

# DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES NEWS

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ARCHITECTS, PLANNING CONSULTANTS & CDM CO-ORDINATORS • SPECIALISTS IN CONSERVATION & NEW BUILDING IN SENSITIVE AREAS

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## ELIZABETH GARRETT ANDERSON HOSPITAL, LONDON

*The Unison Centre, a new headquarters for Europe's largest public sector union, opened in May this year. Designed by Squire and Partners, a significant element of the complex is the former Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, an elegant Grade II listed late-Victorian building which has been refurbished and adapted for its new use under the direction of Donald Insall Associates.*



Glass-roofed atrium of the Unison Centre unites the old with the new

Standing prominently on the north side of the junction of Euston Road with Churchway, the New Hospital for Women was built in 1889–90 for the treatment of female patients by women doctors and nursing staff. It was designed in the “Queen Anne” style by John McKean Brydon (1840–1901), who trained with William

Eden Nesfield and Richard Norman Shaw. In 1917 the Hospital took its founder's name and in 1948 was assimilated into the National Health Service as part of the Royal Free Hospital. It eventually closed in 2000 with its structure in poor condition.

Following Unison's purchase of the whole

*continued on page 2*

## ELIZABETH GARRETT ANDERSON HOSPITAL

Refurbished for a new use as part of the Unison Centre, London



Euston Road elevation of the restored hospital building with its reconstructed porch

hospital site, DIA was instructed in 2006 to undertake an historic buildings appraisal of what remained and, in 2007, was appointed as architect for the old hospital's repair and refurbishment.

Squire and Partners' concept was to create a "campus" which integrated new buildings with old, providing a "village square" within the site, and at the same time creating an external face that would declare the complex's landmark status. As built, this has resulted in a new glass-roofed atrium linking the old to the new, and a new landmark tower on Euston Road standing side by side with the old hospital building.

Major structural repairs to the old building were required, including underpinning the ward block and tower that had been gradually tilting towards the street. The west bay and adjacent link were on the point of collapse, so these were carefully recorded, dismantled and later reconstructed.

Much of the original highly ornate roofscape had been lost and insufficient records existed to allow for its full reinstatement. Lost features included a number of tall open-arched chimney stacks. Fortunately, much of the one remaining chimney survived with sufficient detail to permit its restoration. A new finial to the tower was fitted, based upon research from photographic records; and, using site evidence, the missing arched tower parapet was replaced. Missing gauged brick quoins were reinstated and a lost south porch reconstructed, with a new perimeter wall and railings built across the Euston Road frontage, based upon the design of the original 19th century boundary wall.

Salt staining caused by leaks, with algae, plant growth and grime, had disfigured the building externally. Various cleaning and tinting techniques have been employed to achieve a balanced and uniform appearance.

The original floor structure was a fireproof system patented by the engineers Homan and Rodgers, iron beams and clay floor pots being overlaid with clinker concrete below the timber floor boards. Water had penetrated the interior and the resulting acidic reaction within the clinker topping had caused the beams to rust and degrade. These sections of floor have been replaced with structural steel beams and insitu concrete slabs.

An extra floor and a new roof have been added to the Churchway block, with the inward-facing wall adapted to carry one side of the new glass roof covering the atrium. The Euston Road block has also been adapted and strengthened to carry the end of this glass roof. At ground level a new ramp and steps provide access directly to the building, the bridges above forming balconies with views directly into the atrium. Inside, the old building has had to be suitably adapted for its new use as meeting rooms and support facilities serving the Unison Centre.

The historic interiors retain much of their original character – plasterwork, timber mouldings, windows and doors being repaired or replicated. Dado tiling installed in the 1920s in corridors and the staircase, later covered over, was found to be in good enough condition to be exposed to view. Although in less good condition, original *pâte de verre* blue tiling in the ground floor corridor has been retained.

A new public gallery dedicated to the life of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson has been created, which gives a fascinating glimpse of the 1890s and provides access to the restored former entrance hall and doctors' meeting room.

