

ASSOCIATION FOR STUDIES IN THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

ASCHB

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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2008



www.aschb.org.uk

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Please note that post sent to the Institute of Archaeology is no longer forwarded.

Our official address is now: ASCHB, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.

ABOUT ASCHB

The Association was founded in 1968 and aims to keep its members informed on all aspects of building conservation by providing a forum for meetings, lectures and discussions and by arranging visits to buildings, work-in-progress and places of interest. Lectures and meetings are held in London and local meetings of the Association have been organised by convenors in other parts of the country. The Association retains close connections with other organisations in the field and is represented on other bodies, including COTAC (the Conference on Training in Architectural Conservation), the SPAB, Upkeep (formerly the Building Conservation Trust), and the Standing Joint Conference on Natural Stone. Members receive the *Newsletter* and annual volumes of the *Transactions* of the Association. Membership, now about 350 strong, is by invitation of the committee, and is open to those professionally engaged in work relating to the conservation of historic buildings. Individuals resident overseas, and institutions and other bodies, may subscribe to the Association and receive its regular publications. Members are encouraged to introduce new candidates for membership.

COVER PICTURE No. 3 Covered Slip taken at the ASCHB visit to Chatham Historic Dockyard
© Jean Letherby 2006

VENUE FOR MEETINGS

Meetings are held at **The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL** next to Alan Baxter's offices. Go through the gates to the back of the garden and turn right down the steps. **Farringdon** is the nearest underground and rail station.

AUTUMN/WINTER LECTURES AND VISITS 2006-2007

Lectures

- 25 October 06 **Jo Thwaites:** Kew Palace in Kew Gardens
22 November 06 **Dr Donald Buttress:** Reflections on 45 years in practice
24 January 07 **Frank Kelsall:** Architectural history and the conservation of historic buildings
28 February 07 **Nick Hill:** Apethorpe Hall – the current repairs to the state apartments.
28 March 07 **Eleni Makri:** St Pancras Chambers and the former Midland Grand Hotel – a case study in matching brickwork.
25 April 07 **Restoring glass lanterns:**
Peter Scott: Lanterns at Woodhall Park
Stephen Bond: Lanterns at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

AGM

- 15 February 07 **Annual General Meeting** and all day conference. The subject was **'Lessons from post-war conservation – 60 years of rights and wrongs'**.

VISITS

Visits were arranged to Apethorpe Hall, Kew Palace and to Chatham Historic Dockyard.

- 16 March 07 **Apethorpe Hall**, to see the EH rescue project underway at this major country house
30 March 07 **Kew Palace**, following Jo Thwaites's talk on the approach to the presentation of the recently restored palace.
21 April 07 **Chatham Historic Dockyard**, a guided tour highlighting the architecture and conservation

AUTUMN/WINTER LECTURES AND VISITS 2007-2008

Lectures

- 31 October 07 **Clive England, Scott Cooper:** Fulham Palace
28 November 07 **Paul Vonberg:** *'Un tetto di tegole'* An Italian roof for the Reform Club
30 January 08 **Alan Powers:** *'The convergence of the twain'* Conservation thinking and modern architecture in post-war Britain.
27 February 08 **Warwick Rodwell:** The Cosmati Pavement
26 March 08 **Paul Appleton:** The Royal Festival Hall
30 April 08 **Ian Archer and Graham Abrey:** St Pancras Station - restoration of the Barlow Train Shed.

AGM

- 6 February 08 **Annual General Meeting** and all day conference. The subject was **'Building Conservation and Climate Change'**.

VISITS

- 6 October 2007 Visit to Chichester with Colin Kerr
November 2007 Visit to Fulham Palace with Scott Cooper
Royal Festival Hall

AUTUMN/WINTER LECTURES AND VISITS 2008-2009

The first meeting is on **Wednesday 24 September 2008** when **Jody Morris** will give a 'lecture on The Archaeology of Tudor Cowdray House and Site.' The new meetings card is included with this issue.

ASCHB TRANSACTIONS

Volumes 29 and 30 of the *Transactions* have now been published, both in colour. Volume 29 contains articles on Post War Conservation in the Balkans, The Original Colour Scheme at St Paul's Deptford, St Pancras Station, London: A Case Study in Matching Historic Brickwork and the Royal Gunpowder Mills, Waltham Abbey, Essex. Volume 30 has articles on Beverley Minister: Arresting the Movement in the Walls of the Nave, Jacobean Joinery: The Panelling of the Long Gallery at Apethorpe Hall, Northamptonshire, Learning to Love Again: The Power of Affection, Ightam Mote, Kent: Aspects of the Repair and Conservation, Kew Palace Revealed, St Peter's Northampton: Conservation Of The Interior Decoration and St Mary de Haura, New Shoreham, Sussex: Restoration of the Choir Vault.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

ASCHB NOW ON LINE

ASCHB now has its own internet domain, and the website has been launched at www.aschb.org.uk. The Committee have aschb.org.uk e-mail addresses (see page 2). The website gives brief description of the Association and its aims, contact details for the Committee, and will carry the forthcoming programme of meetings. It also includes the index of Transactions, and copies of the Newsletter. Please send in your ideas of what you would like to see on the website to any of the committee members.

New Members/Subscribers

We are pleased to report that the following people have accepted the invitation and joined the Society:

Sherry Bates
Alexandra di Valmarana
Laura Levitt
Posy Metz
Matt Newton
Adrian Pearson
Steve Pilcher
David Thomas
Paul Travis

New members wanted!

Membership of ASCHB is by invitation of the Committee. Most members must know some likely candidates for membership – why not encourage them to apply, and broaden the knowledge and experience of the Association? A membership form is enclosed with this Newsletter. If you need more, please feel free to photocopy it (but note that it is double-sided) or e-mail a committee member, or download it from the website. Applicants for membership will need to give details of their current involvement in conservation, and be proposed and seconded by current members (don't worry if you can't remember your membership number). If you don't know an ASCHB member please contact any member of the committee.

Please send application forms to the ASCHB Membership Secretary at our address at 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ.

Changes of address

Please remember to let the Membership Secretary know if you change your address. After each ASCHB mailing there are generally a few letters returned marked 'gone away'. If you pay by cheque, your membership may lapse by default if you don't receive a reminder; if you pay by

standing order, you'll be paying your subscription but getting nothing for it.

So if you change your address, please email membership@aschb.org.uk or write to ASCHB Membership Secretary, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.

Membership list amendments

A full list of current members is issued with the copies of this Newsletter mailed to members

ASCHB COMMITTEE CHANGES

Elizabeth Moore has resigned from her post as Membership Secretary from October 2008. The Committee are very grateful for her sterling work; without her guidance through the vagaries of the British banking system and reminders to recalcitrant members our finances would be in a parlous state. The Committee would welcome any offers of help with this role.

We welcome new committee members Sherry Bates, Jackie Heath, and Alexandra di Valmarana, who were elected at the last AGM.

ASCHB REGIONAL GROUPS

Would you like to encourage conservation enthusiasm in your local area? Local convenors exist to bring local members together and arrange meetings and visits in Edinburgh, East Midlands, West Midlands and the North-West, but South-West England, the North-East and East Anglia are currently unrepresented. Please contact Ian Bristow if you would be interested in organising local meetings. The existing local convenors are:

NW Region

Jamie Coath,

16 Upton Park, Upton, Chester, Cheshire
CH2 1DG.

Email: jamescoath@pmt.co.uk

RIBA (SE London Region)

Denis Owen

8 Wembley Road, Hampton, Middlesex
TW12 2QE

Email: denis.owen@atkinglobal.com

NEWSLETTER

With the launch of our new website it is now easier than ever for members to contact the news letter. If you have some project or practice news, or you have some burning issues you want to get off your chest, or an interesting photograph, don't forget to send it to the newsletter, either at the address on page 2 or by e-mail to newsletter@aschb.org.uk

ASCHB TRANSACTIONS

As announced at the AGM, the Committee has concluded that it is no longer necessary or worthwhile to hold a stock of back numbers of *Transactions*. The little demand that there is is for particular articles and with the ready availability of high quality colour reprographics it can be managed on demand. The contents list is on the ASCHB website, together with a list of the libraries known to subscribe. This will allow minimising the print run, with a small saving in cost, while still generating income from the provision of copies.

