation. In our view, no scheme which was financially dependent on such a massive new development could seriously be regarded as optimal viable use. English Heritage responded to our request for backing and a public inquiry was held in 2009, the outcome of which is awaited at the time of writing.

There were superficial parallels at **Baron Hill** at Beaumaris on the **Isle of Anglesey**: also seventeenth century with eighteenth century additions, also derelict and also proposed for conversion to residential use. Here, though, the proposals



were much more attuned to the needs of the house and we welcomed the prospect of a return to beneficial use, while advising that restoration needed to be linked to a proper management plan for the (currently unregistered) landscape. A key concern was how access to the house would be achieved. The plan involved cutting a new route through the landscape but we recommended reinstatement of the original drive, for which the entrance gates survived.

Impact on setting was also a key issue at **Ruperra Castle** in **Glamorgan**, a 1626 house remodelled after a fire in 1785. In 2002 we objected to a scheme to build new houses within the grounds and in 2008 consent was refused for a modified scheme despite a recommendation of approval at officer level. Following an appeal by the applicant, a public inquiry

Whitson Court



was due to be held in 2009. At **Ruthin Castle** in **Denbighshire**, we opposed a scheme for fifteen cabins in the grounds. The poorly-designed enabling development proposed at **Bengeo Hall**, **Hertford** seemed to us to be unnecessary and very possibly a risk to the future viability of the house as a single private dwelling. It was unclear to us why a house that had been both occupied and in good condition in 2002 had been allowed to deteriorate so rapidly, especially as it was an eminently manageable small country house in an attractive location on the edge of an affluent commuter village.

A mixed bag of proposed extensions and alterations to country houses came before us in 2008. **Langley Park** in **Buckinghamshire**, 1750s by Stiff Leadbetter for the third Duke of Marlborough, was latterly a corporate headquarters before lying empty. In 2007 we successfully objected to a scheme for a major extension in order to form an hotel; now, a year later, a substantially identical scheme was submitted and again we objected on the grounds that a proper marketing exercise was needed to establish the scope for other, more viable, uses.

Smaller extensions were planned at **Whitson Court** in **Monmouthshire**, probably by Keck and completed by Nash, where a new pool house was proposed on the site of a demolished Victorian conservatory, as part of a broadly well-considered restoration scheme. We recommended housing

the pool within the shell of a derelict pavilion to avoid eroding the symmetry of the house. At **Rushford Hall** in **Euston, Suffolk**, listed as early eighteenth century but probably a reworking of an earlier building, we raised no objection to the demolition of a later conservatory and the erection of an orangery on a slightly different site, while at **Farnley Hall** in **Yorkshire**, motivated by a desire to preserve the integrity of a fine nine-bay blind arcade, we suggested modifications to a proposal (later withdrawn) to convert the coach house into a residence. When the owners of **Cannon Hall**, also in **Yorkshire** and like Farnley Hall by Carr of York, proposed a lift rising through the full height of the central block, we acknowledged that the least damaging and most practical option had been chosen but nevertheless believed that the scheme would damage the interiors; it was possible in our judgement that decorative seventeenth century or earlier plasterwork might have survived above the present much lower mid-Georgian ceiling line and on that basis recommended investigative work to allow a properly-informed assessment of the plans.

A particularly unusual proposal involved the re-erection of part of **Burnaston House** in **Derbyshire**, built in the 1820s for Ashton Nicholas Moseley but dismantled in 1990 to make way for a Toyota motor plant, in spite of our strong objections. All the stones were numbered and stored with a view to reconstruction once a suitable site had been found. In 1993, permission was refused to rebuild it on a site in Etwall and the fabric was sold to a Japanese company which wanted to rebuild it in Tokyo as a golf club house. After this proposal fell through, the company which had dismantled the house bought it back and sought to re-erect the main block in Repton, Derbyshire. We welcomed this, on condition that it was undertaken in a scholarly manner using the copious records put together at the time of demolition, but noted that the chosen site was within the grounds of a demolished country house known as Repton Park, whose designed landscape largely survived. The project needed to respect, and ideally enhance and restore, the surviving elements of the landscape. Also broadly welcome in principle was the proposal by the Field Studies Council to convert for residential use the derelict Georgian banqueting tower at



Orielton

Puttenham Priory



Orielton near **Pembroke**. Primarily of brick with Bath stone dressings, it was now roofless and floorless and remarkably was recorded as being so in the middle of the nineteenth century. Even so, the exposed interior retained fragments of fielded plaster panels and echoes of its original splendour, and the tower was given statutory protection in 1970 as one of the most important folly buildings in South Wales. Having been derelict for so long, it could perhaps have been a candidate for preservation as a stabilised ruin, but we accepted conversion with the caveat that the works should be undertaken with a light touch and care taken to preserve the patina that added considerably to the tower's distinction and charm.

It is not only changes to the fabric of a listed building that require special permission, of course. Any alteration to its character requires listed building consent and that can include repainting the outside, as at **Puttenham Priory** near **Guildford** in Surrey, which was made over in a shade of fuchsia, with drab detailing, without the necessary authority. Guildford Borough Council, having determined on enforcement action, asked our advice on the historically correct colour scheme. The use of stucco offered a useful clue; here, as elsewhere, it was a device to imitate dressed stone, with a colour wash added to enhance the *trompe l'oeil* effect. Picking out details such as pilasters and string courses is a modern affectation.

Churches

Proposals to reorder churches to improve access or add community facilities continue to come forward in significant numbers. Allowance obviously needs to be made for the fact that these are working buildings with space requirements that to some extent change over time, although not in our view so significantly that radical reordering is automatically justified. The quality of architecture and fittings is highly variable and so each case is taken on its merits. At the **United Reformed Church in Castle Square, Wisbech, 1818** but extensively altered, we raised no objection to the creation of a community centre in the basement of the church, although had the raw material been finer we might have had reservations about the detail of the proposals, which included new PVC windows. We also had no difficulty with plans to reorder the nave at **Holy Trinity Church in Portland Street, Cheltenham (1820–3 by GA Underwood with an interior partly stripped in 1996)**, or to the principle of an extension, although the design as presented was objectionable in that it entailed obscuring the front elevation of the church. We reacted with equanimity to the plans to install a kitchen, loo and office at **St Alkmund's Church in Shrewsbury (partly 1795 by Carline and Tilley)**, where an exemplary restoration of the fabric has taken place in parallel. And at **St Mary's Old Church in Hackney, East London (restored and refurnished by Charles Barry in 1827–9 but bomb-damaged in the Blitz)** we had no objection in principle to the demolition of the post war north aisle but objected strongly to the removal of the box pews, a relatively rare survival. We were also unequivocal on this point at **St Michael's Church, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire, where the impressively complete nave fittings of c1830 were threatened by the necessary removal of the box pews to allow treatment of dry rot underneath. How many should be reinstated? All of them, in our view.**

Sometimes the level of intervention seems disproportionate to the perceived need that is being met. At **St James's Church in Teignmouth, Devon, a fine octagonal creation of 1817–21 by WE Rolfe, a pupil of Soane's**, we suggested that it would be possible to insert a toilet in the stair hall without removing the stair itself. We also noted with disquiet future plans to subdivide the interior to create a servery and circulation



area and put a glazed addition on the south porch. Our concerns were equally all-enveloping at **Holy Trinity Church on Clapham Common, London (1774–6 by Kenton Couse)**, where we objected in principle to the planned erection of a glazed extension at the east end and to the insertion of two new gallery staircases (on top of the four that already existed). The proposal to place the pulpit on wheels found no greater favour. In spite of attempts to address our concerns, we felt that proposals to subdivide **St John the Evangelist in Dewsbury Moor, Yorkshire (1823–27 by Thomas Taylor)** in order to provide meeting rooms, a play-group area, storage and loos were too intrusive for us to do other than object.