John Dangerfield and Alan Frost - London

## BLACKPOOL WINTER GARDENS

A new café and grill room inspired by the 1930s

**B**lackpool's famous Winter Gardens comprise a huge six-acre complex of buildings opened in July 1878 to provide a range of indoor evening and wet weather entertainment for the large number of holiday-makers who flocked to enjoy the town's seafront. Further phases of development continued up until the outbreak of the Second World War. The complex later suffered a critical lack of investment as holiday-makers turned to more exotic destinations, but is now seeing a revival following Blackpool Borough Council's purchase of the complex and the appointment of Donald Insall Associates as its lead architect and conservation advisor. The Mazzei Café and Empress Grill Room opened earlier this year to much acclaim.

The first of these takes its name from Andrew Mazzei who, with J C Derham, created many of the interiors which date from the 1930s. Adjacent to the Victorian Floral Hall is a large area which was recently used as an amusement arcade containing slot machines and other mechanical games of chance. It had been fitted out with a false floor to contain the electrical services and entirely false internal walls finished with scarlet and gold hardboard and plastic panels.

We discovered behind this lining an almost intact café interior designed by Andrew Mazzei, a stage and film set designer who had been art director for Gaumont Films. Original photographs of the interior as he designed it were used to verify the detail; and the bold decision was agreed to return the amusement arcade area to a café, with its original decoration restored.

What was left was carefully repaired and redecorated using deep stone-coloured paint highlighted with pale gilding. New art deco style pendant light fittings



The new Empress Grill Room, inspired by the extensive work of the 1930s

were installed and perimeter seating comprising black banquettes with red upholstery fitted. The so-called Mazzei Café now offers light snacks and refreshments for up to 200 people and opened on schedule in February.

The next completed phase of work was to the nearby Bistro Restaurant. This has now been completely remodelled as an up-market destination restaurant, and named The Empress Grill Room.



The restored art deco interior of the Mazzei Café

1970s and 80s linings and fittings were removed; and we have designed a completely new interior inspired by the spirit of 1930s luxury travel. The coffered ceiling has been turned into an elegant feature by the installation of three up-lit, gilded domes; and the solid walls have been lined with rosewood and brass-banded panelling with matching column casings. The co-ordinated banquette seats are finished in polished lacquer with metallic gold upholstery. Other furnishings and fittings have been selected to maintain the theme.

The Empress Grill Room opened in May, and now serves grilled meat and fish for up to 140 people. Close collaboration between the client, designer and contractor has enabled DIA to deliver an outstanding transformation to meet a limited budget and tight programme.

Caroline Blakeley - Chester

# ADDITIONS TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOUSES

## Traditional construction to meet modern needs

**D**IA's Cambridge office has just completed two projects where new green oak timber-framed extensions have replaced existing extensions and outbuildings to provide new accommodation that sits comfortably with the earlier parent buildings, to provide the facilities and enhanced accommodation required by families today. This approach here has provided an attractive solution to the challenge of adding to an historic structure, as much of the vernacular architecture in Cambridgeshire is of timber-framed construction rendered externally, with thatched or clay tiled roofs.

In the eastern part of the county on the edge of the Fens, a cowshed attached to a Grade II\* listed manor house dating from around 1500 has been rebuilt on the old footprint to provide new level-access living space. The main range of the house here is timber-framed and jettied, and had been extended in the early-to-mid-16th century and again in the 17th century, when a rear kitchen wing was added. Later outbuildings were added to form a courtyard to the rear.

We were asked to provide conservation advice for the main range and to come up with a scheme for converting the disused cowshed. Our brief was to provide new living space which included a kitchen, utility and shower rooms, and additional space in the roof. This had to be fully accessible and provide level access from both the yard and the main range. The provision of these new facilities would help to overcome difficulties in negotiating the many changes of level in the original house.

The old cowshed was recorded photographically, following which the building was carefully taken down and rebuilt using a new green oak frame.



Timber-framed house in East Cambridgeshire

Karen Teideman-Barrett: DIA

Materials from the old cowshed – roof pantiles and clunch stone – have been reused in the new extension's roof and walls. This has created a spacious and light interior, to serve a new residential use in place of the former agricultural outbuilding.

In the southern part of the county, not far from Cambridge, a new two-storey green oak extension has replaced several modern extensions to a Grade II early-16th century timber-framed and jettied house, where the owners had started on an extensive programme of work to repair the timber framing and replace hard cement render with lime render.