The existing stock is to be offered to members and authors and to libraries which already subscribe or are willing to do so. There are no complete sets available and Volume 3 is out of print, but it could be reproduced to make up new sets or to complete existing ones if there is sufficient demand. The cost to members and authors is £1.00 p&p for each volume, with a minimum order value of £5.00. Authors may request multiple copies. The unit cost of reproducing Volume 3 would be additional.

All requests for back numbers, including interest in a reprint of Volume 3, should be submitted to the Editor by the end of August 2008 at transactions@aschb.org.uk. Should demand for any particular volume exceed the available stock, distribution will be at the Editor's discretion, with priority for single copies, not first come first serve.

PRACTICE AND MEMBERS NEWS

SINCLAIR JOHNSTON OFFICE MOVE

Sinclair Johnston and Partners Limited have moved from Clapham to new offices at 93 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BX
Tel: 020 7593 1900
www.sinclairjohnston.co.uk

HERITAGE LINK

ASCHB is now a member of Heritage Link www.heritagelink.org.uk, an organisation 'for national heritage groups to promote the central role of the voluntary movement in the sector and to make their voice heard collectively and coherently'.

REPORTS OF TALKS AND VISITS

JOHN ALLAN

CONSERVATION OF MODERN MOVEMENT ARCHITECTURE

In March 06, John Allan talked to ASCHB about his experiences in the conservation of Modern Movement architecture. For over 20 years, John Allan has been fortunate to meet and get to know influential figures such as Lubetkin, Connell Ward Lucas, Erno Goldfinger and Patrick Gwynne. Avanti Architects actually carry out more new build than conservation, and John Allan was disinclined to draw a distinction between the two: - design judgements must be made in both at every turn. He addressed the question "in what way does the conservation of modern buildings differ from earlier historic buildings?"

Because modern buildings were designed closely for new functions they face earlier redundancy. He posed the question as the buildings were experimental, if they suffer from a failure in service what is the value of repairing them? Post War housing is not rare; philosophically the architects were building instruments rather than monuments. Should a tool that has outlived its purpose be discarded? The owners of the buildings want answers, not history. The criterion for listing is that the building is different in kind or degree. So the significance is important to define, to examine what we are trying to achieve, and investigate alternative routes.

A typology has emerged over the years: - the 'working icon' and the 'fossil with a future'. The Penguin Pool at the London Zoo was one of the former. Designed by Tecton in 1934, it is listed grade 1. In the mid 1980s its conservation was three-way funded by English Heritage, London Zoo and Lord Palumbo. The concrete ramps were repaired with polymer modified mortar and alkaline coatings and the colour values re-established. Changes were developed in a 'Tectonic' manner.

The Modern Movement can represent a progression in thinking – Lubetkin's Finsbury Health Centre was a step forward in public health care. By 1990s there was not one bit of the building that did not need repair, but the Health Authority could not afford works to conservation standards so only partial repairs were carried out. Original materials are often hard to match, such as the Thermalux panels with an 'angel-hair' sheen to the curtain walling. John Allan has had to employ considerable ingenuity to get the same effect.

At Isokon, Wells Coates designed innovative collective housing as an answer to how people should live in a city. Isokon was a building of 36 flats, of minimum size (25m²), and included restaurants. It was aimed at new urban dwellers of the 1930s. But although the building was listed, by 2001 it was uninhabitable and the Notting Hill Housing Group was chosen to purchase and restore the flats. In line with the original social ideas, 25 of the flats were converted for keyworker rental and shared ownership for sale locally, and 11 for outright sale. The features were retained and refurbished. New windows were fitted and services renewed. Changes had to be carried out to the roof terrace because of the regulations covering falls and insulation. The original pink colour was reinstated – black and white photographs misled people into believing it was a white building. An icon has to work for its living and Isokon is now in a position to do this.

John Allan's other category was "Fossils with a future", for example, Willow Road, now owned by the National Trust. It was architect Ernő Goldfinger's home, which he designed and built in 1938, and was occupied by the family until the deaths of Ernő and his wife. Technical problems had to be faced in presenting the house as if the owner had just stepped out, but complying with the requirements for public access. A curator's flat was formed, and a small cinema in one of the garages. A quinquennial inspection regime allows NT to carry out minimum repairs, retain the original and review it regularly.

Another National Trust project was The Homewood - the house influenced by the Villa Savoie that Patrick Gwynne designed for his parents. He wanted the house to be tenanted as well as to allow public access which posed a different set of problems.

Owners have to revalue their assets – conservation has a part to play. Rising expectations led to works at the student accommodation at New North Court, Jesus College. It was upgraded inside and out to meet current standards – more bathrooms were inserted as it is no longer satisfactory to share a bathroom, especially for out-of-term conference visitor use which is important economically for the college.

Islington Council regarded Wynford House, designed by Lubetkin and Tecton, as a liability and intended to dispose of the building and site to developers. The building needed regeneration – the materials were eroded and degraded, the facade interest had been lost – repairs were needed to

exposed aggregate panels. The task was to re-describe and reveal/retain the original visual appearance of the material. The cost of replacing the aggregate panels was prohibitive, so artists were employed to repaint the aggregate in trompe l'oeil. The addition of penthouses added value to the project. The Estate was transferred into Housing Association ownership, and was designated a conservation area.

The list of Avanti projects include the White House 1932 by Amyas Connell and Connell Ward Lucas's 66 Frognal, Miramonte - Maxwell Fry's tribute to Tugendhat, Peter Moro's Harbour Meadow - another house that had been overpainted white because black and white photos didn't show the colour, and Lubetkin's High Point penthouse. As an acknowledged authority on the Modern Movement, John Allan was an expert witness at the Greenside case - the house was illegally demolished in August 2003, although it could have been upgraded to modern standards.

His work encompasses a growing number of conservation based guidelines for complexes such as Dudley Zoo, and the Barbican and Golden Lane Estates which he refers to as 'making road maps'. John Allan has drawn up management guidelines for what sorts of intervention can be permitted, and for what triggers applications. Categories were sorted into 'traffic light' system – green, amber, red, black, and blue.

There is embodied value in buildings, and owners must look again at what shocked people when the buildings were new and understand the excitement they generated. There must be understanding between stakeholders and a rediscovery of the original sense of optimism. Conservation has an important role in regeneration.

Starting his career at the GLC, John Allan moved on to work with Shepherd Epstein Hunter, until forming Avanti in 1981. He has been a director since 1983. He is a member of the London Advisory Council Listing Committee and in 2002 published a biography of Berthold Lubetkin.

DAVID JOHNSON AND EMMA CARMICHAEL

POST WAR CONSERVATION IN THE BALKANS

At the last meeting of the 05-06 series in April 2006 David Johnson and Emma Carmichael gave us a talk on their experiences of post war conservation in the Balkans – the war in question being the conflicts arising from the breakup of Yugoslavia between 1992 and 95, and the riots in

2004. Damage had also been suffered in earlier wars and earthquakes.

In 2003 the Council of Europe and European Commission invited David Johnson and Emma Carmichael to participate in meetings with other architects to consider pilot studies for conservation – the Integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan/Survey of the Archaeological Heritage for seven countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia (including Kosovo) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Heritage Assessments were completed, and a ‘Prioritised Intervention List’ drawn up for each country.

Legislation, heritage identification and protection, management and available resources all had to be reported for each country.