The detailing of exterior works is important. How complementary and harmonious are they? Not very, we felt, at **St John Smith Square in Westminster (Thomas Archer, 1728)**, where disabled access was proposed by means of an external platform lift enclosed by a glass balustrade. Views from the Thames to the riverside elevation of the church are a key introduction to one of the finest squares in London and a glass balustrade would in our judgement have been alien, both in the context of a Grade I stone church and in the context of Marshall Sissons' mid twentieth century restoration, which carefully meshed with Archer's and strove to avoid discordant notes. Our preference was for elegant stone balustrading and piers, ideally as part of a scheme to reinstate the iron railings which once encircled the church. This seemed to us to be a much more durable solution — concern about the plans as they stood arose partly from the likelihood that they would soon appear jaded and dated, and more importantly that they would limit options for future restoration. At **St Mary's Church in Weymouth (also Grade I, 1815**

Left: the Octagon, St James's Teignmouth.

Public Buildings

by James Hamilton) we had objected, successfully, to proposals to replace the outer doors in glass but new plans had come forward to replace the inner doors only in glass, allied to arrangements for disabled access, kitchen facilities and enhanced external lighting. The absence of alterations to the exterior fabric was welcomed, but we registered concerns about the standard of detailed design; the proposed lighting columns, for example, were particularly crude and generic. Detailing was also key at **St James's Church, Clerkenwell, London** (1788–92 by James Carr), where we suggested that new doors planned for the narthex and entrance should be classical in design with a fanlight above. In addition, we deprecated plans to knock an opening in the churchyard wall to allow alternative visitor access to the crypt.



Bentley Priory, showing the proposed new housing development, partly on the site of temporary buildings erected by the Ministry of Defence under Crown Immunity. The Priory campanile is just visible in the centre of the picture.



The disposal of historic assets by public authorities has left many listed buildings vulnerable to unsympathetic reuse or alteration, although as a rule such buildings are flexible enough as spaces and seductive enough as architecture to attract new occupiers, so long-term abandonment can often be avoided. Some especially fine buildings have become available for reuse owing to the contraction and relocation of the military estate, among them the **Dial Arch Building** at the **Royal Arsenal, Woolwich** (1717–20, attributed to both Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor). We expressed deep concern about the implications of proposed change of use to a public house, involving as it did the erection of a poorly-designed extension and a glass atrium between the pavilion blocks. A better solution would have been to reinstate the original rear range. The departure of the Royal Air Force from **Bentley Priory in Middlesex** (1789–90 by Sir John Soane, enlarged by Robert Smirke 1810) prompted proposals for residential development in the grounds, allied to restoration and conversion of the main house to accommodate luxury apartments and a Battle of Britain museum. Our only concern internally was the proposed introduction of a glass viewing panel in the room where Lord Dowding directed Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain. More broadly, we welcomed the opening up of key approaches to the house, the preservation of views towards London across a remarkably sylvan landscape and the demolition of selected post-war **ancillary buildings erected under Crown Immunity**. This last point is important: it ought to be a basic requirement that public bodies, on leaving historic buildings, demolish any buildings that were erected without planning

Grade I St Helen's House, on the right; a glazed link was proposed to connect it to the neighbouring block.



permission. Otherwise, a development footprint is established and subsequent owners can easily replace what were conceived as temporary buildings with permanent ones, to the considerable detriment of the historic asset. In effect, they receive an uncovenanted benefit, with a significant transfer in their favour of development value that has never been sanctioned by the regular planning system.

Ancillary development was also an issue at **St Helen's House** in **Derby** (Grade I, 1762 by Joseph Pickford). Sensitive conversion of this former school, now a building at risk, to hotel use was on the whole warmly to be welcomed, indeed a rare reason for optimism in a city where stewardship of historic buildings by the local authority had as a rule been abysmal. Our reservations focussed on the extent of new housing planned for the immediate vicinity of St Helen's House, intended to finance the restoration project. The density of new development and its negative impact on the historic environment, in the sense that it necessitated the demolition of a Victorian chapel, led us to question whether it genuinely constituted enabling development. At a more detailed level, we criticised the design of the glazed link between the Pickford house and the adjoining block. As always, this was unlikely to be as unobtrusive in reality as it appeared to be on the drawings. These caveats aside, the scheme offered a bright hope for one of the finest of Derby's surviving historic buildings.

Vernacular and Rural

Listed lodges and farmhouses are often in desirable enough settings to make them sought after for higher-end residential use, but the corollary is often an extension that gives enough square footage to meet the expectations of the new owners. Unless handled with skill and delicacy, this expansion can overwhelm the host building and compromise its special interest. Such cases come up every year and in 2008, to take a fairly representative example, we joined other conservation groups in objecting to a proposed extension to **Manor Farmhouse** in **Hardwick, Northamptonshire** (altered c1775).

Slightly different challenges confronted other, similar buildings, some of which had been allowed to fall into disrepair and were therefore especially vulnerable to unsympathetic proposals purporting to offer salvation. Two **Lancashire** cases in this category came to us in 2008. An overscaled, two-storey addition, part of a nursing home extension, was proposed for a derelict Gothic lodge of 1831 at **Crawshaw Hall** and a new wing was planned for a partly-collapsed Gothick eyecatcher that was originally within the park of the now-demolished **Latham Hall**. Pevsner suggested it had originally been a cold bath; the statutory list described it as a hunting lodge. At any rate, it became an estate cottage in the nineteenth century and had been empty since the Second War, its setting increasingly eroded by the expansion of Ormskirk. Given these unpromising circumstances, we did not object in principle but confined ourselves to recommending a better choice of cladding material for the new wing.

Hurst House, a 1797 farmhouse in **Laugharne, Carmarthenshire**, had been on our radar since 2005 owing to proposals for intensive hotel development. In 2008, we became aware of unauthorized works resulting in damage or destruction of internal features. With our full backing, the local authority issued an enforcement notice. Such vigilance, and a willingness to deal robustly with transgressions (including unauthorized deviation from the terms of a planning consent) is of course key to effective building conservation.

Industrial

We also intervened in an effort to improve plans for the residential conversion of **North Down Coach House** in **Lamphey, Pembrokeshire**. Previous conversion to a milking parlour in the late twentieth century had entailed the removal of internal and external features and had seriously compromised the property's setting and appearance; when we first visited in 2002, the building was still part of a working farm and the grouted slate roof was at risk of being replaced with metal sheeting. Sympathetic reuse was thus highly desirable in principle to stave off further maltreatment, but the initial plans were lacking in detail and such detail as was given (for example of doors and windows) did not inspire confidence.

