

CONSERVATION IN NOTTS

The Newsletter of the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust Limited

Volume 7 No 3



1850 - 1900 An Architecture of Transition

3 Greens Gardens - completed!

Newark Castle

Annesley Hall

Progress notes.

November 1984

Autumn

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST LIMITED

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The Work of the Trust

The Trust - as a limited company with charitable status - operates within a legal framework, designed to protect buildings of historical and architectural interest and to maintain the character of towns and villages in Nottinghamshire. The Trust was formed in 1965 and has over the past years built a fine reputation for its assistance both financial and technical in helping preserve the heritage of the County. However in recent years the Trust has lost, because of Government cutbacks, the financial assistance of some of the local councils. The Trust will therefore concentrate on:

- (a) Advising local planning authorities on applications to alter or demolish listed buildings, and on applications affecting conservation areas;
- (b) Presenting evidence on the same issues if and when they come to public inquiry;
- (c) The Trust is anxious to extend its work in two other directions. It is prepared to offer technical advice to owners who, without proposing to alter a building, wish to maintain its essential character and possibly to restore historic features. Such advice calls for professional knowledge and skills. Owners will therefore be expected to pay a modest charge for such advice. This advice is available not only for buildings listed or in conservation areas, but for any building of age;
- (d) The Trust is particularly anxious to resume its policy, carried out successfully in Windles Square, Calverton of acquiring old buildings, restoring them suitably and then selling. The Trust has limited capital funds for this purpose, but hopes to be able to borrow the additional funds from the Civic Trust or from local authorities.

The Trust has accumulated a large collection of photographs and reports, and they are important for reference. Recently the Trust has surveyed a number of farm buildings because they are often now redundant. They differ from one part of the county to another, and it is impossible to advise on, for instance, a proposal to convert a barn into a house unless its historical character is understood. Recently the Trust has extended this by arranging surveying weekends for members. At these members learn the technique of measuring buildings whilst acquiring a valuable record for the Trust of the important buildings in a particular village.

Finance and Establishment

The Trust depends for its finance on voluntary donations. The largest source of voluntary help is supplied by local authorities. From 1980 and for the foreseeable future, owing to cutbacks in Local Government expenditure, the amount of this help will be much reduced and a greater emphasis on help from private individuals and voluntary organisations will be needed.

The Trust invites subscriptions from those who wish to associate themselves with this work; the rates are as follows:

Individual membership	£3.00
Corporate membership	£5.00
Life membership	£30.00

Much of the work is done by volunteers from the Trust's new headquarters at the Bowls Pavilion, West Bridgford, which the Trust is restoring. If you are interested in finding out more about us please contact Marta Phillips at the above telephone number.

Subscriptions

Our subscription level has stayed the same for many years despite a huge increase in administration costs. The annual subscription barely covers the cost of the newsletter and postage. Our income from local authority grants has been drastically reduced and so we must rely on dramatically increasing our membership to survive. So, please try to enlist a new member this year - leaflets advertising our work are available from the Trust's offices - or why not take out a subscription to the newsletter for a friend who has moved away from the area.

NEWSLETTER

Additional copies of the newsletter can be provided either singly @ 25p ptp. or in bulk:

10 copies	£2.00 post paid
50 or more copies	£1.75 per 10 post paid

or sent to any part of the U.K. for £1.50 a year.



Trust secretary Geoff Turner hands the key to Cllr. Mrs Dennett while the Lord Mayor Mrs Ivy Matthews and caretaker Ben Allen, look on - see page 5

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The Heritage of the County is in Your Hands

COMMENT

In this issue we look at the handover of 3 Greens Gardens to Nottingham City Council on 27th September 1984, which marked success for the Trust's Revolving Fund. Hopefully, this can be repeated with Hutt Lodge at Newstead Abbey and the Lodge on the Forest in Nottingham.

Also, we have a comprehensive up date on the conservation work which Newark District Council are undertaking at Newark Castle. Those members of the Trust who went on the day trip to Newark in June this year will find this particularly interesting.

Professor Barley looks in some detail at the restoration work being undertaken at Annesley Hall and Bryan Cather investigates an architecture of transition between 1850 and 1900 - Ruskin et al.

Conversion - how to do it.

A useful new book on how to convert old property is highlighted and is available from the Trust's offices. Also, John Severn brings us up to date on some current projects.

Apologies for the non-appearance of the summer newsletter - and a reminder to all members that articles on any subject likely to be of interest to Trust members are always welcome.

From the Secretary's Post-bag.

The Secretary continues to receive a wide variety of mail about all sorts and conditions of buildings, some of which is more appropriate for other bodies and has to be redirected.

One type of correspondence brings back memories of the early years of the Trust when the technical advisors recommended grants for various buildings and these were considered by the Council of Management.

The grants awarded were then subject to repayment if the building in question was sold in less than five years, and to ensure this an entry to this effect was made as a Land Charge on the property.

Many of the properties affected are now being sold and the Trust is frequently being asked for cancellation of the Land Charge, even though the five year period has long elapsed.

The Trust more recently in giving grants dispensed with the Land Charge and relied upon a simple written agreement between the Trust and the building owner.

However, the exercise shows the great contribution that has been made by our honorary legal adviser over the years, largely unseen and unsung.

GAT/PAW.
13th August, 1984.

By Bus to Newark

The Trust's bus tour took 20 members to Newark for the day in June, under the guidance of the Conservation Officer for Newark, Stuart Fell.

Members were brought up to date on repairs to the castle including the proposed works to the Undercroft and 12th Century gatehouse. They also visited the South West Tower and exhibitions.