The buildings and sites identified covered a wide range of types, religious buildings, urban and rural settlements, castles, bridges, and industrial sites - many of them ruined or highly dilapidated. Stones have been taken for other projects. Uncontrolled development threatens the buildings, along with depopulation, the lack of technical conservation skills as well as finance and resources, and, not least, political factors. These are the first steps in a huge programme to save, protect and rehabilitate the cultural inheritance of the Balkans.

A full account of this lecture is included in Volume 29 of the ASCHB Transactions.

David Johnson is a Partner of Dannatt, Johnson Architect. Emma Carmichael is an Associate of Dannatt, Johnson Architects

JO THWAITES

KEW PALACE IN KEW GARDENS

Works to Kew Palace started in 1996 when it was found that the brick gables were in such a state they could have been pushed over. Donald Insall and Tony Dyson took over the repairs, which were reported in ASCHB transactions Volume 27. Another phase of works has just been completed and Jo Thwaites, the Project Manager came to talk to ASCHB in October 2006, and then organised a visit for members.

The Palace is a survival of a group of larger buildings. Only the sundial remains from the White House designed by Kent, which was demolished in 1801. George III commissioned a castellated palace, in the style of Windsor, which was raised, erected and roofed, but due to the King’s illness

and lack of finances, it was not fitted out inside, and later demolished, including the actual room where George III was confined during his attacks of porphyria. The present palace was used as an annex and occupied by George III, Queen Charlotte and their daughters during 1801-11.

The original house was built by Samuel Fortrey as a family house on the river in 1632. There is evidence that the massive primary and secondary structural timbers were constantly repaired, and there were three roof structures at least. There is a huge amount of information in the fabric, including layers of decorative finishes. During the works a lot of the processes were filmed, recording the evidence before it was covered up again.

In 1728 it was leased for Royal use, and the house has been presented to reflect the time that George III’s family lived there.

For the most recent works, the whole building had to be re-scaffolded, avoiding bearing on the walls, and was re-decorated externally. During the first repair traces of ruddle had been found, dated to pre 19c and after a long debate in 1997-98 it was decided to re-apply it. The sacrificial lime wash had toned down a bit but there was still a considerable difference and it needed to be homogenised.

Internally, fragments of green verditer wallpaper, and piece of flock border, with an 1804 tax stamp, enabled the re-creation of decorative schemes. Some rooms were left as they had been found. The taking of samples and analysis had to be done with great care. Decorative schemes also revealed the extent of alterations – imitation balustrading to a Jacobean staircase was found hidden in the roof space.

One the major problems of the re-presentation of the House was access for all. An early 19c illustration showed the west wing and privy tower which had been demolished. This precedent was used to site the lift in an enclosure clad in silvered oak, the steelwork frame being lifted into place in two parts. Carefully examination of the traces of the west wing showed where links could be made to access each floor. A ramp was incorporated into the front entrance steps.

A Construction Management contract was used for this phase of the works, which proved very successful with the number of specialist contractors and designers. The craftsmen developed a great understanding of the project and were careful to preserve discoveries they made, such as

grisaille work pre-dating the George III decorations. Recording the work was an important part of the project.

It was vital that the atmosphere of an untouched and abandoned house should not be lost, and the stories of the house and its inhabitants are explained through the introduction of voices at conversational level, and faint speaking images. More conventional interpretation is provided in the Welcome centre sited a little distance away from the Palace.

A more detailed account of the works appears in the latest edition of ASCHB Transactions, Volume 30.

Jo Thwaites is Project Sponsor at Historic Royal Palaces. She was awarded the MVO for services to the Kew Palace Project

VISIT TO KEW PALACE

Despite the grey, wet weather a party of ASHCB members were fascinated to see the conservation and new presentation of Kew Palace by Historic Royal Palaces. Following Jo Thwaites' talk on 25th October 2006, we were eager to see the results of the painstaking investigations and careful conservation that she had described to us. The innovative presentation included a soundtrack, starting outside the building with sound of the arrival of a coach and horses, and the unloading of the luggage. The gloomy weather added to the melancholic atmosphere engendered by the ghostly voices.

Inside the house, lighting levels are very low to protect the historic fabric, but there was enough to see the pre-George III scheme spotted by a vigilant carpenter in the King's Library.

Artefacts relating to the King on display include 'crib lists' for music concerts used by the King. A short film explained the history of the King, his wife Charlotte and his 15 children, and grandchild Princess Charlotte.

Passing in to the dining room, where the design of the carpet was taken from the Woodward Grosvenor archive, the full vibrancy of carpet and curtain patterns were striking.

The King's Breakfast room now contains the doll's house that the King's daughters decorated. Views from this room show how the garden and house were related, self contained, and of domestic scale.

On the second floor, we were able to see the fragments of decoration that had formed the basis for the new schemes. As well as the rooms now open to the public, we were able to visit the attics and see the evidence of the changes that had taken place at roof level.

A study room has been created with reproductions of the accounts and documents relating to the house. For more information there are computer links to a database. Great efforts have been made to overcome the difficulties in presenting the building for the casual visitor, more informed visitor, and serious researcher.

This is a house whose walls really speak, although at times it needed concentration to identify the voices - the was experience like moving through a radio play.

It is an interesting experience and well worth a visit. It demonstrates a wide range of problems and solutions in presenting historic places.

ASCHB would like to thank Jo Thwaites and Historic Royal Palaces for making the visit possible and guiding us through the Palace.

The report of Donald Buttress's lecture has been held over to the next issue.

FRANK KELSALL ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND THE CONSERVATION OF BUILDINGS

On a cold and snowy evening in January, Frank Kelsall gave us his talk on his career as an architectural historian and the relationship between architectural history and the conservation of historic buildings. He started work at the London County Council, as an architectural historian. On only his third day at work, he was sent by his boss, Norman Harrison, to the York Water Gate, in Embankment Gardens marooned from the Thames. The Water Gate had been acquired by the LCC by Special Act of Parliament. At that time it was thought to be by Inigo Jones, but has also been attributed to Balthazar Gerbier or Nicholas Stone. The LCC had needed an historian who could handle documents as "Architects know only about preservation". Some of the documents in the LCC files were historically important in themselves, such as a letter dated 1879 to the Metropolitan Board of Works about the Victoria Embankment from the SPAB at Buckingham Street. It was signed by William Morris.

The LCC files held illuminating letters - 17 Fleet Street, popularly reputed to be “formerly the Palace of Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey” was repaired and restored by LCC in an ‘arts and crafts’ manner. SPAB criticised it as speculative restoration. A letter of protest was drafted by Lethaby, who couldn’t sign it as he was employed by LCC in the Education Department at the time. Preservation Orders were brought in by the 1913 Act of Parliament, and 75 Dean Street was the subject of the first order, but it was unconfirmed by Select Committee and so it was demolished and its panelled interiors re-erected at the Art Institute of Chicago.

In the 1930s there was an attack on Georgian London with the demolition of the Adelphi. The excuse was that ‘cement features’ had been added on. Hundreds of Adam fireplaces were stripped out. The 1932 Town and Country Planning Act, championed by Lord Kennet, allowed local authorities to make preservation orders. In 1944-47 the idea of listing was introduced.

Godfrey, Summerson and Goodhart Rendel drew up the list of ‘modern’ buildings post 1800-1840. Walter Godfrey wanted more listed buildings, Summerson wanted less. The LCC considered buildings circa 1919-1939: Highpoint might be considered for listing, but not Hays Wharf as its architect was still living. Lutyens’ Middleton Park of 1936 was listed in 1949.

In the 1960s historic buildings were again under attack.– Euston Arch had been demolished. The Grange was only just saved. Parts of Cavendish Square and Great Ormond Street were under threat. It brought out a campaigning spirit. The proposed demolition of the Pantehnicons in Motcomb Street and West Halkin Street went to appeal, but it was refused and the buildings saved. Architectural historians played a significant part in the proceedings. The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain had been in existence in the UK since 1956.