We supported efforts to achieve sympathetic reuse of eighteenth century stone **shepherds' cottages**, recently saved from demolition, near **Ventnor** on the **Isle of Wight**. Though altered and much-repaired (a corrugated iron roof, in place of the original thatch, had been installed as a temporary protective measure and a collapsed flank wall had been rebuilt), the buildings had sufficient value as vernacular architecture to warrant sensitive conversion.



Derelict shepherds' cottages on the Isle of Wight.

The quality of conversion schemes for former mills is variable, and we are keen to promote good practice by publicising success stories. Of those that came to our attention in 2008, the scheme for the old **William King Flour Mill** in **New Denham, Buckinghamshire**, seemed most likely to come into this category, being an imaginative proposal to reinstate the Mill House as a single dwelling and convert the flour mill itself to 152 flats. Less sensitively handled were conversion plans for **Friars Mills** in **Leicester**, originally early nineteenth century but much altered in the twentieth and now in an area experiencing almost wholesale redevelopment. Major new commercial and residential development was proposed around the listed mill buildings and the adjacent site had been earmarked for three residential tower blocks. Serious revisions to scale and massing were needed to prevent the surviving mill complex being swamped, but the drive for regeneration, prizing quantity over quality, had gathered a momentum which left us with little expectation of success. The Georgian buildings were at least not proposed for demolition; in the long-term, it would hardly be surprising if they outlived the buildings now being put up around them.



North Down Coach House, Pembrokeshire.

Urban Development

The onset of recession in 2008 is likely to have caused the postponement or shelving of some schemes that would, from our perspective, have been controversial. The slow-down is more likely to have affected significant urban development projects than, say, the private residential sector, where stagnation in the housing market might have prompted some householders to extend or alter their existing homes as an alternative to moving. Nonetheless, most significant commercial projects that had been submitted for planning by early 2008 continued their progress through the system, and however slim their chances of being built, we were obliged to marshal our objections where we judged that listed Georgian buildings or their settings were threatened.

A principal case was the proposed 472ft, 43 storey **Doon Street** residential tower on **London's South Bank** that would have appeared in views from the courtyard of Somerset House, one of London's finest urban spaces and easily on a par with the Palais Royal and the Place des Vosges in Paris. The principal views south, east and west from the entrance off the Strand remain as Sir William Chambers would have seen them, without encroachment by extra-mural development. Any intrusion above the roofline would disturb the composition, but it added insult to injury that the proposed tower would be off-centre, thus unbalancing the symmetry that was so fundamental a principle at Somerset House, an accomplished essay in Palladianism. We had considered Somerset House reasonably safe from interloping excrescences of this kind: the St Paul's Heights restrictions to the north and the Thames to the south formed a *cordon sanitaire* that was reinforced by the site's elevated position above the river. A building on the South Bank would need to be exceptionally tall to impinge on a view south across the courtyard, and it seemed to us that the Doon Street tower represented a seriously greedy appropriation of a common airspace that had major amenity value well beyond its immediate neighbourhood. A public inquiry into the scheme concluded in March 2008; the inquiry inspector recommended rejection. Acting against this recommendation, against the advice of the Government's statutory heritage adviser, against the expert recommendation of expert bodies such as The Georgian Group and against the wishes of The City of Westminster, the



Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government gave the scheme the go-ahead in August 2008, on the rather curious grounds that 'although construction of the tower would harm the settings of certain historic areas, this would be offset by the scheme's provision of a sports centre in a deprived area'. English Heritage and Westminster City Council, with our support, challenged the Government's decision in the High Court, ultimately without success.

The case illustrated some of the shortcomings of London's tall buildings policy, which is solely directed at protecting views of St Paul's; a laudable aim, but one that lets through the net some damaging schemes that are located outside the sometimes quite narrow viewing corridors. As far as it goes, though, the policy is robust and serves as a lesson to some other English cities. An effective policy on tall buildings was, in our view, urgently needed in **Birmingham**, to provide a framework against which to judge schemes such as the planned replacement for the **Bank of Scotland building** adjacent to Thomas Archer's Cathedral. *Ad hoc* assessments too often meant that key considerations such as the impact on the historic environment were not given sufficient weight. We also supported efforts by the Bath Preservation Trust to inject greater clarity into planning policy on tall buildings in Bath, while cautioning that any policy that stopped short of prohibition might imply the acceptability of tall building in certain parts of the city.

The phrase 'tall building' generally conjures up towers in the popular imagination, understandably as towers have been in vogue for much of the past decade. But the term is really relative, and thus an eight storey building in a predominantly five-storey townscape could technically be classified as tall. The Birmingham building mentioned above is a case in point. It should also be borne in mind that topography can give low-rise buildings a visual dominance out of all proportion to their absolute mass. We objected to the fairly low-lying **Western Riverside** scheme in **Bath** mainly because it would have loomed large in views from the Royal Crescent. And in **Buxton**, because the land rises steeply in front of Carr of York's Crescent, a planned **supermarket** behind the Crescent, though not in itself tall, would have been highly

Left: visualisation showing the impact on Somerset House of a planned tower in Southwark, on the other side of the River Thames.

visible from key vantage points. In **Newcastle-upon-Tyne**, we welcomed reassurances about the impact of buildings in the proposed new **Stephenson Quarter** on views from Gateshead and Grainger Town.

Like tall buildings, comprehensive redevelopment is a ghost from the 1950s and 1960s that seems, alarmingly, to have gained fresh credibility in planning and development circles. The **Canal Corridor** project in **Lancaster** was the most egregious scheme from 2008, involving as it would have done the demolition of over twenty historic buildings. Approved by Lancaster City Council, it was successfully fought by a coalition of conservation bodies at public inquiry. On a smaller scale, we were again successful in fighting off a scheme by Hammerson to redevelop part of **Norton Folgate** in **Spitalfields, East London**. In disallowing Hammerson's appeal against refusal of Conservation Area Consent, the planning inspector helpfully drew attention to Government guidance to the effect that buildings positively contributing to the character or appearance of a conservation area should be retained. He added that ten storeys was unacceptably high for the area.

A new phenomenon in **central London**, partly provoked it has to be said by the effectiveness of planning restraints, has been a rash of proposals for deep **basement extensions**, generally in historic areas where above-ground development would be viewed unfavourably. One of our concerns, apart from the effect on gardens, historic fabric and basement plan form, is the subversive impact on the hierarchy of internal spaces, particularly as reconfigured basements are often designed to accommodate principal reception rooms. Clearer and stronger planning guidance is needed in this area. A more conventional surface extension was proposed at a Georgian townhouse in **Lincoln's Inn Fields** in **London**, as part of a proposal to return the house to use as a single residence. Again, scale rather than principle was the issue: the extension was far too large, enveloping for example the first floor staircase window.

Urban development forms proportionately far less of our casework in Wales, but we expressed concern about the

The Canal Corridor scheme in the centre of Lancaster, defeated following a public inquiry.