In the afternoon they saw the unique concrete maltings on The Riverside by Trent Bridge and a number of conservation projects in Castlegate.

They spent considerable time examining the preliminary stripping out works in the Governor's House in Stodman Street.

Thanks go to members of Newark's Conservation Team for an enjoyable and informative visit. Perhaps members can catch up with the work at Millgate on another visit, as time ran out on this trip.



Another view of the Lodge on the Forest (see cover). Next N.B.P.T. project?

The Do's and Don'ts of House and Cottage Conversion is a very useful guide to retaining the character of your old building when you alter or extend it. The author, Hugh Lander lectures on historic buildings and lives in a once-derelict cornish farmhouse which he converted himself. The booklet, illustrated with about 70 photographs and drawings, aims to put aesthetic aspects in a practical way.

Copies of the guide are available from the Trust price £1.05 plus 20p postage and packing.

Graham Beaumont

ROOFS

DON'TS

1. Don't flatten out the roof slope (the pitch). Fig 47
2. Don't use concrete interlocking tiles. Fig 49
3. Don't bring a new uniformity into your roof lines when improving or extending a building. Fig 46
4. Don't replace a nice old roof unless it is structurally essential.
5. Don't rebuild old chimneys unless structurally essential, or introduce new chimneys in modern styles. Fig 50
6. Don't introduce dormer windows of modern style and proportions. Fig 48
7. Don't demolish or modernise old dormers in old roofs. Fig 48

DO'S

1. Do choose harmonious materials such as real slate, real stone slates, thatching, weathered plain tiles, weathered pantiles, 'Roman' tiles. These last three may be real old ones or new ones artificially weathered in appearance by applying a cowdung solution; or it may be possible to obtain new ones of subtle colour.

*Asbestos slates (Fig 2) may sometimes be used as a second best, and they do weather successfully to some extent. Note that all these roof coverings must be chosen according to regional styles.

2. Do retain varied roof lines. Fig 46
3. Do use dormer windows to improve lighting and ventilation of top floor rooms, if it will avoid raising the original roof line. Fig 47
4. Do sometimes use dormer windows of correct proportions and design to introduce character to an extension of an old building.

The Do's & Don'ts

House & Cottage Conversion

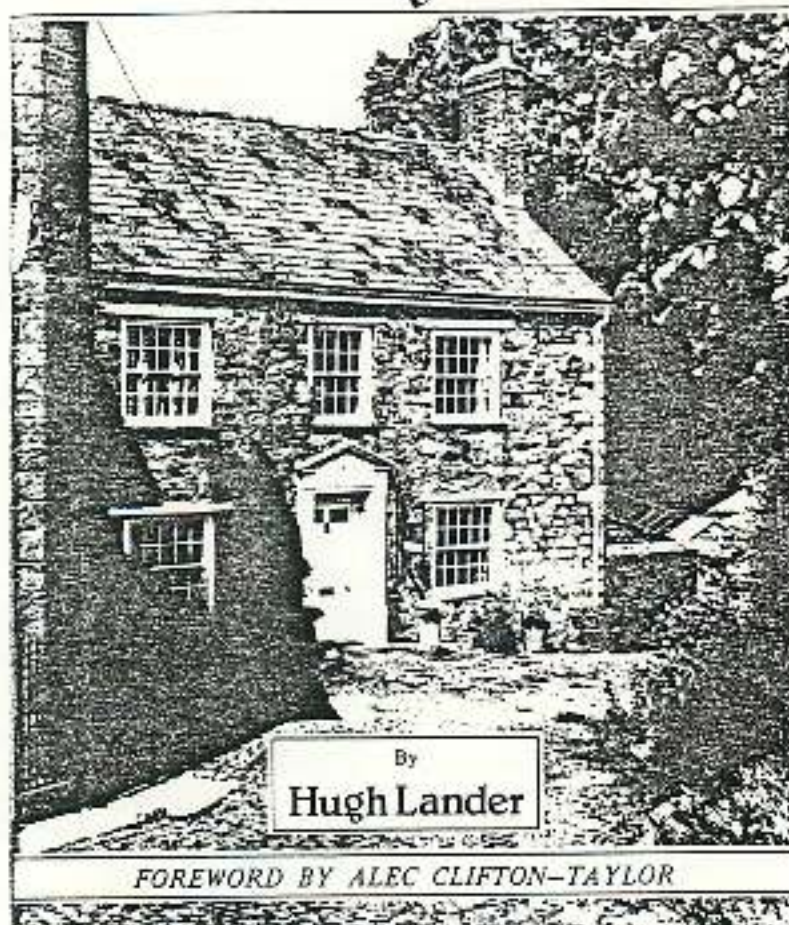


Fig 46 If you start like this....



DON'T end up with this....

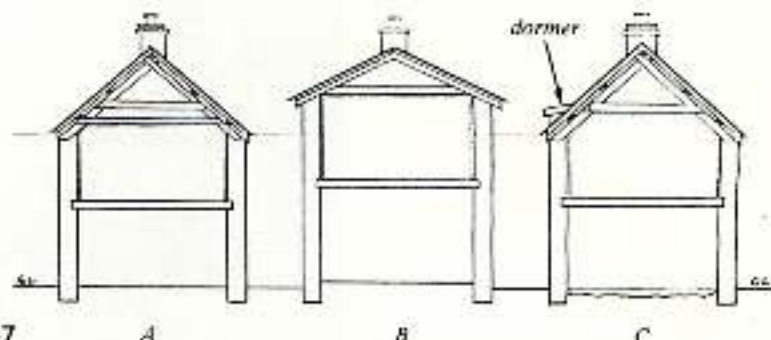


Fig 47

A typical cottage roof structure (A) is all too often flattened out to accommodate raising the eaves line (B), so increasing the ceiling height upstairs and down. The better solution (C) gains space by excavating the ground floor and forming a 'camp' ceiling upstairs. The window is raised by dormering. The roof pitch is unchanged.



