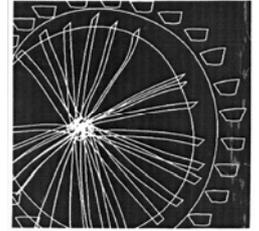




LONDON BRANCH



Spring 2010



London's Calling

This year's IHBC Annual Summer School is being held in London & the Organising Committee needs your help.

Read on for further details on how to volunteer...



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CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

“Hands up those who have read PPS5 and the Planning Practice Guide?” That is the rather school masterly question I have been asking groups of development control colleagues in my office. Yesterday, only one out of eight team members tentatively raised her hand. It's only just over a month after its publication, and perhaps it's not the first priority in a busy development controller's hectic life, but it does show that there is a need to keep both ourselves and colleagues up-to-date with new Government policy and advice.

I have to confess that I am only just getting to grips with the new document myself, and its implications for the way we work. Hopefully that process will be assisted by attendance at an English Heritage workshop. Like it or not, the PPS is here to stay, and we will all have to be familiar with its contents and how to use it.

Whilst the PPS is being rolled out nationally by English Heritage, at IHBC London Branch level, there will be two opportunities in the next couple of months to learn more about it. It was covered in the afternoon session at the joint Heritage of London Trust/English Heritage/IHBC meeting on 20th May.

In June, the topic will be covered at the IHBC Annual School. I am pleased to announce that we already have a large number of bookings, and I would like to compliment the Branch organising sub-committee for all its hard work in setting up what I hope will be a very successful event. If you have not already booked, I would urge you to do so as soon as possible – the Day School is filling up very quickly. I look forward to seeing many of you there and discussing how the Branch can help with further PPS5 training.

David McDonald

PPS5 Is Unleashed

Following last year's consultation on the revised PPS15 the new guidance for planning and the historic environment has been released with little fanfare. Now termed PPS5, one can only assume this is because there was a convenient gap in the policy numbering rather than it being reflective of a shift of governmental priorities, it formally replaces PPG15 and PPG16.

As there was significant concern raised over the wording and perceived priorities of the draft PPS, not least by the IHBC, it has been revisited and certain areas have been tightened up.

That being said the fundamentals of the draft PPS have been carried across to PPS5 with a stronger emphasis on understanding the significance of a heritage asset in order to successfully manage change in the historic environment.

The most significant change from the old PPG's has been the stripping out of the guidance on designating heritage assets and the old Annex C. A companion 'Practice Guide' has been published which provides an overview as to how the policy should be implemented and interpreted, though it is important to note that it does not constitute policy itself.

For those responsible for designating heritage assets they will need to rely on the raft of best practice guidance that have been published by English Heritage, DCMS and DCLG.

Whilst everyone will have their own opinion on the merits of the new PPS5 it will undoubtedly take some time for its full implications to be understood. In the meantime there will no doubt be a flood of CPD events on how to use the new PPS.

Marc Timlin

Book Review - Silesia - The Land of Dying Country Houses

Polish Upper Silesia was the home of my grandfather until the outbreak of the Second World War so I was particularly drawn to the latest report from SAVE Europe's Heritage.

Historically Silesia, once Polish and later predominantly German territory, had been a wealthy province and has one of the most outstanding concentrations of country houses in Europe. Prior to the Second World War nearly every village had a fine country house and these formed, along with the church, the centre of community life.

The society that my grandfather knew vanished overnight when on 1 September 1939 German planes took off from an airfield in German Lower Silesia to bomb Polish towns. At the end of the war Stalin's territorial demands led to eastern Poland being annexed to Soviet Russia and German Lower Silesia becoming part of Poland. Silesia's German population was expelled and replaced with Poles which had themselves been expelled. Understandably the new residents, who had lost everything, took time to feel secure in their new communities - Germany only recognised the Polish western border in 1991. In the meantime the country house had no role to play in territories under the control of Soviet Russia and those that were not converted to institutional use were left to rot.

It is a remarkable achievement that the author's have identified 117 country houses still standing, some barely, and in desperate need of rescue. Within 20 years the majority of these, the equivalent of grade II* or grade I-listed buildings, will be beyond practical repair.

Crucially the report is not simply a list, it includes strategies and identifies potential new uses. Many of the country houses are ideally suited for conversion to hotels but the number that can take this option will be limited, others are identified for appropriate residential or commercial use.

One of the authors, Marcus Binney, was a co-curator of the seminal exhibition 'The Destruction of the Country House' held at the V&A in 1974. It helped lead to the dramatic fall in the number of demolitions of country houses in this country.

I very much hope that this excellent report promotes the plight of country houses in Silesia, and those across Poland, and attracts the investors that are needed to preserve these beautiful and often remarkable buildings for future generations to enjoy.