The serviced areas of this building (kitchen, bathrooms and boiler room) had all been accommodated within the modern extensions; and so the historic main range had survived relatively free of later alterations. Our brief was to take



Main range of a South Cambridgeshire house

Karen Teideman-Barrett: DIA



New extension replacing a former cowshed

Karen Teideman-Barrett: DIA

down the modern extensions, which were of indifferent quality, and to replace them with a new extension offering enhanced thermal performance and to provide the same facilities as formerly, but with an additional bedroom. This meant that subdivisions in the main range could again be avoided. As for the other house, traditional local materials were used in the construction; and thermal performance has been improved using sheep's wool and hemp batt insulation, with wood fibre boarding.

These two Cambridgeshire projects demonstrate that it is feasible to construct new buildings using very traditional techniques and materials which provide a sympathetic appearance and meet the rigorous standards of sustainability to which current regulations are now directed.

Karen Teideman-Barrett - Cambridge



New timber-framed and rendered extension behind

Karen Teideman-Barrett: DIA

# STANFORD HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE

## Conservation of structures and ecology in a great park

**S**tanford Hall was built in 1697 by William Smith of Warwick for Sir Roger Cave, 2nd Bt. The stables and parts of the interior were completed by Francis Smith for the third Baronet between 1730 and 1745. The fine park contains a number of structures of interest, some pre-dating the house; and these have been the subject of recent work aided by funding from Natural England who, following the park's designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (it contains the richest assemblage of lichens in Leicestershire), is supporting a major programme of conservation.

A condition of Natural England's grant has been that particular emphasis be placed on the use of traditional materials for all repairs, that attention be taken to conserve the lichens growing on the brick, stone and ironwork, and that flora and fauna adjacent to the structures be protected. Where a change of material was proposed, firm evidence had to be produced that another covering had been there previously. For example, we wished to take off the corrugated iron roof to the Deer Hut. Whilst we were confident that the building had once been thatched, re-thatching was not accepted until a 19th century oil painting of a parkland view was discovered which showed the structure in the background with a thatched roof. The roof covering has now been replaced in long straw thatch to great effect.



17th century Stanford Hall in its parkland setting

Mark Wilkinson: DIA

The most complex project was the restoration of the so-called Charles I Bridge. Material from three of the supporting stone piers had been washed out and stonework from the western arch had fallen into the river. There was concern that the bridge might not survive another winter if further stonework were to become dislodged. Before repairs could be carried out it was necessary to dam the river to divert the flow, then to construct a steel supporting framework around the bridge. Ecologists had previously carried out studies which established the presence of otters and fresh water sponges, so that mitigating works had also to be carried out to reduce disturbance to them.

Much original material was salvaged from the river bed, but new stone for the copings and arches had to be brought from the Great Tew quarry. Ibstock bricks were used to rebuild the missing parapets. Most dramatically, the original cobble and stone carriageway was uncovered beneath soil which had accumulated over the centuries. Where missing, areas of cobbles have now been carefully relaid to match the existing.

Other structures repaired have included a second bridge and adjacent weir, park railings and gates, a brick ha-ha, and outbuildings in the estate yard.

Mark Wilkinson - Cambridge



The reinstated thatched roof on the Deer Shelter

Mark Wilkinson: DIA



Completed repairs to the Charles I Bridge

Mark Wilkinson: DIA



Iron gates after restoration

Mark Wilkinson: DIA

# THE WOLSEY CHIMNEYS AT HAMPTON COURT

Continuing brick craftsmanship in the 21st century

**H**ampton Court Palace is valued as much for its ancient brickwork as for its historical associations as the Royal Palace presented to Henry VIII by Cardinal Wolsey. Contrary to what the name may suggest, the so-called Wolsey Chimneys were most likely built during the later Georgian period in a consciously antiquarian Tudor gothic style. The three square stacks with their rounded corners and sculptural lozenge patterns of cut and rubbed bricks are, however, excellent examples of the brickmaker's art. That their lofty and inaccessible location to the south of Clock Court made them awkward to repair may be the reason that so much of the original work has survived; but by 2010 concern over the stability of the stacks resulted in an urgent and comprehensive programme of restoration and repair being undertaken.