Fig 48

DON'T let an old dormer like this.... TURN INTO this.... or WORSE STILL, this.

Newark Castle

The Trust visited Newark on 22nd June. One of the major ports of call was Newark Castle; this article, prepared by Michael Hurst and Chris Terrey of Newark District Council, gives the background to the visits.

Newark Castle is one of the finest episcopal castles in the country, and it is important even by European standards, with its two outstanding features of the 12th century gatehouse and the grand 14th century riverside curtain wall. It was started c.1133, received a major rebuilding c.1330 and remained occupied as a dwelling up until the slighting in 1646 following the three Civil War sieges.

The castle ruins and grounds were bought for the Borough of Newark in 1889 and so have descended to the present owners, Newark District Council. It is an unusual property to be owned by a small district council, as most comparable ruined buildings have been taken into Department of the Environment guardianship. It thus presents a peculiar responsibility to the council. Fortunately, the DoE has agreed to give both financial and technical help to supplement the District's resources, and the County Council is also contributing funds towards the repairs, 50/50 with the District.

The work done so far is the complete restoration of the SW turret (traditionally the place of death of King John in 1216, despite the lack of any corroborative evidence), and of the middle tower, and of the top part of the river front oriel window of about 1475. Currently, scaffolding is erected around

the gate house to permit accurate survey and a start on repair in the near future. Also, a photogrammetric survey has been done of the main curtain walls. When repairing such an historically important building, practical and philosophical problems are encountered in full measure. Let us look first at the philosophical ones.

The Castle is a ruin and will remain a ruin: the restoration of missing parts in any way would be reprehensible and is not intended. At the same time the castle must be left safe and durable and in a condition to be passed on to the next generation. This means that rotten materials must be removed and replaced by new, and that new materials must be added, for instance to keep out rainwater and strengthen the buildings at points where it has been weakened by the slighting or by subsequent weathering.

This seeming paradox can be resolved by thoroughly recording the building with photographs and drawings showing the work before and after repair, and by ensuring it is quite clear from the structure which work is old and which is new. When it is not clear, through the use of different materials which is new work, new stones are dated.

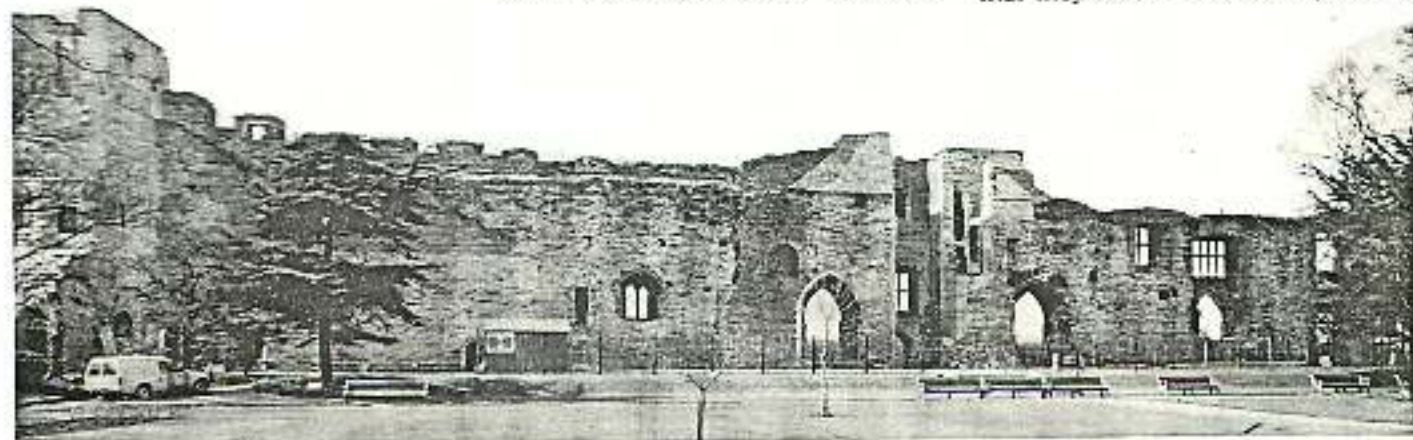
Other philosophical problems are closely linked with the practical problems set by the materials used for the original construction and subsequent repairs. The basic structural material for all periods of construction was the local lias stone, used as rubble in the Norman work and as roughly squared blocks in the later work. The trouble arises from the peculiar weathering characteristics of this stone, so that similar pointing is often not sufficient,

but full stone-by-stone replacement is too dramatic. The degree of repair has therefore to be assessed pragmatically, and will vary widely over any given piece of wall.

(The lias stone is no longer available locally and replacement material has to be imported from Dorset.)

The dressings to this basic structure of local stone were carried out partly in limestone (probably Ancaster) and partly in red Mansfield sandstone. The former presents no difficulty as ancaster is still readily obtainable, and in any case it is a good stone which rarely needs replacements. The red Mansfield is a very different kettle of fish, as over large areas of the curtain wall it has weathered very badly (exacerbated by the pigeons which have formed a columbarium below the battlements) and requires removal. But Mansfield red is no longer quarried, so a substitute has had to be used which is not a perfect match. Repairing the curtain wall ashlar will be the single most expensive operation of the whole project.