Kristian Kaminski

IHBC Annual School - Your Committee Needs You

As you will all be aware this year's Annual School is being held in London (if you haven't booked your place yet I suggest you do so quickly as they are being snapped up!).

The Organising Sub-Committee has been busy behind the scenes for over a year now sorting our accommodation, tours, venues and speakers.

We have now reached the crunch point in the last few months in the lead up to the Annual School.

If you can contribute a little time each month to the Organising Committee or even better volunteer to help on the day please get in touch with Sheila Stones.

Think not of what your Branch can do for you but what you can do for your Branch!

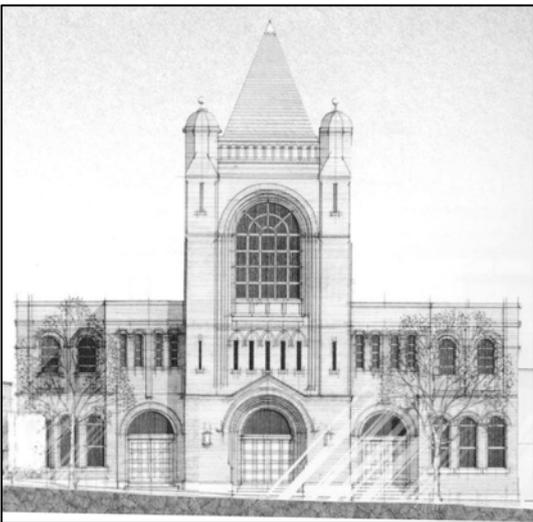


The Restoration of Hampstead Synagogue

The Hampstead Synagogue is located in Dennington Park Road in West Hampstead, London. Designed by architect Delissa Joseph in 1892, this building was of paramount importance to the largest Jewish community in London at that time and is the only synagogue of its era to be listed Grade II*. On High Holy days the Synagogue still receives approximately 1000 visitors.

The restoration project started over 10 years ago to remediate the passage of time and other maintenance related signs of deterioration. Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture, have been involved since the commencement of the restoration process. The actual contract started in November 2007, and building was officially handed back to the owners on the 4th September 2009.

The local Jewish community battled for years to restore the building, and after unsuccessful attempts to obtain Heritage Lottery Funding, they managed to raise £1.8 million through the sale of the adjoining junior Synagogue site, to be used as affordable housing, which kick-started the project. The total cost however, exceeded £3 million. Very generous donations and loans from the community and private individuals, allowed for a comprehensive restoration and reconditioning.



Significant architectural features

Plan form: The main Synagogue building was originally designed to address West End Lane. It was repositioned to allow commercial exploitation of the retail frontage, essentially leaving the plan form unaltered. Particular liturgical requirements of this congregation, which separate men and women, and general space requirements, dictated the working plan form. Ground and gallery levels remain very much as originally designed.

The expansion of the congregation demanded a series of alterations and additions. These were not all ideal, and have affected the original purity of form, particularly at the entrance lobbies leading to an awkward arrangement of stairs and circulation spaces at gallery level.

Elevation treatment: The front entrance elevation is of very high significance. The tower and flanking wings provide a powerful landmark presence in the immediate area, including the central polygonal roof, seen from West End Lane. The elevation is not as originally designed, having been extended at the wings, but the massing is still successful. The brickwork and detailing are of a high order, well proportioned and with subtle articulation and embellishment which is used in an almost Ruskinian manner to adorn structural and functional requirements. The two side elevations have a simple dignity, with well-crafted detail of equal quality to that of the front.

Internally: The vast open space up to the dome resting on pendentives is an inspiring piece of architectural grandeur. The relationship with the ladies gallery and choir is well handled to ensure that none of the majesty of the space is compromised. This spatial mastery is of high significance.

Fittings / Lighting: Virtually all the early or original joinery remains except for the front entrance doors and the lighting, replaced in the 1950/60s. The seating has been altered and added, but was largely of an earlier period, and was in a parlous condition being much patched and repaired. The ceilings and walls remained unadorned with minimal decorative relief mouldings. The draft lobbies still retain their “copperlite” glazing.

Practice philosophy applied to this project was based upon the SPAB principles of conservation - repair rather than replacement and renewal, and above all sympathetic and thoughtful conservation. Following the idea fundamental to all our heritage projects, that art of conservation is dependant upon knowledge and experience of historic methods of construction, a thorough investigation of the existing fabric was conducted. This approach allowed for a holistic understanding of the building, both as a whole and as a collection of component parts, informing how it should be

treated or preserved. We believe that the secret of preservation lies in a well considered programme for detailed maintenance regime.