It was with great pleasure that we received an instruction from Historic Royal Palaces to survey and specify the repair of these chimneys. Investigation revealed that much of the pointing was in poor condition; and mortar analysis showed that this was binder rich and lacked satisfactory integrity. Extensive surface decay caused by wet/dry cycles had occurred to a number of the bricks. The disengagement of the top sections one from another was, however, the greatest cause for concern, since the stacks were essentially live at the top, behaving independently rather than acting as the single integrated structure as designed. Due to a number of loose bricks at high level even the instability of the crowns was suspect.

The significance of the chimneys meant that craftsmen of the highest order had to be found for their repair. Simpson Brickwork Conservation were appointed to undertake the work and, where replacement was needed, fully-washed handmade red



The three chimney stacks after strengthening and repair

rubbing bricks were supplied by the Bulmer Brick and Tile Company in Sudbury. The standard new bricks were moulded to a finished standard 10"x 5"x 3" module and



Loose and eroded brickwork before repair

fired at 1000 - 1100°C. Wherever possible, however, existing bricks were retained and reused.

Over the years, the chimneys had slipped out of true alignment. The unstable nature of the crowns necessitated the dismantling and rebuilding of the top 13 courses of brickwork, and strengthening by the introduction of stainless-steel bed joint reinforcement. The difficult access gave rise to a decision to erect a scaffold which made provision for a workshop at high level to allow cutting and rubbing to be undertaken close to the chimneys, thus saving time and minimizing the risk of damage to the bricks in transit. The scaffold also provided cost effective access for other repairs needed to adjacent areas of masonry and roofing.

Paul Travis - London

Emma Simpson

Paul Travis: DIA

# THE GRANGE, HAMPSHIRE

A staircase restored to its rightful place

**I**t was something of an act of faith when John Redmill and I were moved to purchase the doorcase to the Cockerell dining room and the mid-19th century imperial stair by John Cox at the 1972 sale of fittings and materials which preceded the intended demolition of The Grange at Northington. What could we possibly do with this material? Yet somehow taking responsibility for its fate seemed better than leaving it to chance. Little did we know at that time that the demolisher's hand would be stayed by international pressure and that the shell of the building would be conserved and become the inspiration for a new opera house alongside. Now nearly 40 years later, the doorcase and stair have been passed to English Heritage who have re-installed them in their original locations.

Grange Park (as it was called) was one of the most important early 19th century neo-classical houses in Britain and the best example of a house in the form of an ancient Greek Temple. Designed for Henry Drummond between 1809 and 1816 by William Wilkins around an earlier core by William Samwell for Sir Robert Henley, it was further developed by CR Cockerell and others for the Baring family, who became Lords Ashburton. After demolition had been halted, the house and its immediate surroundings were placed in the guardianship of the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, now English Heritage, who between 1980 and 1982 consolidated the house and later picture gallery as a roofed ruin. In 1997 a new opera company took a lease of the site and has now been able to build a new opera house alongside the ruin.

After what seemed endless and costly years of storage since the staircase's dispersal, the decision was recently



The Grange staircase and door surround reinstated after almost 40 years

taken by English Heritage to reinstate the dismantled elements in their original locations. A programme of historical research was carried out; and, when the oak came back, an interesting history came to light, as the woodwork of the



The lower flight seen from the centre of the house

stair was found to be of two dates, with earlier newels enclosed in later panelled casings. A rediscovered and unattributed watercolour suggests some of the grandeur of what had been planned and possibly built. It shows the design for a great coved and decorated ceiling above the stair, culminating in a balustraded gallery, dome and cupola. The upper parts of this scheme can never be re-captured, but the half-landing doorway has been reassembled as an architectural focus and the staircase again gives meaning to this important space.

The re-assembled bones of this highly evocative interior can today be visited by arrangement, and makes a fascinating expedition for opera-going audiences who can eat and drink in the unrestored and dramatic interiors of the house during intervals.