In the past, repairs to the castle have used sundry materials and methods. Salvin in 1845 mostly worked in a white limestone, possibly Clipsham, which is easily distinguishable. Subsequent repairs, probably by the unknown architect who was at work in 1889, have used the SPAB technique of cutting-in clay tiles and filling with mortar. Repairs to the lias work in 1881 used a singularly unsympathetic material: riven Yorkstone slabs, rock faced and laid with recessed joints in cement mortar. Those repairs are part of the history of the castle and are therefore left untouched except for pointing, unless the condition is so poor that they must be taken out, in which



case they are replaced with the Mansfield substitute or with Dorset lias respectively.

For structural, strengthening, reinforced concrete beams have been used. These are neatly buried in the walls and so have no visible sign, but in one or two places it has been considered visually acceptable to leave iron tie rods or concrete beams visible. Metal fixings beneath stones are non-ferrous or stainless steel.

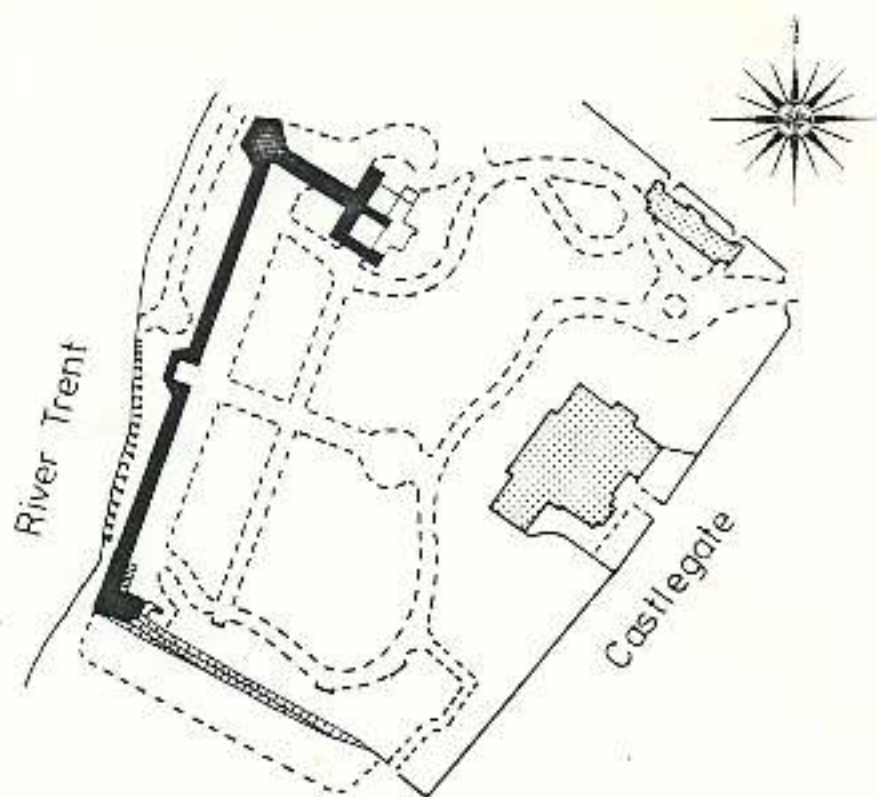
In carrying out repairs, the first stage has always been to clean the masonry using plain water to reveal the true state of the stone and joints. On the spot inspection and decision on the treatment of individual stones can be made. The required treatment is recorded directly on the stone or on a drawing of the whole wall. The mortar is basically a 1:3 lime:sand mix with a little Portland cement added to give early weather-resistance. Experiments are made to find a mortar matching the old, section by section, in colour and texture; the sand is the major factor in this, but sometimes white cement has to be used to avoid excessive greyness. Pointing is finished with a brush to give a slightly recessed joint with an open frost-resistant texture.

For capping the walls, the DoE carried out much experiment but decided that Yorkshire slabs were the only satisfactory material. It is hoped to experiment further and find a more sympathetic materials for the remainder of the job.

The castle is being progressively repaired and made safe. This means that access to and interpretation of the monument for the enjoyment and edification of the public assumes greater significance.

Like all ancient monuments, Newark Castle has a powerful effect on the imagination and attracts people irresistibly to itself. This innate attraction combines with the intrinsic qualities of the ruin itself to make it highly desirable that interpretation facilities should be provided on site.

English Heritage, the new body which has taken over most of the historic buildings functions of the DoE, is now espousing a more relaxed attitude to interpreting monuments to give them a more popular appeal. Their emphasis is on enjoyment, with the



advancement of knowledge and instruction taking a back seat. However, a balanced approach giving scope for both the enthusiast and the casual visitor can present a really challenging design opportunity. To this end perhaps, English Heritage as a funding body can be persuaded to assist with the interpretation of Newark Castle to the public.

Concepts for a well orchestrated design scheme to give the town an asset for its tourist potential and enhance civil pride in the Castle are being thought about. One of the possibilities is a custom-made tourist centre built alongside the castle itself.

To date, the work on the SW tower had given the only real chance to provide interpretation facilities. This project was completed recently (May 1984) and uses spaces released within the tower by the repairs carried out in 1979 to 81.