Bottom: Houses saved from demolition in Norton Folgate, on the eastern edge of the City of London.



demolition following a severe fire of the remains of the **Gatehouse Hotel** in **Tenby, Pembrokeshire**. Although early Victorian, the building formed part of an otherwise late Georgian terrace that served as an important local landmark within a seafront conservation area. We sought clarification of how the decision to demolish had been arrived at, what recording work had taken place before demolition and what measures had been put in place for the salvage and safe storage of decorative features. In addition, we pressed for the reinstatement of the lost exteriors.

Landscaping

Garden and landscape conservation crops up frequently as part of our country house casework, especially when housing or leisure facilities such as golf courses are proposed within historic estates. Designed landscapes also, of course, occur in urban contexts, where they are even more vulnerable to the vagaries of fashion. Funding for remodelling schemes is often forthcoming from regeneration agencies, for whom historical authenticity is generally not the top priority. Thus at **Winckley Square** in **Preston**, a privately-planned urban square laid out from 1801, the North-West Development Agency part-funded a relandscaping scheme that included a 64-jet water fountain, granite walkways, fibre optic lighting, sculptures and metal artwork, all obviously alien to the original design conception. The proposals seemed to us to have been formulated without any serious analysis of the historic landscape, an essential starting point regardless of whether, ultimately, the scheme is wholly faithful to the original. Accordingly, we objected. Far better were proposals, now implemented, for the relandscaping of **Fitzroy Square**, as part of a rolling English Heritage programme of square restorations in **central London**. Here the focus was entirely on the hard landscaping outside the privately-owned central garden; a conservative scheme saw the installation of York stone perimeter paving, with bound

gravel surfacing on what historically would have been the carriageway. There were some minor infelicities, such as the retention of lighting columns on the historic carriageway instead of aligning them along the pavement, but the general result was a far closer approximation of the original 1790s design.

Simplicity and avoidance of fussy design is generally the key; overdone design always increases installation and maintenance costs and looks dated and bedraggled within a decade or two. Proposals for the courtyard outside **Wesley's New Room**, off a busy shopping street in the middle of **Bristol**, seemed likely to fall into this trap. The existing equestrian statue of Wesley should really have been allowed to speak for itself, but the plan to inscribe quotations on one of the courtyard walls seemed to us symptomatic of the overdone nature of the scheme. Early proposals for a remodelled **Cathedral Green** in **Derby** also seemed an unappetising *mélange* of clichés, made worse by the computer-aided drawings (never a good presentation tool for historic environments) and very much worse by the designers' suggestion that the east end of the Cathedral, sensitively added to the Gibbs original by Comper in the early 1970s, could be enhanced by full-height glazed extensions on either side.



The proposed landscaping scheme for Winckley Square in Preston, Lancashire: an alien intervention.

Architectural Awards 2008

The 2008 Georgian Group Architectural Awards were presented by The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr John Sentamu, Lord Archbishop of York, at Christie's in central London in November. These premier conservation awards, sponsored by Savills, recognise excellence in the restoration of Georgian buildings. Awards were also given to the best new classical building and the best new building in a Georgian setting.

The judges in 2008 were Charles Cator (Deputy Chairman, Christie's International), Crispin Holborow (Director of the Country Department at Savills), the historian Tristram Hunt, The Hon. Sir Mark Lennox-Boyd (Trustee of The Georgian Group), Lady Nutting OBE (Chairman of the Georgian Group), and the architectural historians Dr John Martin Robinson (Chairman of the Judges) and Professor David Watkin.



Lord Crathorne and Lady Nutting greet The Archbishop of York before the 2008 awards ceremony.

Restoration of a Georgian Country House

Winner Blackburn House, Lothian
Client The Cockburn Conservation Trust
Architect Simpson and Brown



This early eighteenth century house, almost midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh in the old Midlothian mining belt – a landscaped slagheap is a prominent feature behind the house – was last occupied in 1972 and thereafter fell into serious and almost terminal disrepair. Rather like Mavisbank, it has proved tenacious, and The Cockburn Conservation Trust has now restored it beautifully inside and out, rebuilding the lost East Pavilion and West Doocot so that the overall composition recovers its balance.

Commended: The Vein, Caerhays, Cornwall; Thorpe Hall, Barnard Castle, Co Durham

Restoration of a Georgian building in an urban setting

Winner The Block Mills, Her Majesty's Naval Base
Portsmouth
Client Naval Base Commander
Architect White Young Green



Public agencies are not always the best stewards of historic buildings and for those that survive in the maelstrom of an operational Royal Navy base the odds on careful long-term conservation are radically lengthened. The Block Mills, within shouting distance of HMS Victory but firmly within the operational naval base, had indeed been mauled over the years, with an inappropriate pitched roof installed, windows blocked in and rampant dry rot that put the building at risk. Fortunately their importance as the first mill to house steam-powered mass production machinery, making rigging and gun carriage blocks, was not lost on the Royal Navy and English Heritage, which have repaired the fabric, restored the original hipped roof and parapet roof and removed bulky excrescences such as fire escapes. One positive feature is the lightness of touch; much of the conservation work here is visually unspectacular but is no less solid for that, and those undertaking it have done well to remember that this is a robust industrial building whose hard-edged roughness needs to be carefully and deliberately preserved.

Commended: Dunraven Place, Bridgend, Glamorgan; 35–39 West Street, West Rochford, Essex; 11 Princelet Street, Spitalfields, London

Reuse of a Georgian building

Winner Garrison Chapel, Pembroke Dock
Client Pembrokeshire County Council
Architect Acanthus Holden



We at the Georgian Group are not new to derelict dockyard churches by George Ledwell Taylor: one lies abandoned and burnt out at Sheerness Dockyard in Kent and we have joined the fight to save it. This entry, then, encouraged us. Here was one of his churches derelict, partly roofless and vandalised, but then compulsorily purchased by the planning authority, fully restored with all plasterwork, joinery and cupola reinstated to the original design – and now ready to house a mix of uses that support the wider regeneration strategy for Pembroke Dock.

Commended: Clavell Tower, Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset

Architectural Awards 2008

Restoration of a Georgian Church

Winner St Paul's Cathedral, London
Client The Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral
Architect Martin Stancliffe of Purcell Miller Tritton



After several years during which our awards were dominated by restorations of London parish churches, St Paul's Cathedral was indisputably *summa cum laude* in 2008, the tercentenary of its completion. With the restoration of the south courtyard just recently finished, this is an ideal opportunity to recognise a tremendous achievement. Kerry Downes, in his recent mini-monograph on Wren, has put it well: "In five years," he writes, "Wren's masterpiece has changed dramatically. Exterior recleaning has restored the way in which the mouldings and relief details read, how each piece fits into a visual structure partly representing, partly expressing, the material structure of mass and support. It restores clarity and balance, like removing scratches from old records or brown varnish from a painting. The interior cleaning is even more dramatic, taking away the deepest traces of the soot that was already eating into the stonework before the cathedral was finished and the last remnants of the three coats of oil paint that Wren had ordered at the eleventh hour in an attempt to hide the dirt. The whole interior now has the luminosity Wren envisaged but never saw. The soul has come back to St Paul's".