There were some victories and some losses: 148 Piccadilly, built in the 1860s, known as ‘Rothschild Row’ was demolished by LCC for a road widening scheme, but the DoH retained Richmond House and adjacent buildings up to Bridge Street when the scheme was called in by the Tory Government.

The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 introduced Conservation Areas and saved places such as Gibson Square in Islington. The basis of the Conservation Areas in London were the historic great estates, the Islington squares, De Beauvoir

Square, and the Clothworker’s Estate in the east of Islington. For some areas there were lots of documents, less so in the less fashionable areas. There were useful finds such as the title deeds to the properties on the Eton College Estate, which included block plans. The identification of the earliest terraced houses in England in Newington Green demonstrated the importance of research.

Leases proved important sources -Bedford Square building agreements showed that leaseholders were granted the liberty to cut down the first floor windows. The leasehold system itself formed some of the pattern of development.

The field widened from houses to Board Schools, LCC Housing and industrial buildings - to some the Three Mills at Bromley-by-Bow was “not architecture”, but the House Mill is now listed Grade I.

Research also revealed patent building materials such as Soane’s terracotta pots, Coade stone, mathematical tiles, and patent fireproofing.

In 1986, the Frank Kelsall joined English Heritage as an Inspector of Historic Buildings, and became involved in urban Manchester where the Ancoats Textile Mills were at risk. Redhill St. Mills and the Royal Mills New Sedgewick showed the change in appreciation of very large buildings. Anita Street, renamed from Sanitary Street, was an example of late 19c urban renewal of modest terraces - Schinkel records seeing these streets.

St George’s Hall, in Liverpool, was one of the buildings that gave Frank Kelsall’s work a ‘temple theme’ including Ince Blundell garden temple built to house Henry Blundell’s collection of sculpture. The Free Trade Hall in Manchester was reconstructed behind its facade into a five star hotel. Michael Hopkins connected the Manchester City Art Gallery with Barry’s Athenaeum building with a modern insertion. Disappointingly Hopkins did not consult the Archives in the City Library when reconstructing the top floor.

Architectural history equals social history – the effect of moving buildings, reconstruction and rebuilding all have to be considered. Frank Kelsall finished by stating his belief that architecture is to enable people in the widest sense – to live their lives to the full, to feel awe, wellbeing, comfort, safety.

Frank Kelsall is one of the founders of the Architectural History Practice, a specialist research consultancy for public and private clients.

NICK HILL

APETHORPE HALL – THE CURRENT REPAIRS TO THE STATE APARTMENTS.

Apethorpe Hall was, for many years, a major Building At Risk. Finally it was subject to a compulsory purchase order in 2004 and English Heritage carried out a repair and rescue programme. It was an ambitious and unusual project as it is intended to be returned to private use.

Built for a local notable in the late 15c, by mid 16c it was owned by the Mildmay family who added state apartments in the 1560s, obliterated by later phases.

In the 1620s, James I was a regular visitor and ordered Francis Fane, 1st Earl of Westmorland, to rebuild and extend the state apartments. He gave oak trees from Rockingham Forest for the construction. The east range was extended into the courtyard, the long gallery and the roof walk added. The state rooms were in the south range.

The 7th Earl commissioned Roger Morris to remodel the building in Palladian style in 1740s. Copies of the drawings exist showing domes, towers and a thirteen bay Doric colonnade, but the Earl spent his fortune on Mereworth and only part of the works were carried out. The plans show the Earl was keen to retain the Jacobean state apartments. In the 1840s further alterations were carried out.

In the early 1900s, the building was brought up to date as an Edwardian Country House, including improvements to the estate village, and the gardens and park were laid out. Country Life had some excellent photos from 1909 which proved very useful in the restoration.

After World War II the house and immediate grounds were sold, cutting off the original access road. The building then became an approved school, with institutional additions and alterations, and a row of staff houses. The school closed in 1982. It was then bought by a Libyan business man, who left the country as political relations cooled, and never returned to live at Apethorpe. The historic building parts deteriorated quickly, dry rot broke out, ceilings were in danger of collapse. The house only survived because of the sterling work of George Kelley, the resident caretaker and gardener who continued to carry out basic maintenance even though his wages were unpaid for years. Statutory notices were served, and English Heritage did £6m of essential repairs in

1999. After a public inquiry a compulsory purchase order was confirmed and EH took possession in 2004.

Scaffolding and temporary roof were in place by March 2005. Enabling works had to be targeted within the procurement limits. Specialist investigations were carried out, asbestos had to be removed and priorities set. As much risk as possible had to be taken out of the works; EU rules demanded Official Journal of the European Union procedures on advertising throughout Europe, so tight criteria had to be set for judging quality. Enough time for surveys had been allowed in the programme to ensure a sound specification. EH Research Department carried out investigations and studies into all aspects of the building and grounds.

Methods of elimination for death watch beetle, wet and dry rot had to be decided upon. Matching Collyweston slates, and other materials had to be sourced. Post war houses built for the approved school staff were demolished and the slates salvaged. Ceilings were propped and crash decks erected. Once the 1620s plasterwork had been protected underneath, floors were lifted and debris cleared out. The architects made a stone by stone survey. The roof structure was repaired and beams strengthened with fitch plates. To avoid dismantling the fine ashlar of the leaning gables they were carefully jacked back into plumb. The stone slate roof with diminishing courses and laced valleys was reinstated. In the 1900s works, iron cramps had been put into the chimney stacks and they now had to be removed and repairs made bit by bit. The roof walk leadwork was reinstated in sand cast lead, terne coated stainless steel was used for gutters where the drips and steps had proved to be deficient.

Stone was matched to as near the original King's Cliffe as possible. A study of mason's marks has enabled them to be identified with the workshop of Thomas Thorp of Kings Cliffe.

Comprehensive removal of the 20c paint clogging the plasterwork revealed the fine moulded 1620s work. Although the plasterwork was coming detached in places, no large areas of remodelling were needed. Close investigation also revealed important details about how the ceilings were made.

The partial dismantling of the panelling in the Long Gallery revealed answers to questions on its survival and original configuration. Nick Hill has written detailed study of the panelling and repairs

in the latest issue of ASCHB Transactions, Volume 30.

The works have also revealed a discreet passageway leading between the King's Chamber and the room occupied by the favourite, the Duke of Buckingham.

As an exemplar of a conservation project, the investigations were written up in detail in the EH Research News no. 5 Winter 2006-2007 (available on-line), and the SPAB magazine Cornerstone Vol 28. No.2 2007 devotes a major part of the issue to it.

EH are again opening the house for pre-booked tours every Wednesday and Saturday from 28 May to 30 August 2008, see www.english-heritage.org.uk/apethorpehall for details or call 0870 333 1181.

Nick Hill is Apethorpe Hall Project Director at English Heritage.

VISIT TO APETHORPE

On a bright but chilly March day, a group of ASCHB members assembled at Apethorpe to see the works in progress. The sheer scale and range of the enterprise became apparent. The demolition of the post war houses had revealed the 1740s eyecatcher dovecot. There were few signs left of the approved school that had occupied the site.



As he led us through the site, Nick explained the where evidence had been found of the alterations and the amazing survival of the plasterwork.



We were lucky enough to be able to inspect one of the ceilings at close quarters.



The vitality of the plasterwork was striking



We then made our way up to the roof level and the lead flats behind the parapet. The access gantry across the roof gave a fine view of the roof slating in progress.



Finally we admired the house from the gardens, with its sinister topiary.

Our thanks are due to Nick Hill for arranging the visit and sharing his enthusiasm for the project with us.