Although they are modest in size, the 3 rooms in this tower did present the first opportunity to give the public regular access to the interior, so a scheme of interpretation was proposed. This scheme would present a series of displays on the history of the castle and its associations, and publicise the type and programme of repairs being undertaken. With the aid of an English Tourist Board grant this scheme has now been realised.

The design concept was to use natural materials in a plain straight forward manner to complement the inherent strength and character of the spaces and their ancient masonry walls.

The work involved improving and repairing the interior using hair plaster and limewash and providing new purpose-designed and made doors and windows. For the displays themselves exhibition panels were designed incorporating lighting tracks to illuminate the material with spot-lights.

THE SOUTH WEST TOWER IS CURRENTLY OPEN ALL DAY
ON WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS AND ON THURSDAY
AFTERNOONS. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO VIEW AT
OTHER TIMES CAN BE MADE BY ARRANGEMENT WITH
THE N.D.C. MUSEUM SERVICE.
ADMISSION IS FREE.

3 Greens Gardens - completed!

Background

When Nottingham City Council took possession of the cottage at 3 Green's Gardens on 27th September 1984, it marked the completion of the Trust's renovation of the property and another successful use of the Revolving Fund.

The two-storey mid-nineteenth century cottage is in one of the allotments in Greens Gardens, Sneinton, and is typical of several houses that once existed in the area. It was last occupied in 1978, but had been deteriorating over a long period, never having been modernised.

The City Council accepted that the building should be restored and returned as accommodation for a resident site caretaker for Green's Mill and park. Although not of outstanding architectural significance, it is a valuable part of the townscape at this point. But the cost of restoration appeared likely to be prohibitive, even though provision of accommodation for a caretaker was beginning to be a pressing matter now that the museum complex is complete.

The Trust has provided a way out of the dilemma. We offered to acquire an interest in the building then carry out restoration and make the two bedroom dwelling thus created available to the City Council for use by the caretaker.

The mechanism of the agreement is that the City Council grants a lease to the Trust at a nominal rent for six years (to qualify for an improvement grant). The lease requires that the Trust restores the property in accordance with the schedule of work drawn up by John Severn. Now restoration is finished, the Trust is required to grant the City an underlease for the unexpired part of the original 6 year term. The price to the City is then a payment equal to the net cost to the Trust of carrying out the work after deduction of the grant.

The house is now let by the City to the new Greens Gardens complex caretaker - Ben Allen - on a service tenancy, and his contract of employment requires him to occupy the house "for the better performance of his duties."



3 Green's Gardens - restored

Restoration is now complete, and the building was recently handed over to the City Council.

Dick Blenkinship outlines the significance of the handover to the Trust and John Severn sums up the progress of the job.

No. 3 Greens Gardens, Sneinton

Harry Chapman's old house is back in service again. You probably saw a picture of it in the Evening Post of Friday, August 17th in the article on "Greens Mill".

Here Mr R. J. Coleman and his son Peter took over the near derelict building in April of this year and it was handed back to our Chairman on August 6th, refurbished.

Again, it is amazing what can be done with some careful thought, a lot of hard work and plenty of enthusiasm. One needs plenty of the latter to overcome all the doubting Thomases who say, No it can't or it should not be done. The number of times I have heard them say "You should put a bulldozer through it" not particularly about Greens Gardens but about old buildings in general.

One sometimes begins to lose heart and to wonder really if one is barking up the wrong tree - until inevitably someone comes up to you and says "I am glad the old building is alright again - makes the place look better don't it me Duck, now it's mended? I am pleased it's done 'cos my Grandma was born there! Cheerio duckee" and off they go. You know then you were right.

Someone's Grandma was probably born in the old house near the Mill. Most old buildings did have Grandmas born in them, but the main point is that they are now being put back into the Community to do their job again, and to do it just as well as the modern house - perhaps better for they have more experience!

Greens Gardens will be used by the Nottingham City Council to house the Miller/Attendant for the New Mill Museum due to open very shortly.

The Trust has been pleased to become involved in the scheme and particularly in the repair of this building for it very near went - to the bulldozer.

Cost! Round about £17,300 and the final account should be a pound or two inside the Contract figure.

John Severn

The Handover of 3 Greens Gardens by Dick Blenkinship

The handover of 3 Greens Gardens by the Trust to Nottingham City Council on Thursday 27th September 1984 was much more than just the restoration of an old building. It was a declaration of faith by both the City Council and the Trust to the people of Sneinton. It was they through the Sneinton Environmental Society who pleaded for someone to restore this vandalised shell of a building and thus complete and complement the George Green Windmill/Museum/Park complex.

Two quotes on the day stick in my mind, one by Ben Allen the new caretaker of the complex who will live at 3 Greens Gardens. He'd already bought the carpets and was itching to move in, so he'd obviously appreciated the Trusts work. Also the quote of Geoff Turner the Secretary to the Trust - "They said it couldn't be done, some even said it shouldn't be done but we've done it," (and we're bloody proud of the fact, he might have added)!

The Trust is now working on two other buildings with the City. We hope also to be involved shortly with Mansfield and Bassetlaw and Gerry Archer is to set up another Revolving Fund Committee in the north of the County.

Maurice Barley said at the last but one Annual General Meeting that if we carry on at our present rate we will do half a dozen buildings by the end of the century. Now I hope we will have done half a dozen by the end of 1985.

Newstead and Forest Lodges

Again your Evening Post drew attention to these buildings recently and mentioned that the Trust was likely to become involved.

Well the Nottingham City Council and the Trust have been looking very carefully at the possibility of repairing these buildings and putting them back into use again. No bulldozers this time as both are listed and also both are protected by ownership rights which means that the City Council cannot dispose of them.