Canon Martin Warner (centre) and Martin Stancliffe, Surveyor of the Fabric, receive the award for St Paul's from The Archbishop of York.

Right: the Darnley Mausoleum before restoration; and the Georgian Group's Vice-Chairmen, Professor David Watkin and Dr John Martin Robinson, admiring the newly-restored interior in 2008. The Group contributed its largest ever grant to the renewal of the wrecked interior.

Restoration of a Georgian garden or landscape

Winner Cobham Park Gardens and the Darnley Mausoleum, Kent
Client Gravesham Borough Council
Architect Purcell Miller Tritton and Enplan



This is an absolute *tour de force*, one of the conservation achievements of recent years, ironically made possible (financially at least) by the truncation of part of the Cobham Hall estate by the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. In heritage terms, the compensation has been more than adequate. The jewel in the crown here is the restoration – salvation might be a better word – of the atrociously vandalised Darnley Mausoleum, designed by Wyatt in the 1790s. This was virtually destroyed by vandals and arsonists in a sustained and deliberate campaign. One of the many low points was on Guy Fawkes Night 1980, when a bonfire of car tyres was set ablaze inside the mausoleum. The rebirth has had a great deal to do with Gravesham Borough Council, from the leader down: the sheer unselfish commitment and dedication to the authentic restoration of a brutally-damaged building in the middle of nowhere and with no prospect of commercial use deserves the highest praise. And it is not just the Mausoleum that has been given new life. The Pump House and the Aviary have been rebuilt and Repton's Seat, of which almost nothing remained, has been beautifully recreated.

Commended: Bonsall Field Barns, Bonsall, Derbys; The Summer House, Warnford, Hampshire; St Leonard's Gardens, Hastings, Sussex

New building in the Classical tradition

Winner New Pavilion, Ferne Park, Dorset
 Client Viscount and Viscountess Rothermere
 Architect Quinlan and Francis Terry Architects



The architects are on top form with this five-bay pavilion, a formidably rigorous essay inspired by Kent's Praeneste at Rousham in Oxfordshire. It pays due homage, down to the pedimented bays and the rough texture of its stone, and the seriousness of the exercise is underscored by the seated statue of Immanuel Kant that faces the pavilion across still water. But this is also an extension of living space: behind the deeply scholarly articulation of the façade that greets the visitor, the open arcade and two open gazebos betoken relaxation and pleasure. All in all, a worthy addition to the Rothermeres' award-winning country house at Ferne, also designed by the Terrys.

Commended: Collector Earl's Garden, Arundel Castle, Sussex; 198–202 Piccadilly, London

New building in a Georgian context

Winner 25 Queen Square, Bristol
 Client Westmark Developments
 Architect Donald Insall Associates/Alec French Architects



There is a redemptive quality to this project that makes it especially attractive. The 1700 townhouse at 25 Queen Square was demolished in the 1930s to make way for a ring road of the kind that blighted so many of our cities in the twentieth century. This had the effect of cutting one of the terraces in Queen Square uncomfortably short and compromised the sense of enclosure that helps define the urban square in England. At the same time, a taller building arose behind the next-door house. These unfortunate changes have now been wholly reversed, in a sequence of events that exposes the futility of so many demolitions of historic buildings. The taller building has now gone and the road has been replaced by a scholarly reconstruction of the lost façade. The materials and detailing are top-rank and the end result has a crucial role in knitting together the torn fabric of an early eighteenth century square.

Commended: Herschel Place, Bathwick Street, Bath; Upton House, Tetbury, Gloucestershire
 Preserving our Georgian Heritage

Preserving our Georgian heritage

Building preservation grants awarded by The Georgian Group in 2008

For over thirty years, the Georgian Group has made a practical and positive contribution to the preservation of Georgian buildings and monuments by making grants from its Cleary Fund, and this continued in 2008 with the grants listed below. The spread of recipients is fairly typical; our aim is to offer grants which, though small, can have a real beneficial impact on buildings that are publicly accessible or in public use. Grant applications are assessed initially by the Group's Casework Panel; the panel's recommendations are then considered formally by the Executive Committee. Conditions are attached to grants.

Townesend Memorial, St Giles's, Oxford

The most historically and aesthetically significant tomb in the graveyard at St Giles's. The tribute by one of Oxford's greatest Georgian architect-builders, William Townesend, to his father, John (1648–1728), an independent mason whose buildings include the Long Library at The Queen's College (1692–5), the Kitchen Court and the Clock Tower at Blenheim Palace (1705–1712), the

gate house and some of the Turl Street wing of Exeter College and the main gate, gate tower and Master's Lodging at Pembroke (1691–1709). The tomb had fallen into disrepair and the late Sir Howard Colvin encouraged St Giles to have the monument conserved properly while making it safe; Rory Young, a specialist in tomb conservation, has now completed the work.

Grant offered: £2400 in memory of Sir Howard Colvin.



King Charles the Martyr Church, Shelland, Suffolk

Rebuilt 1767. Complete interior. GII.*

Repairs to the north nave box pew platforms, 3-decker pulpit and tower, all suffering deterioration of woodwork through wet rot. Works were started in 2005 but this covered only the repair of four of the pews to the south.

Grant offered: £5,645 to cover pew repairs.



Eginton Window, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

1775 by Francis Eginton.

Repair of the east window. Main issues requiring attention were: compression cracking, missing backing of fronting glass, making good previous repairs by face leads which were now lost or peeling off and inappropriate replacements of missing glass.

Grant offered: £2,500



The David Hume Mausoleum, Old Calton Cemetery, Edinburgh

1777 by Robert Adam.

There was an urgent need to re-lay some of the upper masonry of the structure and the dentil layer which supported the cornice. The Hume Enlightenment Trust proposed to take down the upper 25% of the structure and to rebuild this using traditional mortar and stone. The coping stones would be re-laid and covered to prevent further water damage. The chipped plaque above the entrance and the iron gate would also be restored.

Grant offered: £4,500



Preserving our Georgian heritage

North Leverton Mill,
Retford, Nottinghamshire

1813. *GII**

Repairs to the two rotten sail beams, repair/replacement of the structural cross members in the wooden cap and general repainting and weatherproofing.

Grant offered: £4,000

Burford Methodist
Church, Burford,
Oxfordshire

1720–30. *Railings listed separately at
GII*.*

Repairs to external railings.

Grant offered: £2,000

Old Town Hall, Greenlaw,
Berwickshire

1829–31 by *John Cunningham.*

*Grade A. Buildings at Risk Register
Scotland.*

As part of a phased repair and restoration programme, the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust applied for funding to assist specifically with the repair of the stair balustrade, comprising timber hand rail and cast-iron balusters, within the entrance hall.

Grant offered: £4,000



Education & activities

Measured Architectural Drawing Prize

Responding to immediate threats to buildings, and dealing day-to-day with the minutiae of planning applications, will always be a key part of the Group's work, but there is no substitute, in the long-term, for investment in skills and education. Ultimately, that is the only sure way to improve visual literacy, appreciation of the historic environment and, in turn, public demand for the preservation of heritage assets.