Donald Insall - London

Donald Insall: DIA

Donald Insall: DIA

# Y BECWS, CONWY

A former bakehouse adapted as DIA's North Wales base

*Since the successful opening of an office in Conwy in 2007, the Practice has been looking for larger premises with longer term prospects. Happily, we have been able to purchase a former bakehouse tucked behind the main Bangor Road which runs through the town. This has now been completely refurbished and comprises two floors of office accommodation. We celebrated its opening with a party at Plas Mawr last year.*

We had found the building in a poor state of repair, having suffered unsympathetic alterations at various stages of its life. We, however, recognised the potential of the building and its strategic location in the town. Our small Conwy team soon set to work, measuring up and preparing proposals, full of enthusiasm despite a tight programme and approaching winter. Working closely with local contractors and craftsmen, our vision soon took shape.

There were many challenges. Unexpectedly heavy snowfalls and sub-zero temperatures threatened to damage the newly applied insulating render, a unique mix of crushed, recycled glass and traditional lime-based products on a hemp substrate. The building

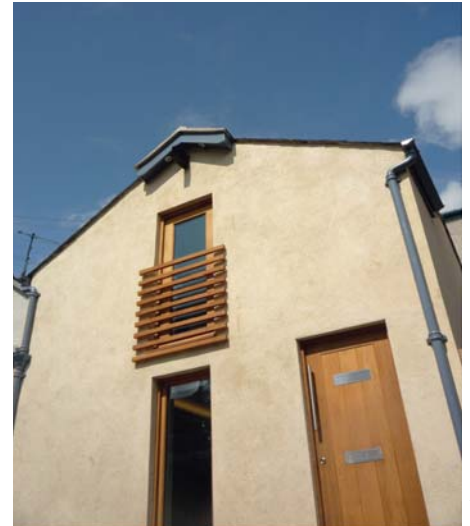
had to be wrapped for the duration of the bad weather!

Internally, the poor quality fixtures and finishes were stripped out. All internal walls were replastered; the floor was resurfaced to deal with the damp; and blocked openings were re-opened to increase natural daylight. An extended roof overhang now conceals the exterior lighting; and the upper glazed door with its new Juliet balcony allows light and ventilation into the first floor studio. Building services were completely renewed.

The utilitarian wooden staircase and balustrade were replaced with a specially commissioned steel structure, made by a local ironmonger using off-the-shelf steel elements. This was left untreated to allow it to develop a patina sympathetic to the building's existing structural steelwork, before being lacquered by the team to seal it once the right colour had been achieved.

We have now been working in our new office for almost a year and have many interesting projects, to which we can direct the full range of the Practice's skills.

Elinor Gray-Williams - Conwy



Refurbished exterior of DIA's Conwy premises

Bethan Jones: DIA



New steel stair leading to the upper studio

Elinor Gray-Williams: DIA

## Company News and Awards

Since the last edition of DIA News, we have said farewell to old friends, but have been pleased to welcome new ones. Ayaka Takaki has joined our London team as a Senior Architectural Assistant. Josephine Jones, Emma Masters and Ben Shrubsole have also joined the secretarial team in London, with Charlotte Jackman and Robert Plumbly providing front office support at West Eaton Place. Robert Whitaker now strengthens our Practice Accounts team in a new role as Financial Controller.

We are delighted that Neil McLaughlin and Lucy Inder have passed their RIBA Part III exams to become qualified architects; and we have welcomed Dorian Proudfoot back to Chester after passing his Part II exams.

Our Jesus College Chapter House project in Cambridge has received an RIBA East Region Spirit of Ingenuity Heritage Award. The refurbishment of the Marianne North Gallery at Kew has received a Richmond Society Award. Our recent work at St Mary le Strand, London has received the King of Prussia's Gold Medal Award.



Re-glazed windows at St Mary le Strand

Lodge & Sons

### DONALD INSALL ASSOCIATES

19 West Eaton Place, London SW1X 8LT Tel: 020 7245 9888 Email: london@insall-architects.co.uk Website: www.insall-architects.co.uk

Bath 01225 469898 Belfast 028 9024 8656 Cambridge 01223 303111 Canterbury 01227 761616 Chester 01244 350063 Conwy 01492 592378 Shrewsbury 01743 351244