Specific research carried out and how it affected our decisions

A comprehensive Historic background research has been conducted, as well as detailed survey of the condition with appraisal of the significance of the external and internal fabric before any works started. This research informed our decisions on repairs and refurbishment guiding the overall conservation approach. More detailed investigations e.g. mortar, or paint analysis, were carried out, once the works started, to ensure that sympathetic materials were used. Moisture levels were measured in the walls, to inform which finishes would be most appropriate. The original fabric in the building has been retained, and wherever possible salvaged, refurbished and re-used. Bulging parapet walls were re-built using same bricks; good slates from roofs were re-used after installation of roof insulation. Seating removed to improve the layout and circulation within the building was re-used for timber repairs and removed doors were recycled for repairs of the remaining doors.

Use of traditional materials and repair techniques

The main lighting, designed by Bruce Kirk of Light Perceptions is based upon the original fittings of 1902, using traditional materials, but designed to provide high quality levels of illumination throughout.

Perhaps the greatest challenge was the high level of repairs involved in the redecoration of the Dome, which features intricate plaster work and spectacular stained glass windows, some of them designed by William Morris' company. The windows were cleaned and repaired and are now illuminated by specially positioned lights, giving the Synagogue a spectacular glow, externally at night.

The sympathetic restoration works and modernisation of the services, carried out on West Hampstead Synagogue, by the long-established building contractor, Stonewest, have stunningly transformed this historic building, ensuring for the foreseeable future its continued survival in its original use.

The building is now ready and fit to be used for another 100 years, perpetuating and enhancing its original splendour. In recognition of this work the Hampstead Synagogue has received the first award for the conservation and restoration of a synagogue from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Moggerhanger - A Forgotten Gem

'I rode my horse to Barnet, collected the stage coach to Biggleswade and had a brisk 5 mile walk to Moggerhanger House for a site meeting with my dear friend, Godfrey Thornton' – words which could have been said by John Soane during his time working at Moggerhanger House, near Sandy in Bedfordshire.

By that time, too, supplies could be brought from London by ship and then up the river Ouse and craftsmen could make that journey to work relatively easily.



Soane worked for 3 generations of the Thornton family beginning in 1792 and completing in 1833 with the reglazing of the greenhouses after a storm. Godfrey Thornton was a director of the Bank of England and appointed Soane to make major alterations to his country residence, Soane having recently redesigned the Bank of England.

Many features were tried out at Moggerhanger which Soane then later used on other properties, according to Peter Inskip of Inskip & Jenkins Architects, such as the tribune and the telescopic chimneys. Also, as Peter discovered, the Moggerhanger archive is the second biggest, after Lincoln's Inn, of all the Soane projects. The Thorntons were very private so were not keen on publicity and very little was known about the house.

Peter was able to trace the early work of late 18thc and the later work of early 19th c through the architectural details – early stepped mouldings and later sunk mouldings used from 1806 onwards derived from reeds in the river Ouse. Also samples of early and late ironmongery were found lost under the floorboards and were copied and replaced.

From 1919 to 1987 Moggerhanger was a hospital so a lot of the architectural detail had been lost, such as the door handles, and the dado rails hidden under wallpaper. All the beautiful graining in the hall by William Watson, Soane's decorator, had been hidden under layers of hospital green paint and was just

waiting to be revealed in all its glories. Catherine Hassell did paint research so the original paint colours have been reinstated.



The main area of decoration was the Hall and Mrs Thornton's boudoir otherwise the decoration was very simple – plain paint and small design wallpapers.

The last recession saved Moggerhanger from developers and a conversion to flats and was sold to a Christian group 'Harvest Vision' as a Christian conference and training centre. As the Thorntons belonged to the Clapham Group, a Christian group dedicated to improve social conditions of their day, this is a rather nice progression for the house.

Peter's talk and slide show whetted our appetite for the tour round the house which was fascinating, particularly how the tribune was discovered. Thinking the area, a small hallway, was a bit dark and thinking on ways to lighten it, the ceiling was investigated and low and behold the tribune, an oval opening in the ceiling, top lit from above, was uncovered.

After a delicious lunch in the centre Drawing room we toured the gardens which has just won a grant for their restoration. Repton supplied two red books for it. He was working for the Pymms at Sandy 5 miles away for 5 guineas a day.

It seems sad that the house is full of donated office furniture and antiques from a local dealer but they do have a very nice carpet in the Library which was donated by an American who discovered it was too big for his room!!

Our thanks to Peter Inskip for a great day and fascinating talk and tour – he made it come alive for us with all the stories and snippets of information. Also thanks to Nicolette Duckham for instigating it with Peter.