The Georgian Group's education and activities programme has several strands: raising visual awareness, providing conservation advice to householders, running practical skills masterclasses and specialist study courses, arranging visits to Georgian buildings and gardens both here and abroad, curating exhibitions, holding academic symposia, disseminating primary research through our academic Journal and publishing best practice guidance on matters ranging from stonework repair to enabling development.

A major highlight in 2008 was our Measured Architectural Drawing Prize, held to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of our Patron, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, and to honour his longstanding practical commitment to the encouragement of traditional skills, including drawing skills. The one-off prize also aimed to promote and reward excellence in measured architectural drawing and to encourage close study and understanding of Georgian buildings.

The winning and commended entrants, chosen from an impressive field of entries from Britain, the Commonwealth and the United States, were presented to The Prince of Wales at a ceremony at The Ritz, Piccadilly on 26 November 2008. Competition entries were subsequently exhibited at the Group's headquarters and at the Prince's Drawing School in East London.



First prize (detail)



Second prize



Third prize



From top: Professor David Watkin, Hugh Petter, Lady Nutting, Alireza Sagharchi and Francis Terry judge the drawing prize entries; Fergus Devlin-Connolly receives the winner's trophy from The Prince of Wales; His Royal Highness inspects the winning entry in the company of the judges.

First prize (trophy in Carrara marble, specially designed by Francis Terry, plus £1000): The Screen Wall of The Bank of England, London (Sir John Soane), drawn by Fergus Devlin-Connolly

Second prize (£750) Doric House, Bath (J.M. Gandy), drawn by Chris Draper

Third prize (£500): The Queen's Temple, Kensington Gardens, London (William Kent) drawn by Martyn Winney

Commended entries: Tokai, Cape Town, drawn by Marla Bekondo; Lloyd House, Alexandria, Virginia, drawn by Erik Bootsma; Sherman's Hall, Dedham, Essex, drawn by Eric Cartwright; The Richardson-Owens-Thomas House, Savannah, Georgia, drawn by Jonathan LaCrosse; and the Old State House, Boston, Mass., drawn by Lisa Lombardi.

The Georgian Group took the opportunity of the award ceremony to present to The Prince of Wales a sixtieth birthday gift of a watercolour by Ceri Leeder of Llwynywermod, His Royal Highness's estate in Carmarthenshire.



Above: Michael Tree and Lady Nutting present to The Prince of Wales a drawing of Llwynywermod, His Royal Highness's estate in Carmarthenshire. The drawing was a sixtieth birthday gift from The Georgian Group to its Patron.

Palladio Festival

The presentation of the drawing prize took place during The Georgian Group's special two-week festival to commemorate another anniversary, the quincentenary of the birth of Andrea Palladio, progenitor of classicism in Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Palladio Quincentenary Festival, running from 24 November to 5 December and sponsored by Hoare's Bank, encompassed a range of unique events, including symposia on Palladianism in Britain and Wanstead House, both chaired by the eminent architectural historian John Harris, and study days at Wilton House and Wilbury House in Wiltshire with contributions from John Martin Robinson, David Mlinaric, John Bold and Gordon Higgott. Charles Hind hosted a private view of the Palladio archives at the RIBA and an exhibition of images of Palladian houses from the archives of The Georgian Group and *Country Life* was held at Fitzroy Square, accompanied by a catalogue entitled *Absolute Architecture: English Palladianism in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Alongside academic content, the Italian Ambassador hosted a reception in Grosvenor Square and, by gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen, we celebrated the exact anniversary of Palladio's birth on Sunday 30 November with Evensong at the Queen's Chapel, St James's Palace. The service was led by The Rt Hon and Rt Rev Richard Chartres, Lord Bishop of London, with the Choir of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal in attendance.

Clockwise from right: Michael Bidnell, the Group's Research and Information Officer, introduces the Welsh Heritage Fair in the company of Mark Baker of the Gwrych Castle

Preservation Trust, Professor Tom Pritchard and Michael Tree; Rory Young leads a stonework masterclass and Charles Brooking explains the finer points of window construction.

Wales

The 2008 Georgian Group Summer School was held in Aberystwyth in September. Around a core of illustrated talks, practical demonstrations and hands-on exercises covering brickwork, stonework, joinery, sash windows, decorative plasterwork and paintwork, we organised other events including a parks and gardens study day at the spectacular Hafod estate, a masterpiece of the Picturesque. These educational activities were set within the context of our special Welsh Heritage Fair, launched by the former Chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, Professor Tom Pritchard. Based at the Bellevue Royal Hotel on the Aberystwyth seafront, the Fair incorporated stands from national and regional conservation bodies and exhibitions of Welsh buildings at risk and Welsh country houses from the Group's Pardoe Collection. A companion catalogue, *Welsh Country Houses Illustrated*, was also published.



Education and activities

The Georgian Group Journal

Another principal publication of 2008 was Volume XVI of *The Georgian Group Journal*, the leading compendium of new academic research on Georgian architecture, interiors, art and culture. Alongside John Harris's tribute to the late Sir Howard Colvin, the 2008 volume included articles by Pete Smith on Newby Hall, Richard Hewlings on Firle Place, John Kenworthy-Browne on Nollekens' memorial to Bishop Trevor, Alastair Fair on Talman and All Souls College and Ben Cowell on Hardwick Hall. During 2008, Dr Geoffrey Tyack, Fellow of Kellogg College Oxford, was appointed editor of the *Journal*, effective from Volume XVII (2009). Two issues of *The Georgian* magazine were published in 2008: the spring issue focussed on conservation challenges in Liverpool and a special Palladio issue was published to coincide with the Palladio Quincentenary Festival in November.

Members' events

A comprehensive and varied programme of **members' events** was arranged, averaging more than one a week across the year and including visits to Firle Place and Castle Goring in Sussex and weekends in Bath, Dublin and Staffordshire, the last based at Weston Park. Successful overseas trips took place to Poland, taking in a broad spectrum of eighteenth century architecture from the palaces of Warsaw to Renaissance castles, and to Rhode Island, where Mrs Mary Riggs organised a programme that included a private reception at the State House in Providence hosted by the Governor of Rhode Island.

Consistent with our mission to disseminate advice to new audiences, The Group also had a presence at the Listed Property Owners' Club weekend show at Olympia in February, Grand Designs at London Excel in May, the Malton Hall Crafts Fair in Yorkshire (June) and the Royal Welsh Show at Builth Wells, Brecknockshire (July).

Matthew Parris was guest speaker at the Group's Annual General Meeting.

Michael Bidnell supervised further preparatory work on a catalogue of The Group's Pardoe Collection of watercolours and drawings of British country houses.

American Friends

For their annual British trip, expertly arranged once again by Lady Bradbury and Caroline Rimell and serving as a principal fundraiser for the Group, The American Friends of the Georgian Group visited Gloucestershire. Based at Lower Slaughter Manor, the party took in private tours of some of the county's finest houses, with generous hospitality from hosts including Lord Neidpath at Stanway and Mr and Mrs David Loseley-Williams at Chavenage.

Robert Bargery, Secretary of the Georgian Group, visited New York in December to address the American Friends' Annual General Meeting at the Collectors' Club on East 35th Street.