ELENI MAKRI

ST PANCRAS CHAMBERS AND THE FORMER MIDLAND GRAND HOTEL – A CASE STUDY IN MATCHING BRICKWORK.

In March 2007 Eleni Makri told us of her work on the historic brickwork at St Pancras station. George Gilbert Scott's Midland Hotel was built between 1867-77. It stands set back from the Euston Road behind a ramped forecourt raised on arches. On Pancras Road there were 4 arches, which had been altered in early 20c to 2 arches and a set of stairs. During the works to rejuvenate the station as the Eurostar terminal, repairs and alterations were needed to this forecourt to form the new western ticket hall. The stairs and one of the arches were to be taken down, the stone and brickwork of the facade were to be salvaged, stored and re-used, but the hard mortar made the bricks impossible to salvage. Areas of new brickwork needed to be designed and new bricks sourced. Eleni Makri showed that this was not a simple process by any manner of means. This involved intensive detective work to unpick the different eras of work, including the major repairs carried out by British Rail and English Heritage in the 1990s to this Grade 1 listed building.

There were three areas of original brickwork all with similarities and differences, including the thickness of the joints. Mortar analysis caused problems – it proved difficult to collect enough mortar for testing from some areas. The original specification survives at Kew, but the analysis proved that it had not been followed. Painstaking investigations led to the conclusion that the authentic pointing was a thin joint in black mortar.

The original bricks were 'Gripper's patent' bricks from Nottingham, and it took two years in trying to match the bricks, finally a 're-pressed' Ibstock brick was used. In the 1990s works the bricks had been matched to the original protected faces. This time the decision was made to match the qualities of the brickwork as it survived with scuffed surfaces. Size, too, proved a problem. Modern bricks are not made to such close tolerances as the originals which leads to misfits in the coursing. Ultimately the decision was made to cut bricks to fit.

ASCHB Transactions Vol. 29 2006 has published Eleni Makri's illustrated article, recording how and why the conservation decisions were made, and how the colour and finish to the brickwork was achieved so that the wall would appear as a complete entity, but close inspection would allow the new work to be identified.

Eleni Makri is an accredited conservation architect. She was instructed by Arup and Allies and Morrison Architects as an external consultant for this project.

STEPHEN BOND AND PETER SCOTT *RESTORING GLASS LANTERNS*

The final meeting of the 2006-7 season was held on 25 April when we had two speakers on the subject of restoring glass lanterns but which more properly was repairing glass domes.

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

The first speaker was Stephen Bond, formerly of Historic Royal Palaces and now with Tuffin, Ferraby, Taylor Cultural Heritage. The project he described was at the Founders Building of the Fitzwilliam Museum. Designed by Joseph Basevi, and finished in 1843, it was one of his last buildings before his untimely death in 1845. The project was funded for two of the glazed domes over the galleries. Although Basevi's specification has survived it was not until the domes could be inspected at close quarters that the design and construction could be understood. Initially, the most pressing problem was thought to be the glazing bars, which had been heavily taped over. However, it soon appeared that the copper cladding on the ribs was just as much of a problem. Inadequate design of the seams had caused rippling and wrinkling of the copper. The copper was 1/18th inch thick (0.6 to 0.7 mm) and the bays were far too long. The glazing bars were taped, but they were not the main cause of the damage. The ribs were badly decayed. Under the finial the copper

was screw fixed. The timber was of Baltic pine from Riga, which had decayed in places. Protection of the timber was a problem as it is difficult to form copper without hot works. At the foot of each dome there were cast iron and timber ring beams.

Ingenious anti condensation measures had been incorporated into the design - copper pipes were found, which were blocked, possibly within 30-40 years of their installation. There were also clay pots under the dome structure to help water evaporate (1840 experimentation), and an opening mechanism for the lantern lights.

Basevi used an archaic specification for the glass – Crown /Normandy but it appeared to be cylinder glass etched externally. Only 10 – 15% of the glass survived - none of the original glass was put back. In recent years there has been a serious lack of interest in historic glass. Condition surveys and conservation plans often ignore glass completely. New condensation measures involved glass tiles at t-bars to allow the water to runoff. The T bars were of fine workmanship. Replacement timber was British Columbian pine, with the timbers stained where necessary. Some was built up as a laminate. All the work was done with the input of EH and the conservation officer. The copper bay sizes were reduced, and a single lock joint was used. The profiles were as the original, except for the finial – it only had a 10mm lip and was never watertight – the new detail is 50mm tall which allows the ribs to get under the finial and have a secret fixing. Re-glazing was with linseed oil putty. As Museum conditions were essential anti-UV measures had to be fitted. The glazing bars could only take 3mm glass so laminated glass could not be used. Even the thickness of the film could not be accommodated inside so it was decided to put the film on the exterior and accept the reduced life expectancy. Health and Safety was a major problem because of the fragility of the glazing although the film gives some protection. It was dealt with as a management issue, as it was recognized that the Museum was better placed than ‘lay owners’. The works were carried out in conjunction with the John Miller Partnership, and Gardiner Theobald Project Managers.

Stephen Bond is a Partner of Tuffin Ferraby Taylor LLP

WOODHALL PARK

Peter Scott of Martin Ashley Architects. Woodhall Park was built as a manor house at Watton at Stone. Designed by Thomas Leverton in 1777, it was occupied by the Abel-Smith family

from 1801 until it became a prep school in 1930s. The entrance hall has paintings by Kauffman and the original 1782 print room survives. The central stair has fan ceilings, and it is lit only by a domed lantern. In 2004 investigations and a feasibility study showed that this key feature was in need of restoration. Research had found very little recorded history except for the 1960s work – many of the details found were from that era. This glazed dome had 32 segments, alternating wide and narrow, with fine wrought iron ribs, seated on a timber frame, lined internally. There was a vent at the top and a mechanism for raising and lowering the chandelier. The thickness of the bands decreased to make the dome look larger. 2005 investigations showed that patch repairs had failed, and water had damaged the stair handrail below. The glass panels sat directly on the guilloche band detail, and were ill-fitting with a 4-5 mm gap. The heavy glass had caused the lead to pull away. Putty had been applied over the ribs. The lead was only dressed 10mm under the glass in a very exposed situation and the gaps had been stuffed with putty. The glass panels were found to be of a different curvature and were packed out. This may have been introduced to give more clearance over the leadwork. There had been movement in the ribs, causing cracking. The glass had discoloured and was aesthetically unpleasing. A scope of repair works and a specification had been drawn up. It was decided to use a Trade Management Contract. Safety was a principal concern as the school children were still in occupation. When all the old coverings were stripped off the fine wrought iron ribs, 2mm thick and 40mm high, were revealed with a ring at the top to support the chandelier. A sample of the corroded metal was sent for analysis and found to be wrought iron with a microstructure indicating that the ribs were contemporary with the house. Most of the ribs were warped along their length. The new glass needed to have a regular curve. The ribs were repaired and new cast iron extensions added where necessary. Cast iron cleats were fixed above the lead bands. At the top of the dome the ribs had become distorted because of the pressure so an extra compression ring was added. Most of the lead ornament survived. The weight of the glass was a problem. The glass itself was originally fish scale pattern as at Syon House. This could not be reproduced on cost and exposure grounds. Should single sheets and curved glass be used? It was decided that laminated 9½ mm curved sheets of glass should be used due to the use of the building and vulnerability of the lantern. The glass was lifted in sequence to avoid damage. There was some insect infestation to the curved timber panels at the base of the dome - new lead had been installed in the 1960s but not to best practice. It

was replaced with new sand cast lead, and flashings extended. Some of the original sand cast lead was retained as undercloaking. The joints were hollow rolls with a double bead of lead at the base. Putty would cause maintenance and safety issues, so lead cappings were fitted in lieu.

The pulley system for the chandelier was overhauled and re-fixed in a new housing. The ventilation rose was 20c, covered with plaster leaves with the air gaps fixed to cross bands, but the plaster bud was fixed to the chandelier cable.