Kate Ainslie Williams

Lillington Estate - Conserving a 'Modern' Success Story

Pimlico, in the City of Westminster, is characterized by the noble Regency architecture of the Georgian planner, Thomas Cubitt (1788–1855). In stark contrast, post-war sporadic development in Pimlico has included the award-winning 1960s housing estate, Lillington Gardens Estate. Designed by the architects Darbourne and Darke, following a national open competition in 1960/61, this architecturally celebrated site has Conservation Area and Grade II and II* listed status.

London based architects, MRDA Architects and Conservation Consultants, have been appointed by the estate's management, CityWest Homes, to assist in the complicated task of managing and maintaining this central London listed low-rise, high-density housing estate. As well as the production of a Conservation Management Plan for the site, MRDA have designed and implemented a new access and security regime.

The 12-acre 'island' site comprises 780 residential properties and houses approximately 2000 people in 14 housing blocks. The dwellings, leased and rented from the local authority, are accompanied by residential amenities including public houses, shops, Pimlico Library and hard and soft landscaped areas. The estate was developed in three phases (1964-72) which, though displaying individual design characteristics, are unified under the same original style and character. Each phase of the project reflect the lessons learnt from the previous design phase. The design of Phase 3 is more suited to the developing needs of the residents, with the incorporation of a low rise solution, gardens and a sense of individual house-ownership.

Longmoore Estate, located to the west of Lillington Gardens Estate, was also designed by Darbourne and Darke and was completed in 1980.



Darbourne and Darke's design of Lillington Gardens was influenced by the character of the area: green spaces such as Warwick, St George's and Vincent Squares, Bessborough Gardens and the terraces of the surrounding buildings. The external scale takes reference from its neighbouring buildings on perimeter streets. Most significant is the Church of St James the Less, located within the centre of the site, whose identity was to be re-established by the scheme. The Church represents the first work of George Edmund Street (1824-1881) in London and is Grade I listed.

Lillington Gardens Estate has become generally acknowledged as one of the most highly successful high density developments in central London. Writing in 1972, the Architect's Journal notes that, 'since the first stage completion in 1966, Darbourne and Darke's Lillington Street has, perhaps, been the most illustrated, most visited, most eulogised housing scheme in London.' The scheme has won four major architectural awards: the Housing Design Awards, 1961; Ministry of Housing and Local Government Award for Good Design, 1970; RIBA Award, 1970; and RIBA Commendation, 1973. In addition, Lillington and Longmoore Gardens Estate was the first housing estate to achieve a Green Flag Award in 2007/2008.

A combination of three, four and six storey blocks (of houses and maisonettes) form an enclosing wall around the site with 'wings' pushing into the interior. The design is celebrated for its series of flowing interior spaces that are reflected in the spatial complexities of the enclosing elevations. There is a notable absence of monotony and predictability of form which has been strongly influenced by vernacular form. The scheme reflects the architectural trends of the 1960s of broken skylines and elevations with projection and recession.

The well-planted interior landscape is a dominant element of the scheme. The series of spaces provide the maximum area for pedestrian use, and with a minimum of road penetration within the interior of the site.

A series of split level units are accessed by 'a wide brick paved 'street' which occurs twice above ground level in the eight storey blocks and once in the six storey blocks. The 'street' is broadly planted, projecting into the sun and the rain. These roof streets were intended to offer a high degree of privacy at this level. This policy has been largely successful; however, there have been problems of security and some vandalism. Concerns of anti-social behaviour and the residents feeling unsafe has led CityWest Homes to implement a phased access control scheme within a portion of the estate.



In addition, MRDA have been commissioned to produce a Conservation Management Plan for the listed estate. Detailed site and condition surveys have served as the basis of the Plan and are informing the production of management strategies as well as revised roles for occupants on development and change. The Conservation Management Plan is informing current and future programmes of repair and maintenance. There is particular reference to rationalisation of later accretions, such as television aerials and satellite dishes.

Jessica Cook
MRDA

NEW BRANCH MEMBERS

A warm welcome to :-

Gary Brown
Robert Buckley
Amy Davidson
Dianna Floud
Neil Hitchin
Regina Jaszynski
Jhilmil Kishore
Christina Malathouni
Joanna Moore
Kit Wedd
Barbara Woda
Joanthon Wright
James Evans
Arzu Kocabas
Heather Alcock
Robert Butler
Pamela Earl
Richard Meager
Brian O'Callaghan
Stephen Paine
Joanna Parker
Ian Rice
Debbie Sorkin
Monica Filby
Duncan Hawkins
Daniel Martin
Alessandra Perrone
Louisa Reynolds
Alice Brackenbury
Rebecca Freeman
Daryl Page

Please e-mail any changes in your details to me as soon as you can. Updated details should also be sent to -

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Thanks

Jacinta Fisher

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for the IHBC London branch.

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