Professor Thomas Gordon Smith of Notre Dame University, author of *Vitruvius on Architecture*, leads a group of American Friends on a microcosm of the Grand Tour at the Met in New York, in May 2008.

Young Georgians

The Young Georgians continued to expand in 2008 under the leadership of its chairman, Oliver Gerrish, who arranged a varied programme of events, both social and academic. Among houses visited in 2008 were Bellamont in Dorset and Ribston Hall in Yorkshire. By the end of the year, after six years in existence in its current form, membership had risen to 208.

Membership

Membership rose in 2008 to 3319 (a new record), with further encouraging growth in the Young Georgians, which ended the year with 208 members. The Young Georgians Facebook group had attracted 650 members by year's end. This expansion is important not just from a financial perspective (though as an essentially privately-funded organisation we are heavily dependent on membership subscriptions for the resources that allow us to perform our primary function of casework) but also from a political one, as a strong membership base lends weight to our campaigning voice.

The continued growth in membership is pleasing when seen against a background of an increasingly competitive leisure environment. Success is partly a result of member benefits, such as the clubroom at 6 Fitzroy Square, a varied activities programme averaging more than one event a week across the year, a colour magazine and academic journal and discounts on selected goods and services. The Georgian Group website received over one million hits in 2008 and was expanded during the year to offer members improved access to the searchable catalogues of the Group's reference library and drawings collection. As a result of these and other efforts, 409 people joined the Group in 2008. We were pleased to have been able to avoid a rise in subscription rates in 2008, for the fourth successive year.

People

Jean Monro OBE, founder of the American Friends, accepted an invitation to join The Georgian Group's Council on her retirement from day to day involvement with the Group. She remains President of the Anglo-American Committee.

Composition of the Executive Committee and casework panel remained unchanged in 2008. Trustees and committee members undertake their tasks without payment, even of expenses, and we are enormously grateful to them all for their support and dedication.

Amongst our staff, Paul Robertshaw, Northern Caseworker since 2005, accepted the position of Conservation Officer with the London Borough of Croydon, and Kirsten McKnight, Southern Caseworker, moved on at the end of September to take up a job as historic buildings consultant

to an engineering firm. David McKinstry and Stuart Taylor were recruited as replacements from a strong field of applicants. We were assisted during the year by a roster of highly dedicated volunteers, among whom Michael Statham-Fletcher, Michelle Sadleir, Katrin Brinkhaus, Lorna Coventry and Tom Williamson joined us for the first time. Sue Berry and Martin Andrews offered support with the organisation and running of members' events. We are grateful to all our staff and volunteers, past and present, for their hard work and place on record our appreciation of their services. Gratitude is also due to a team of NADFAS volunteers who are patiently and expertly conserving our library books.

Premises

6 Fitzroy Square, The Group's Grade I listed headquarters, provides, above all, working accommodation for our staff, as well as meeting space for the Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies and other conservation-oriented bodies. More recently it has offered clubroom facilities for members in the ground floor members' room. Lectures, conferences and exhibitions are held on the ground and first floors. We remain committed to the conversion of the basement into an archive and education space, primarily for the purpose of storing our Pardoe Collection of architectural drawings in controlled conditions.

Freehold ownership of a substantial Adam townhouse in central London is not simply a capital investment; it also allows us to generate crucial revenue that can be applied to charitable purposes. Funds are raised by renting out surplus parts of the building for residential and office accommodation and by hiring out the first floor rooms and members' room in a manner compatible with the building's listed status. In 2008, 6 Fitzroy Square was used for a variety of external events, including filming, book launches, photo-shoots and private functions.

Apart from bringing in funds, filming also creates an opportunity for internal redecoration, undertaken free of charge and to the Group's specification. A proportion of filming fees is donated to the Fitzroy Square Frontagers' and Garden Committee, of which The Group is an active member, to assist with the preservation and enhancement of Fitzroy Square.

The Group is also naturally concerned to maintain and where possible restore 6 Fitzroy Square, and to that end has

implemented a programme of steady improvements since acquiring the freehold in the mid-1990s. In 2008, Heritage Restorations undertook minor repairs to furniture and added security devices to the bookcases and to the map chest holding the bulk of the Pardoe Collection. A full wiring and electricity appliance safety test was carried out.

Aside from our role as custodians of the house and its fabric, we effectively act as curators of a small collection of art, antiques and other fixtures and fittings, acquired largely through donations or loans. Although 6 Fitzroy Square is a working premises rather than a museum, we are always grateful for gifts of suitable items. In 2008, we acquired a Thomas Malton aquatint from May 1800 showing the east side of Fitzroy Square and Dr Tessa Murdoch kindly donated, in memory of her mother Lady Meyer, a mid nineteenth century charcoal drawing of the York Watergate and Adelphi in London.

The Group continued to research and catalogue its Pardoe Collection of views of British Country Houses; in 2008, the work was done largely by Harry Leslie Melville, a volunteer, under the supervision of Michael Bidnell. NADFAS volunteers continued their programme of repairing and conserving library stock.

Georgian Enterprises and Trading Limited (GETL)

GETL, a trading subsidiary of The Georgian Group, encompasses the non-primary trading activities of The Georgian Group, principally estate agency (GeorgianProperty.com), locations hire agency (GeorgianLocations.com), the sale of advertising and publications and the organisation and running of tours for The American Friends of The Georgian Group. The principal objective of GETL is to undertake these activities in a way that generates funds for The Georgian Group (to which revenue is donated) and in a manner consistent with and capable of advancing The Group's charitable purposes. Its operating strategy is set out in a business plan agreed by Directors. By the end of 2008, GeorgianProperty.com had 35 houses on its books, with 1 Naval Terrace in Sheerness among the properties sold. 78 properties were available for hire through GeorgianLocations.com.

Finances

Total funds remained reasonably constant year on year, ending 2008 at £2,084,445. This reflected continued good performance of the Group's investment portfolio, valuation for accounting purposes of non-cash donations and a sustained high level of income from premises hire. There was a surplus of incoming resources over resources expended of £92,343.

In 2008, membership subscriptions were the largest single source of regular and predictable income, raising £90,019. Given the continuing importance of subscription income, we are particularly grateful when existing or new members who are United Kingdom taxpayers sign a Gift Aid declaration to allow us to reclaim the tax paid on their subscriptions. This costs the member nothing but gives us an extra twenty-eight pence in the pound, via Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. Taxpayers who pay tax at the higher rate may claim back for themselves the difference between the standard and higher rates.

The Group continues to subsidise, effectively from private sources, its formal public function as a statutory consultee in the planning system in England and Wales. The disparity between income from public sources and actual casework-related expenditure – and hence the subsidy we are required to provide to sustain our public function at current levels – becomes larger by the year, as the public contribution is generally index-linked at best, while salary and other costs linked to casework increase annually at rates that normally exceed inflation. Nonetheless, we value the annual contributions made by English Heritage and Cadw towards our casework costs.