The 18c paint scheme was analysed, and found to be a pale blue-grey, raised detail in off-white, darker behind the rosettes and the dentil cornice at the base.

Peter Scott paid tribute to a great team of consultants and specialists, including Chris Topp for the wrought iron.

Peter Scott is a Partner of Martin Ashley Architects.

VISIT TO CHATHAM HISTORIC DOCKYARD 21st April 2007

A warm and sunny April day saw a group of ASCHB members at Chatham Historic Dockyard. Over the past decades works have been carried out on most of the historic buildings, and at the time of the visit emergency works were in progress at the Smithery –the last ‘Building at Risk’ in the Dockyard. But this does not mean that there is no more to discover. Recent floor repairs in the old plank store next to the Wheelwright’s shop had revealed seven layers of planking on the floor concealing timbers of a ship of the line. Research is being carried out to identify the ship.



The group were then privileged to go up to the mezzanine floor of No. 3 covered slip. A lift and

staircases are being installed to allow public access to this vast space. This building is the largest timber slip cover built for the Royal Navy and the mezzanine floor was installed in 1901 when the slip was adapted for use as a boat store.



The Commander’s House is now used for conferences and functions, and the group admired the early English Delft tiles in the ‘blue loo’.



The magnificent painted ceiling over the staircase has maritime motifs, and was believed to have been painted for a captain’s cabin. The garden layout dates from the mid 17c and contains a brick lined ice well. The Naval Officers’ terrace of housing and mews are now privately occupied.

The Dockyard church is a simple building, retaining its galleries which stood in for the Houses of Parliament in the film ‘Amazing Grace’; the Dockyard has been used in a great many film and television productions.

The sail and colour loft stood empty, but the Ropery is still a commercial concern, with an exhibition and costumed interpreters to bring to life the privations of the workforce.

With the exhibitions in the Mast Houses and the Anchor Wharf storehouses, and the historic ships there was still plenty left for several future visits.

37th ASCHB CONFERENCE “LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM 60 YEARS OF CONSERVATION?”

The 37th ASCHB conference was held at the Art Workers Guild on 15 February 2007. **Malcolm Ains** introduced the proceedings. Looking back over the past 60 years since the 1947 Act there had been many developments in the protection of listed buildings – it was only in 1968 that Listed Building Consent had been introduced. Professional advice had since become available, PPGs had been issued. The principal change had been in attitudes to conservation. It had been seen as a province of the middle class, but had grown into a part of the wider movement for urban regeneration and sustainability. Scholarship had developed, amenity societies had grown up. In parallel there had been a decline of industrialisation and the economic effects of tourism, and more recently the energy crisis and the impact of lottery money.

Donald Insall talked about *‘The Longer View’*. He set the conference a series of questions, pointing out the inexorable advance of time and the perspective that age gives. ASCHB was growing up and it was time to look at where we had come from and where we were going. The word ‘conservation’ can have so many meanings – for many of us it is beginning to have unwelcome overtones. It should be simply the care and management of our buildings and our surroundings. It should be proactive – we should get there before the problems do. To do this we have to know what we want and what we value, but also what the future may want.

Over recent decades we have moved from covering cathedrals and henges to wider concerns of the group value of cathedral close or terrace. Conservation areas have grown up with the ideas of not only preserving but enhancing them. And ‘World Monuments’ – how can we control city centres – which cities? How tall the buildings? How near?

He asked “have we got that right?” Are we sometimes too partisan, overvaluing the perfect period example over one showing evidence of change? Do we overvalue the identity of original

fabric over cyclical renewal? When does interpretation change into theme park?

Issues such as Health and Safety, CPD, NVQs and the like occupy our time – have we got the balance right?

He looked back to the 1950s when the world felt drained and grey. Every energy had been spent on the War – building care had been negative. There was little of skills and little of money. We have come a long way to homes that cost a million pounds.

The mid-century grasped this situation with courage and brought in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. The Historic Buildings Council and later English Heritage did a lot with a little grant money, until the advent of Lottery Funding – now declining. Now cathedrals, museums and galleries and parks have to pay their way – sometimes by “dumbing-down”.

Listing set up as a advice to planning officers has become calcified and lost the elasticity planned for it. Overt repairs – thumping great buttresses and tile repair of stonework have become less common. The emphasis is on substitutes – photographic painted ceilings at Greenwich, fibreglass chimneys, and secret repairs – corseting, drilling and threading, silicones and epoxy fillers.

New ways of dealing with historic buildings have grown up; facadism -“gut and stuff” - and conversion of churches into housing given away by forests of skylights.

Society too has been in flux, becoming multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-faith. We move about more, we expect to drive to supermarkets, local services are being replaced by centralized ones, we fly away on holidays. But will our oil run out?

Technical advances have been rapid – Donald Insall remembers drawing on linen with Indian ink. Now we have e-mails – how many of those will await you tomorrow? And Xerox, fax, IT, CAD, digital cameras, iPods and Instant Availability. Proactive Building Care could be so simple.

He considered the high point of the last sixty years, in terms of saving buildings, was 1975 European Architectural Heritage Year. It brought stimulus, positive action and celebration.

We need a focus – a centre of excellence, and an Event such as a world heritage year. We have to face up to climate change – we have been consuming the very atmosphere we need for our survival

To sum up – the key which we must never lose is to accept change and guide that change. How can we expect people elected in the short term to consider the long term? And having trained and appointed experts to study and assess and make selections, are these now accessible only to those who can afford to apply?

Martin Cherry spoke on ‘*Designating the heritage of the recent past: the unravelling of a national consensus?*’

He pointed out that we are in a time of immense change and the challenge is to see it with an historian’s detachment. The difficulty is to identify trends in the micro environment of conservation. We have a thirty year rule as a self-denying ordinance, but we haven’t time to detach ourselves from what is happening now. A Government White Paper is due out (Heritage Protection for the 21st Century) and further papers are contingent upon it. We are on the threshold of major changes in attitudes and expectations – who will designate to what criteria? And changes in the professional approach to history – the history of the people is becoming more important – every one now is an historian.

Conservation has been written into the planning system. Peter Brook, Secretary of State for National Heritage 1992-94, accepted that if buildings were of historical or architectural value, he was bound to list them and their future could be worked out. He was sympathetic and firmly legal, but he was the last one. This Government is the least sympathetic. Martin Cherry talked of the rapid turnover of civil servants. DCMS is low down on their career paths. Confusing advice has been given to ministers and the current minister appeared not to be disposed to support our heritage. Will that change?

Human Rights legislation was being used in opposition to conservation practitioners.

New roles won’t allow the inspector just to turn up, but a letter must be written and consultations arranged. There have been attacks on the Images of England site by landowners invoking infringement of human rights being ascendant over the legal right to take a photograph from a public footpath. There have been changes in engagement and consultation with the building owners – Stephen Dorrell opened out the process but ran the risk of a building being demolished as soon as it was considered for listing. The emergence of conservation plans and the broadening of the definition of heritage assets have changed the parameters, but the perception of expertise and the role of the professional has been undermined.

There has been listing creep – the expansion of what is listable. The number of listings rose from a quarter to half a million over the 70s and 80s. Originally the Anglican parish churches were the benchmark - now non-conformist, industrial and post WWII sites are now included. English Heritage’s work is in protecting the physical fabric, not people, which means it is hard pressed to protect the ambience of modest buildings.

Protection of industrial buildings has focused on the icon, like Ancoats cotton mills, but they are part of a wider complex that needs to be understood in a context that has been taken away. There has also been recognition of places like the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter: a concentration of manufacturers of small things, individually not of huge importance, but significant together.

Vernacular and modern buildings were now listed due to the efforts of people such as Professor Roy Brunskill, Bridget Cherry, Elaine Harwood and Diane Green.