If the schemes go ahead and it is hoped that September will be the month when the Council considers and makes a final decision on the proposals, then the Trust will take over these buildings and work will commence on the Forest Lodge immediately.

Contracts have been negotiated with C.R. Crane and Son Limited and, if these are signed, two more of Nottingham's small but significant buildings will be brought into use again.

When working with the City Council the Trust acts as guardian of the building, it takes a lease from the Council, repairs the building and lets it back to the Council, the rent being the cost of the refurbishment work and fees agreed over a period of time. Eventually the building reverts to its owner, the Trust having spent its money on refurbishment but recouped it all in rent, therefore having lost nothing, but gained immensely in being able to have helped to save a building which for many and varied reasons could not have been done otherwise.

John Severn



Hutt Lodge, Newstead Abbey.

1850 - 1900

An Architecture of Transition by Bryan Carther

It is unlikely that admirers of vernacular architecture cannot resist the appeal of the Arts and Crafts movement which attempted to link the romantic associations of traditional building with a spiritual recognition of the craft skills. An appreciation should recognise however that all architectural styles were derived in part by fashion, and the Arts and Crafts period is quite typical, being a reaction against contemporary fashion.

Crystal Palace

In 1851, the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace was housed in the now famous exhibition building by Paxton, a fusion of cast-iron structure, and glass. Even the hoardings which surrounded the site during construction were utilised as a modular floor decking. In spirit, this building retained the proportion of contemporary regency, up till then expressed as poor stucco and imitation classical detail. The fashions of the High Victorians were assaulted by the hereditary designs of classicism influenced from Greece and Italy; the

dignity of Gothic revival considered more appropriate for public buildings; and then the unique polychromatic styles being developed by Waterhouse and Butterfield as an "essay in fashion."

Italianate feel

Even Hine and Fothergill Watson buildings have an Italianate feel with mock campanile towers, and later medieval framing with heavy masonry rustication. Internally, the buildings were decorated in similar extreme

designs. At a time of the classic horror story, the romantic reader would sit at home by a flickering candle; "a gothic gentleman in a gothic home thinking gothic thoughts". (A quotation from my college days which I fail to resist!) Furniture would reflect the expansion of the Empire and aspects of long distance exploration, whether this be an Egyptian artefact or Greek tablet, or perhaps a black lacquered cabinet from the orient.

This contrived and confused fashion began with extreme clarity, the Crystal Palace was inspiration for the supreme conservatory at Flintham 1853, with one of the finest interiors to the library matched with great difficulty anywhere. However, as ornamentation, pastiche and indeed bad taste became dominant, there were a minority who wished to establish a standard based on first principles.

As industrialisation grew, and the towns became densely populated, social squalor and depravity became common, causing the beginnings of reform to be established by Booth, Barnado and others. Long working hours and industrial illnesses were symptomatic and many began to recall the better times of a rural upbringing with fresh-air, gardens, simple living and pleasures.

The Red House

As a positive movement, Arts and Crafts can only be seen in the last 20 years of the 19th Century and most definitely finished by the Great War; yet the most significant event was probably the Red House, built for Wm. Morris in 1859 at Bexley Heath.

Contrary to the eclectic fashion of the time, this house, built by Philip Webb was quite different, being perhaps medieval in thinking and possibly tradition. The plan by necessity had the accommodation expected for a Victorian gentleman's residence, yet the elevations expressed an unusual (for the time) organic layout of steep hipped roofs, with different volumes and interlocking complexity. In form, the building appeared to be similar to a rural group each element possibly of different build yet as a whole, perfectly organised. As a departure against fashion it was striking, and was to remain outstanding for the next 50 years.

The complimentary finishing of the interiors was undertaken by Morris's own company, selecting printed wall hangings and simple but sturdy traditional furniture, which retained an elegant yet functional layout.

The taste of medieval form was not contrived, as the reaction against industrialisation and mass production was manifest in the secret and personal skills of the medieval craft Guilds. Many years later, Morris set up a Craft Guild in Chipping Campden, in the Cotswolds, where the vernacular forms of stone building inspired a clarity of form and function. Skills by rural craftsmen became much admired, with crafted jewellery/metalwork or furniture became complimentary to the timeless skills of mason and roofer. Alas, this was not to last, despite sales to London showrooms and much perseverance by Morris and his fellow workers. Economic failure was inevitable.

Simplicity and good proportion were an aspiration, achieved in some degree, but lost in the economics of industrialisation.

The fact that craftsmen cost more than machines, and that homes conceived for the masses became homes for men of substantial means was the principle flaw which resulted in failure.

Art Nouveau

In 1896, a true turning-point was reached by the inspiration of the decorative style known as Art-Nouveau. Wood-cuts for book covers designed by R. H. Mackmurdo in 1883 had hinted at a new genesis, with arcadian designs elaborately worked in long, sensitive and surrealist curves reminiscent of a flower's stem. Architecturally in Britain this was redundant, but in sculpture or as motifs in glass, stone or iron, it was a new style consciously developed and invented for a new century. Many buildings today hint at this new expression.

"Let us hope that the time is not far distant when people who love this English home-life will refuse to associate it with the houses they now inhabit, and that the increased demand for a better class of buildings thus created will result in the erection of houses which we may be proud to call our Houses." (M.H. Baillie-Scott, 'The Studio' 1894).

Barton in Fabis Dovecote

At last the dovecote is repaired. By the end of June all but the finishing touches had been completed and our thanks must go to Messrs. C.R. Crane and Son, the Builders, for making such a good job of the work.