Since at least 75% of the cost of our statutory casework function is borne by the Group, fundraising from private sources remains absolutely essential. The fundraising imperative is even greater where educational activities are concerned, since these are wholly unsupported by the public purse. We are therefore enormously grateful to the following individuals, organisations and charitable trusts, and to others who by request remain anonymous, for their generosity in supporting our work in 2008:

Savills; Richard Broyd; The Golden Bottle Trust; Hoare's Bank; The Ritz Hotel; APS Masonry; Mr and Mrs Roger Palley; The Hazel Wood Charitable Trust; The Bernard

Sunley Charitable Trust; Mrs Sheila Manning; and Mr and Mrs Charles Adams. We thank the American Friends of the Georgian Group for donating the surplus income generated from their trip to the United Kingdom in October 2008, and for other support.

In 2008, we greatly appreciated the receipt of legacies from the estates of Eliot Hodgkin, Frances Elizabeth Brodie, Mary Mitchell and Sir Howard Colvin.

Our intention is always to use funds received, from whatever source, to service the fulfilment of our charitable objectives, namely the protection of the nation's Georgian heritage through casework, education and other means.

It is the intention of the Trustees to maintain such a level of reserves in unrestricted funds as will generate sufficient income to help fund the activities of the group. In the light of recent global turmoil in the financial and banking sectors and the widespread publicity given recently to major financial losses suffered by British charities, a report was sought in 2008 from the Group's investment brokers on prospects for the Group's portfolio. A deliberately defensive and low-risk investment strategy had been pursued in recent years and exposure had therefore been limited; this strategy would continue in the foreseeable future.

Designated funds are funds which have been set aside by the Trustees for specific projects. As at 31 December 2008 designated funds were:

Shelbourne Legacy	£1,188,286
Library Reserve	£15,000
Life Subscriptions	£41,465

The Shelbourne Legacy was received from the estate of the late Sir Philip Shelbourne and set aside for the purchase and refurbishment of 6 Fitzroy Square. The Library Reserve represents funds used for the acquisition of a collection of library books held at Fitzroy Square. The Life Subscriptions fund exists to defray the future costs associated with life membership of the Group.

Future Plans

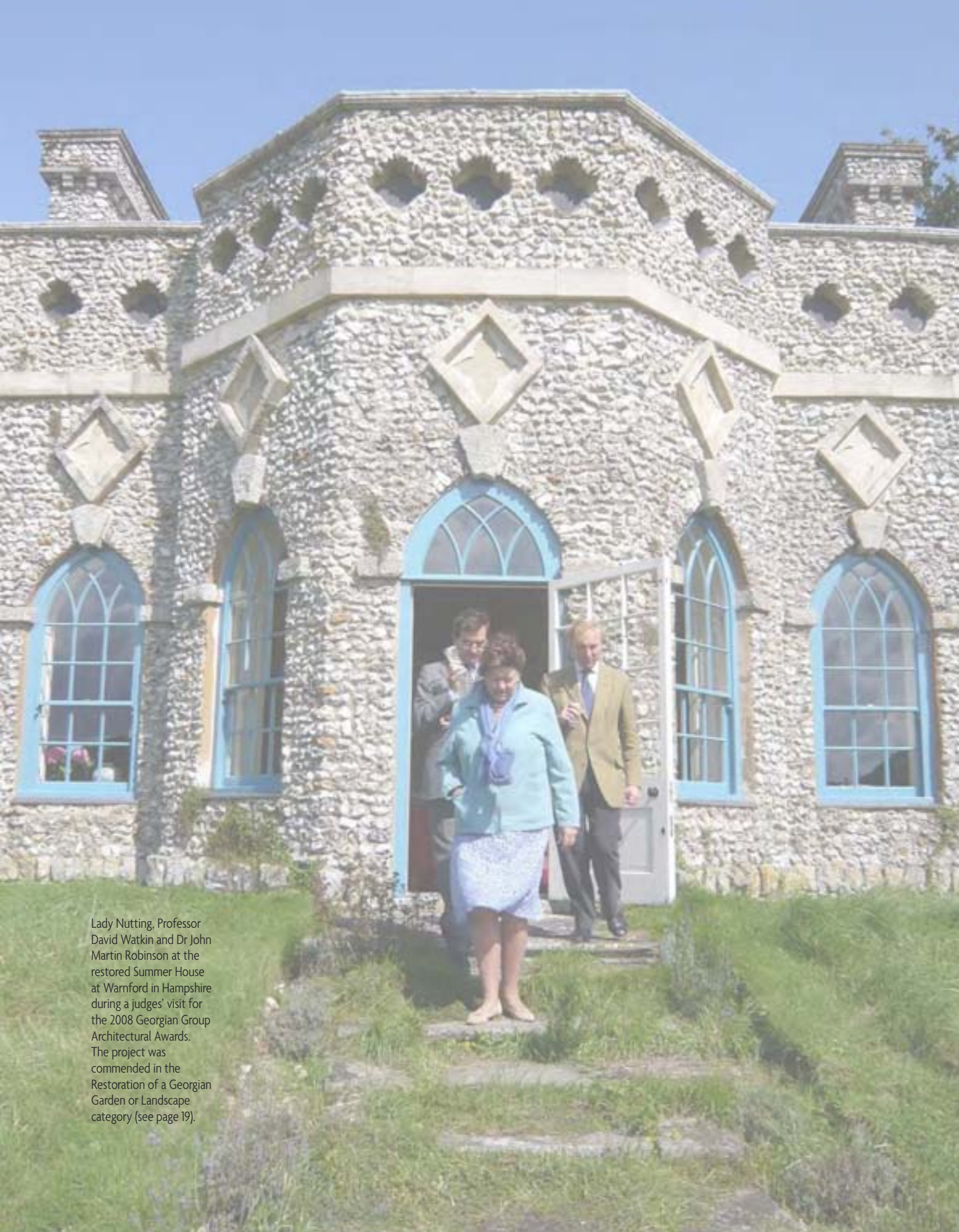
The Group has a risk management strategy which comprises a review of the risks The Group may face; the establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified; and the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on The Group should those risks materialise.

In accordance with its governing constitution, The Group will continue to devote its resources and energies to save from destruction or disfigurement Georgian buildings, whether individually or as part of a group, monuments, parks and gardens of architectural and historic interest; and, where necessary, to encourage their appropriate repair or restoration and the protection and improvement of their setting. The Group will also aim to stimulate public knowledge and appreciation of Georgian architecture and town planning and of Georgian taste as displayed in the applied arts, design and craftsmanship.

To this end we will continue to employ four caseworkers to provide expert advice on planning applications and to those seeking to restore and discover the history of Georgian properties. We will continue our education programme, with a week-long summer school in Weymouth and a symposium on John Nash, with associated events, forming the twin centrepieces in 2009. Other educational events will include trips to country houses in the United Kingdom and a tour of Palladio's villas in the Veneto in conjunction with our American Friends. To improve our educational capacity, we will develop plans for an archive centre at 6 Fitzroy Square.

Georgian Enterprises and Trading Limited, the Group's trading subsidiary, will continue to be developed with a view to generating funds for the charitable activities of The Group.

The Trustees
16 October 2008



Lady Nutting, Professor David Watkin and Dr John Martin Robinson at the restored Summer House at Warnford in Hampshire during a judges' visit for the 2008 Georgian Group Architectural Awards. The project was commended in the Restoration of a Georgian Garden or Landscape category (see page 19).



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