At present there is a lack of transparency in listing process. Consultancy raised expectations which cannot be met: people are involved but not in control.

The EH monopoly has been diluted by the introduction of CABE; now cultural values must be debated. Modern buildings such as the Pimlico school raise the issue of fitness for purpose, which only becomes a consideration if it is listable. Mass housing is a sensitive issue – is it an imposition to list?

So there have been huge changes in people’s expectation. Human Rights legislation had empowered people to have their say in historic environment where the State and its agents impinge. There was a challenge to architectural historians’ discipline – now they must attend to everyone’s past.

Neil Burton’s subject was ‘*The Curse if Significance : Conservation Plans and other matters*’

Neil Burton remarked that there have been so many acronyms, for better or worse - DCMS, EH (1986), PPG 16 (1990), IHBC, HLF (1994), PPG 15 over the past 60 years. We are on the threshold of change with the new White Paper.

At the GLC Historic Buildings Division, and then London Division of EH in the 70s, 80s, the importance of interdisciplinary working was recognised with architectural historians, architects, conservators and archaeologists. Discussions influenced individual cases, and there were general and typological studies. The GLC was an excellent

record keeper: core files now in EH are still a wonderful source of factual information. But much other information was stripped out, which was a real disaster for understanding.

EH Inspectors, before regionalisation, formed a centre of excellence around Fortress House. EH was the largest grant giver, and sent real experts to Expert Advisory Committees. Listing Branch had national standards for consistency. Small specialist teams had expertise available for local Planning Authorities. Expertise was not Tessa Jowell's "elitist" as long as it was accessible to those who need it. Recipients of Heritage grants want continuity of systems. Organisations don't want to have to start all over again.

The Amenity Societies now inhabit limbo between general public and state.

The huge number and range of case work needs to be seen in a wider overall picture than the individual Local Authority or regional EH Inspector. Every Council has a different idea in dispensing approval and much depends on the personality of the individual Conservation Officer. But ordinary people had no idea of reasonable advice available, and suffered bad experiences of controls. Conservation can be a closed world. The Heritage Lottery Fund has changed the landscape of conservation.

In 1999 the merger of EH and RCHME fused of bodies of advice and record. In a digital age, recording and dispensing information is crucial.

In 2001, Neil Burton went free lance, encouraged by the Government's policy to "buy in" consultant's advice. Growth was fuelled by HLF requiring documents to release cash, and planning and listed building controls statements. Specialised consultancies have grown.

Accreditation of conservation architects to AABC has been fuelled by EH with an eye to HLF grants.

As a consequence information systems are struggling to keep with demands to see records, and factual information. The complete statutory lists are not yet on line – only the details on the Images of England site.

Conservation Plans based on James Semple Kerr's Australian Model have been adopted by HLF, and are essential parts of planning submissions. Funding has been made available for conservation plans -sometimes the cost of the plan would have paid for some urgent repairs. However there is an absence of any agreed standard for CP so there is no best practice, and no repository for Conservation Plans – they are issued then disappear - where do they go? And do they get read? There is a lot of

good sensible stuff in conservation plans giving richer pictures.

"Significance" is coming to take over pre-existing systems of thought and value. This is wide and all-embracing but kinds of significance, architecture, community, associational, are ill-defined.

There is a growing idea embedded in the draft EH guidelines that significance will be assigned absolutely in the new descriptions. We are lucky to have so much knowledge on buildings already, especially the Colvin dictionary, and Pevsner. However, Clients expect that an assessment of significance will answer the problems e.g. where to put the lift. Words hide the fact, people don't want to make hard decisions.

Neil Burton's lessons for the future were:

1. No more acronyms – [they] discriminate against the old!
2. Importance of record keeping in the age of the 'paperless office'.
3. Accessibility of facts and records. The digital revolution must be embraced
4. Standards – "significance" must be discussed with stakeholders

Finally education standards and scholarship. It is vital to bring in younger people. And we must develop humility in dealing with the heritage owned and paid for by other people – we have to persuade them the best way to go.

John Ashurst is noted as a pioneer of scientific and technical aspects of conservation and took as his theme '*Practice into Theory*'. After the 1939-45 war the body of knowledge on Ancient Monuments amassed by the Office of Works was inherited by the Ministry of Public Building and Works, then Department of the Environment, and eventually its Department of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings which became English Heritage, and thus to the Building conservation research team.

Conscious of stepping into the world of AM and archaeology, John Ashurst learnt on Ancient Monument sites. He continued to enjoy them whilst striving to implement the philosophy of "conserve as found, minimum intervention, maximum retention of historic fabric, and reversibility" although often unattainable in practice. DAMHB was London based with a powerful HQ – each inspector had a room of his own. It was a brother hood and the superintendents "barons". Most were Masons. Superintendents of Works directly employed a large workforce, who knew the sites extremely well. Now consultants and contractors must report cold. Without the expertise in the pathology of ruined buildings of the Ministry of Works teams we would have had far fewer monuments today.

Materials they used were of their time – cement was king. It was used on wall cappings, repairs, joints, but no cement was used on face works. Their records are really important – they consolidated as found and used secret repairs so it is not known what deep tamping or grouting was carried out.

For ruins leans, bulges, and fractures are part of the story of the building, especially the way stones lie on the ground. When ruins such as Tintern or Jervaulx need repair they must be analysed again. To ‘conserve as found’ may mean maximum intervention.

There were some errors with materials and what not to do was learnt. Mortar is a very important element of buildings - it was learnt to analyse, record, and advise on what weakest mortar to use so that no new stresses were put on bricks or mortars.

Laboratory analysis sometimes showed up surprising results – at Malmesbury Abbey a black deposit was shown to be potassium nitrate due to the storage of gunpowder above the south porch Parliamentary Army.

The organisation is now very different – there is less direct work and more advisory response to conservation professionals. Free technical advice is now available via the website, on war memorials for example, and the strategic survey of stone resources in England.

Robyn Pender stepped in for Bill Martin at short notice and talked on ‘*Theory into Practice*’. She has been working on the effects of climate change and the legislation relating to the performance of existing buildings in English Heritage’s Building Conservation and Research Team. There is a large stock of existing buildings without cavity walls where there is no easy answer to increasing the thermal insulation. The buildings must be adapted but we need to know how they actually work before carrying out ill-considered drastic alterations which may turn out to be worse than no adaptation at all. Making the building airtight may increase moisture and condensation. Indeed can the traditional terrace house stock be made airtight without major works.

English Heritage are developing an ambitious research project to amass a robust body of knowledge on the performance and energy usage of Victorian houses. This information will be used to evaluate what can be done to improve houses, what is most cost-effective, and how people can change

their lifestyles to still be comfortable, but make savings in their energy consumption. The effects of climate change and the problems of flooding were also being assessed.

The information will be used to develop a website Climate Change and your Home where homeowners can obtain unbiased advice.

Our last speaker was **Matthew Saunders** who posed the question “Have we won?” and if we say “Yes” are we smug, complacent or stupid? The job is only partly done.

In 1953 Louis Silkin asked “Preservation is important, but what for?” There is now a legal structure and public sentiment for conservation. A measure of improvement can be seen in total demolition of listed buildings. In 1979 673 buildings were demolished out of 550,000 listed buildings - 13 a week! In 2006 there were three times as many listed buildings, and 125 applications for demolition. There has been an acute reduction in applications for de-listing – down to 2%

The culture of Local Authorities has changed: in 1979 there were 327 applications for demolition from LAs – to make roads and shopping centres, last year there were only 3 – and in 2 cases the buildings had collapsed. But the LA is no longer the principle developer.

Most Development Plans accept conservation as a good thing, but the effect of the Shimizu judgement on conservation areas is still to be undone. Many Conservation areas have been declared by local government. We now have more protected buildings than any other country in the world (possibly except Italy).