Those who knew the Dovecote before it was repaired will see a vast difference both inside and out. Not that its character has changed, nor has its real appearance, but the Building has dramatically emerged from being a neglected but important piece of our Rural past into a monument to former times, standing proudly in Mr Plowright's farmyard. The reason it looks so good is that John Pearson and his faithful colleague Derek have worked on the building through the most bitter cold of winter, the heavy rains of spring and the sweltering heat of the summer to mend what I think is one of our finest examples of our building heritage.

I hope the editor will print all of this because it is not often that we get the chance to praise the craftsmen for their efforts, for true craftsmanship has been shown in this repair. Without you knowing where he has been, John Pearson has transformed the former crumbling and split brickwork into its original octagonal form that looks as if it has stood since 1677, without mishap. That is the true mark of a craftsman to exercise his skills to the benefit of the building without forcing his will upon it. John has done a great job and everyone should know it.

But that is not all, from the outside he went on inside and whilst Derek brought him the bits and pieces, the mortar and the plaster, he re-built the nesting boxes so well where they had collapsed that we shall have to say that he did it lest the next generation think it is all 1677. But we have not cheated and we have not faked. We have taken the building as we found it and we have repaired it as best we can. There are, therefore, some nesting boxes missing, as there were not enough pieces of the 'jigsaw' suitable for re-use to put it all back again.

We also did it within the grant allocation we were given, which is important. In fact we have a little left over and hopefully we shall mount a small but permanent exhibition in the building if Mr Plowright agrees. We

have not asked him yet but I don't think he will say No.

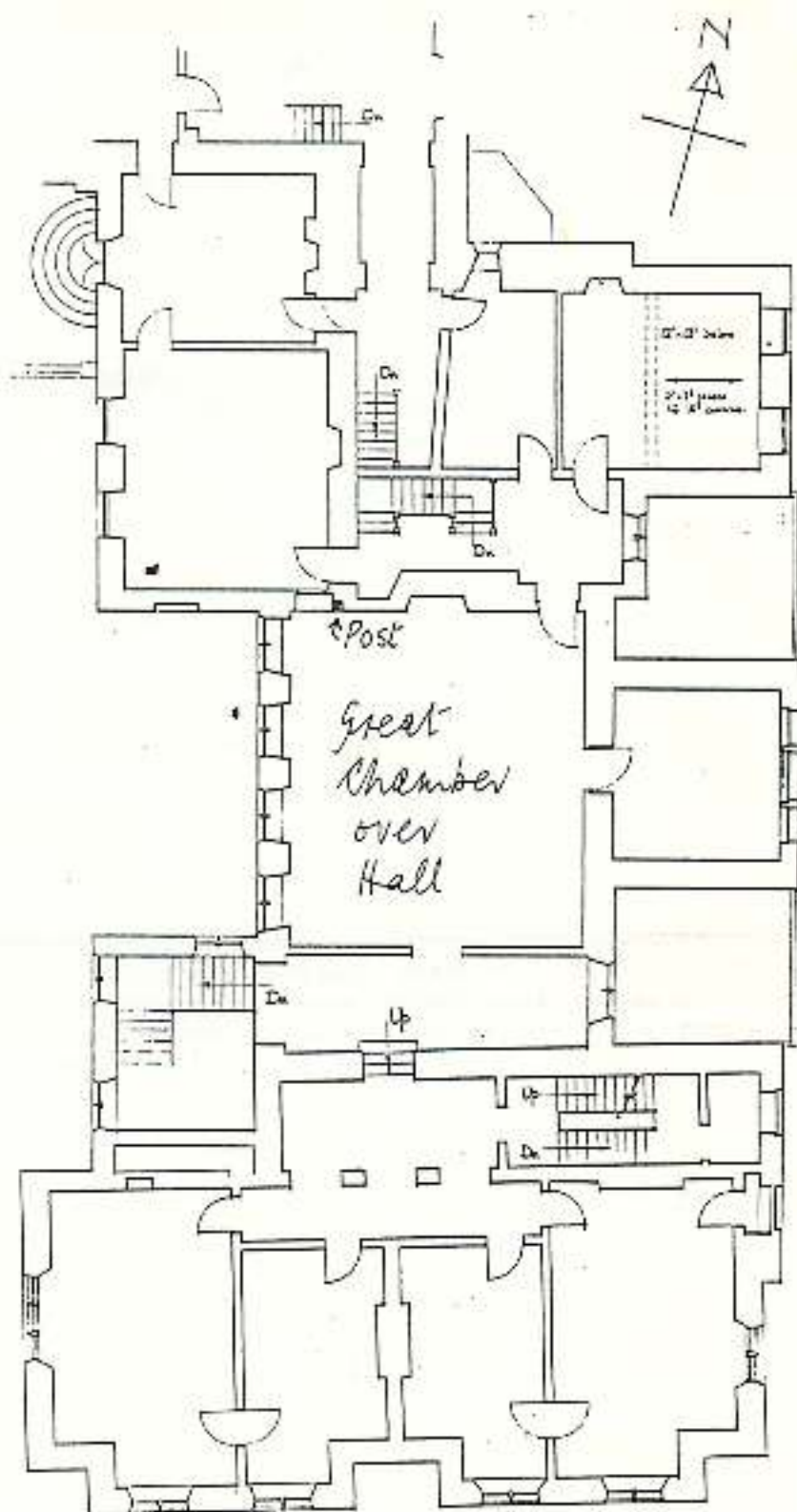
I am sure Sir William Sacheverell would be pleased and, for that matter, Joseph Whitaker, if they could see what has now been done - but perhaps they can!