There is social kudos, and some pride in occupying historic buildings; Greenwich University took the opportunity to leave the 1960s buildings and re-site in Greenwich, and acquire the sense of tradition comes with the association of great building.

When John Major set up the lottery, the good causes had to be defined. Medicine was considered but the Wellcome Trust provides finance for that. Sport, charity, arts were chosen and heritage which came as a surprise. This has provided £3.8bn in last 10 years. But the cost of the Olympics has cut the money available The Government are worried about elitism, although grass roots support is enormous. The National Trust has 3m members – a figure all political parties envy. America NT for historic preservation has only 250,00 members. The ‘Restoration’ programme finale had 3m viewers.

Civic Societies have a membership of 320,000 seeking to protect their sense of identity. There are many small groups with particular interests – in conserving letter boxes for example, in local architects such as the Silvanus Trevail Society in Cornwall.

In other places conservation has been opposed by local residents as at Easington School. It is now derelict and the Victorian Society held a Memory Day and 100 people brought their memories. The Society is now hoping that a scheme to regenerate it to provide a new heart to the community will be developed.

There has been a revolution at developer level – gritty warehouses used to be dismissed until Urban Splash saw the potential for ‘loft living’. 26,000 people now live in converted mental asylums. Although several have kept a padded cell, has this neutered the character for which they were listed? Oxford Prison is now a five star hotel.

HLF’s remit is that everything has some heritage – does this dilute the best for the sake of the rest? Liz Forgan has said that it is for people to bring to HLF the things they hold dear, to bring forward to the future, to share and bring new people in. A project must be plausible with a sound business plan.

Arnos Vale, Bristol had a massive HLF grant to conserve wildlife, burials, landscape, and buildings – multi-layered reflections on the past.

There are many attacks on our heritage - facadism arguing that demolition of most is not all. The plastic sash window business is worth £3bn per year, and encouraged by the building regulations, is trying to get accepted for use in historic buildings when for sustainability alone we should use timber. Stone substitutes have a long history in types of reconstructed stone to meet shortfalls in natural stone.

We are now seeing descriptions such as ‘purpose built converted barn’ ‘heritage builder’ ‘period homes’ to get them through the system for enabling development, such as gaining consent for houses in old walled gardens.

The historic environment is affected by everything that makes the authority run – courts, town halls, public buildings: all subject to VAT except churches.

EH finance for grants has been frozen at £30m, of which £10m is ring-fenced for churches. It pales beside the cost of the £120m for the average city development; the New Change development next to St Paul’s is a £550m scheme. At Canterbury cathedral alone £30m is required for urgent conservation of the fabric. Matthew Saunders saw

huge crises on the horizon – EH and SPAB are concerned about the number of agricultural buildings at risk. £37m was given to save Tyntesfield, so there was no £15m to buy Easton Neston. What would happen if a major Country House were to come on the market? Some private owners, such as Damien Hurst at Toddington have done a good job.

To Simon Thurley the most important risk is to churches. 1 in 4 in Monmouth, and 2 churches in Wales have been closed per year. Shrinking congregations lead to consolidation of parishes and closure of redundant churches. Small congregations and the lack of church wardens make upkeep difficult.

In the political context, Gordon Brown’s attitude to heritage concerns is not known. However he has not yet been swayed by the arguments on reducing VAT on listed buildings as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Matthew Saunders finished by pointing out that even if money were available there was a crisis in training for building crafts, for instance knapping flints was not done any more. Conservation courses were coming under threat. More refined political skills were needed.

The conference finished with a lively discussion pointing out that the only a few years ago it was unthinkable that country houses would be returning to private owners, but there would still be much at risk as Lottery Fund money came to an end.

BOOK REVIEWS

KENTISH RAGSTONE

Malcolm Stocker,

71 pages 42 illustrations

ISBN 9781-1-903206-48-5

A4 paperback £11.50 incl. postage and packing

Obtainable from Malcolm Stocker, Crowham Cottage, Westfield East Sussex TN35 4SP

Tel/Fax: 01424 754 355

Historically Kentish Ragstone was the most widespread of the building stones used in the south east of England. From a peak in the Victorian period through a rapid and severe decline since the end of WWII it has become practically unavailable, due to the closure of most of the quarries.

The author sets out strengths and weaknesses of the stone tracing the history of its production and use from Roman times to the present day. The latest example of the use of Kentish Ragstone is the

rebuilding of the church of St Ethelburga's in the City of London.

Various case studies illustrate some of the difficulties faced by conservationists and other involved with buildings constructed of Kentish Ragstone. The book provides useful and interesting information not readily available elsewhere.

Review by Ann Stocker

STONE CONSERVATION –Principles and Practice

Editor Alison Henry

352 pages ISBN-10 1 873394 78 0

ISBN-13 978 1 873394 78 6

Donhead Publishing 2006

Hardback £46.00

It is no surprise that this book won the Sir Robert McAlpine International Book Award for Construction 2007. It is not just a book on the conservation, but on the whole sweep of conservation issues, principles and practicalities, with examples particularly relevant to stone.

The introduction of CoBRA has led to the development of a methodology for conservation projects, emphasising the importance and benefits of the thorough investigation. Alison Henry has organised the book to lead the reader through 'a process which starts long before the first specification is written or the first spatula is wielded on site' and has assembled an authoritative group of contributors to guide the way.

Peter Burmin and Michael Drury start with the principles of conservation and cast a new light on the Victorian 'restoring' architects. Michael Drury goes on to deal with concepts and semantics – terminology is important in conveying the idea that conservation is proactive and not prohibitive. The development of conservation policies is important for all sizes of project.

Jerry Sampson's chapter on the amount of information to be gleaned from the existing fabric by a trained eye shows it is crucial to know the history of a building in order to assess its significance – how else can we truly determine the good or harm we are doing?

The need for correct diagnoses of the causes of a building's deterioration is emphasised by Nicholas Durnan and Colin Muir who explain the range of techniques of surveying and analysis which can be used to ensure that remedial work is the result of informed decisions.

Ewan Hyslop deals with the identification of stone and the parameters for the selection of replacements to match not just initial appearance but performance over time.

The chapter on stone consolidation by Clifford Price is particularly welcome. He explains the processes and the science behind what has come to seem a very difficult area. From first enthusiasm, consolidants have been treated with deep suspicion. The clear explanations of their actions and uses gives much needed guidance where there use is under consideration. Advances in methods of treating buildings such as cathodic protection may avoid the need for greater intervention.

Kyle Normandin and Deborah Slaton warn that the masonry cleaning must distinguish between detrimental soiling and benign patinas. Again the essential understanding of the substrate and the causes of the soiling before deciding on a method of cleaning is emphasised. Practical guidance on how to select a cleaning method is given, with a matrix summarizing stone types and possible cleaning methods.

Nicholas Durnan, Colin Muir and Jonathan Kemp deal in their respective chapters with individual stone types – limestone, sandstone and marble, and the different approaches and techniques appropriate for each type – emphasising again the importance of understanding the processes and problems involved. It is now widely known that most pre-modern western architecture and sculpture in stone would once have been decorated with paint. The importance of identification of remaining traces is Christopher Weeks' subject. How the pigments and media weather and change over time is still being discovered and conservation techniques developed. David Carrington deals with the particular problems of church monuments and stresses the importance careful analysis of the monument and its situation before formulating remedial works. He also enters a plea for more opportunities for the training of monument conservators.

In an associated chapter, Chris Daniels discusses graveyard memorials and difficult context of 24 hour unsupervised access, and the conflicting demands of visitors and wildlife, and parishes in straightened circumstances. He advises the preparation of a graveyard conservation plan to identify elements and threats to the significance of the graveyard as a whole.

Not only will practiced professionals find this a useful update on the latest thinking but it is a good introduction to anyone starting out in conservation.

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