John Severn

Annesley Hall

One of the exciting things about being involved with the Building Preservation Trust is that scarcely a month goes by without the discovery of an old house with some features of special interest. For instance the Old Post Office at Normanton on Soar presents a timber-framed front to this street and so is evidently old. When Graham Beaumont of the County Planning Department recently inspected it inside, he found that it was built with crucks, and so adds one more to the Nottinghamshire list of cruck buildings. It was probably built in before 1600. Another is the Governor's House, Newark, which has recently been properly examined; it was built c.1500.

Buildings like that were farm-houses. It is rare for a new discovery to be made about a country house, but Annesley Hall is an exception. It was thought to be "basically 17 Century" (Pevsnet Nottinghamshire, revised 1979). Everyone knows that since Major R.P. Chaworth-Musters sold it in 1972, various proposals have been made for a new use. The Football Association acquired it and proposed to develop it as a training centre, but that scheme was abandoned and it is now being converted into a home for the elderly. The Football Association was, apparently, responsible for removing the panelling in the room over the hall which must have been the Great Chamber in the 17th Century. This was, to say the least of it, unfortunate, but stripping the room served to reveal the true age and character of the house. It is often the fact that the anatomy of a historic building only becomes visible in the course of demolition. Happily, Annesley is now being restored.



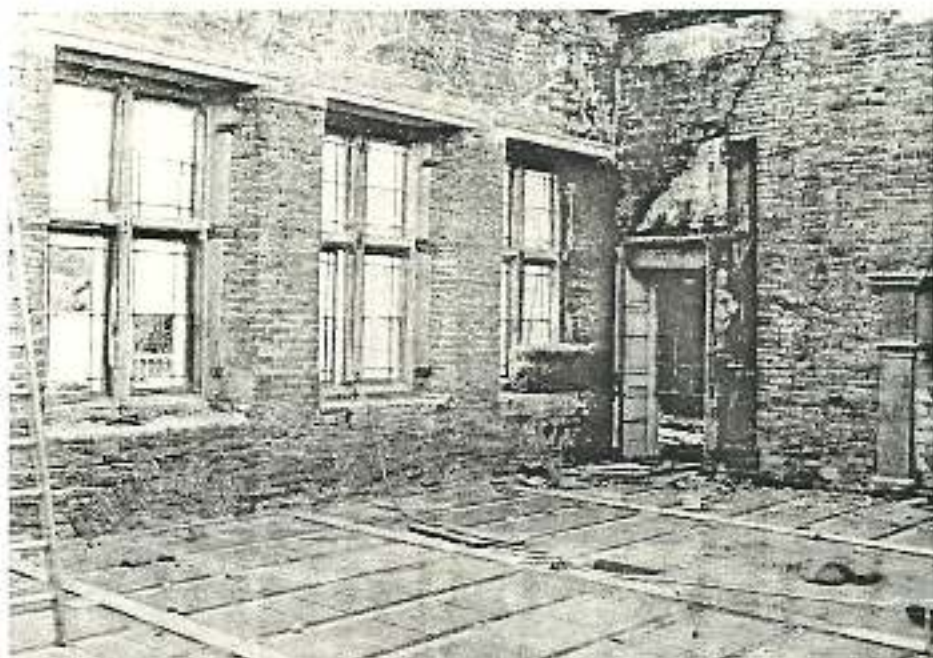
Plan of the first floor of Annesley Hall showing the position of the arcade post of the medieval aisled hall.

The plan is essentially an H, with a hall between two cross-wings. Over the hall is the Great Chamber, created in the 17th Century when halls open to the roof were no longer fashionable.

The post embedded in later brick-work in the north wall of the Great Chamber has features that prove that it

was one of two at the end of an aisled hall, like Oakham Castle hall but built of timber rather than stone. The photos show that the arcade posts had moulded capitals about 14ft.6ins above the present level of the ground floor.

Since the publication of *The English Farmhouse and Cottage* (1961), in



The great chamber of Annesley Hall, after the panelling had been removed, and while a new floor was being inserted. The Arcade post can be seen between the doorway and the fireplace. The sloping line over the doorway shows the pitch of the roof.

which I illustrated a timber aisled hall in Kent (Nurstead Court), many more examples of this construction have been discovered. They are still far more common in the south-eastern counties, so an example from Nottinghamshire (and the first) is of unusual interest. They were mostly built for Kings (Winchester Castle hall) Bishops (The Old Palace, Lincoln) and for lords of manors, but were occasionally copied on a smaller scale for rich peasants. The construction was very suitable for barns, such as the one which stood in Lovers' Lane, Newark, and there was one at Rempstone dated 1614.

The other feature about Annesley is that the details of construction suggest that it was probably built c. 1250-1300. That conclusion is based on the fact that there is what is called a passing brace, which went from the

aisle wall, trenched into the arcade post and then jointed into a rafter, crossing another brace on the opposite side. This particular device, for making the whole truss rigid, is characteristic of the earliest surviving aisled halls, the photos also show the pitch of the original roof in the line between plaster and brick on the one hand and the stone of the cross wing. Evidently the original walls were rebuilt in more than one operation. We should be grateful for this chance to see the skeleton of the house revealed, once the flesh (of plaster and panelling) had been removed.

I hope to do justice to aisled halls, and to other types of medieval house, in a general book, to be called *Houses and History* which will be published in the Autumn of 1985.

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The arcade post. The moulded capital is just over the level of the inserted floor.