



# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST BULLETIN

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78 BRIDGFORD ROAD WEST BRIDGFORD, NOTTINGHAM NG2 6AX.

MAY 1987

## NEW TRUST OFFICES

The Trust has now moved from its "romantic" setting at the Old Bowls Pavilion, which it shared with a family of foxes, to more prosaic rooms at 78 Bridgford Road, West Bridgford, about thirty yards down the road.

The Pavilion served a very useful purpose in housing the Trust during the transition period between being a professionally administered grant-giving body to its new role of active participation in building acquisition and restoration.

We are grateful to St. Giles Church for letting us use the pavilion at a modest rent, but the building was rapidly deteriorating and would have required substantial restoration for it to continue in use as an office. I understand that there is no intention to list the building despite its unique association with the Trust.

## SLIDE MEETINGS AT LANGAR

A new venture started last autumn, aimed at bringing members together to talk and exchange ideas, has been particularly successful, if not in the way originally intended.

Thanks to Mrs. Imogen Skirving who kindly invited us to use Langar Hall for the purpose, a monthly meeting has been held which up to twenty members have attended. After a glass of wine a talk has been given, usually by Graham Beaumont with valuable contributions by Leo Godlewski and Neville Hoskins, followed by coffee again kindly provided by our hostess.

These meetings are to continue for the next five months at Shireoaks Hall near Worksop by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Godlewski and, of course, Leo. The meetings are held on the first Friday of each month commencing at 8.00 p.m. It is hoped that more people who have slides will bring them along. The subject matter is not unduly restricted and no criticisms of the composition or technical merit of the slide will be made.

This is really a challenge to those northern members of the Trust who often complain that they are neglected by those living south of Ollerton, so we look forward to a large attendance during the summer months.

Geoff Turner.

## LAMBERT'S FACTORY, NOTTINGHAM : UPDATE

Our earlier report in the Trust Newsletter indicated that this building was under threat from demolition and that an Appeal to the Department of the Environment had yet to be heard. The Hearing took place during 24-26th June, 1986.

After hearing evidence, the Inspector allowed the Appeal, concluding that Lambert's Factory is a building of considerable architectural merit and not without local historical interest. It makes a significant contribution to the appearance of the local Conservation Area and to the Nottingham sky-line when seen from middle distance view-points in and around the Arboretum.

The appeal was supported by evidence that the building was structurally sound and capable of conversion at a viable cost. A special point was made that the building was an example of 19th century industrial architecture with a distinctive presence and an unusually ornate roof-line, dominated by the clock-tower at one end. As well as retaining significant stone features, the building makes a powerful contribution to the enclosure on Talbot Street and maintains a rigid definition of the street frontage.

The Inspector also referred to the (pleasant) Baptist Chapel which forms part of the historic fabric, and also Short's factory on Talbot Street, which even though it is un-listed, is considered to make a positive and beneficial contribution to the townscape, and that demolition is unjustified.

This report is but one step in the chequered history of this site, and even though the buildings are saved, firm proposals for re-use have yet to be developed. It is hoped that we can report on the owners proposals as they become clear, and that the new use proves to be a sensitive and appropriate change.

## FIRE!

Following a fire caused by arson at Ilminster in the West Country, a 600 ton hay-rick of unthreshed corn was destroyed which could cause a shortage of thatching straw in the region this year. This fire illustrates the precarious nature with which many traditional materials are now obtained and the difficulty which often faces conservationists in obtaining a suitable resource.

## LEIGH COURT BARN, WORCESTERSHIRE

English Heritage have now agreed to take into its care the oldest surviving cruck barn in the world even though it is not the legal owner. The 700 year old barn which forms part of a working farm, has been compared in stature with Westminster Hall and is Listed Grade I.

The proposals include work over a period of two years to draw-back a spread on the trusses of almost half a metre and also new roof and foundations to the old framed structure. The cost will be in the order of £5000,000.

Bryan Cather.

## THE MANOR HOUSE, MANSFIELD WOODHOUSE

The Manor House, Mansfield Woodhouse dates back to the early 17th century, and has a long history of alterations prior to its listing as a Grade II structure.

The Manor House is sometimes known as "Woodhouse Castle" and was built by the grandfather of Sir John Digby, High Sheriff of Nottingham. The house was passed down the Digby family to his grandson, also named John, who died unmarried in 1728. His seven sisters inherited the house, which they sold to John Hall who died in 1736. A series of owners included Sir William Boothby (d. 1787) and in 1811 it was sold to Colonel John Need. The house has had much alteration in late Georgian times, having a porch added and crenellations; and at the time of John Need, further alterations were made, including demolition of a west wing and another porch added.

The Needs moved away and from 1844-53 Robert Gill occupied the house. After the death of Colonel Need his widow return with her son Captain Walter Need and re-occupied the house. Mrs. Need died in 1857, leaving Captain Need to marry and live in the house until he died in 1901. His wife died soon after and their two daughters who were brought up and lived in the house left in 1911 to live in Wellbourne, Lincolnshire.

The Duke of Portland conveyed the house in 1923 to the Sherwood Colliery Company and the Colliery Manager, John Taylor, lived there. He died in 1932 and the house was conveyed to Mansfield Woodhouse Urban District Council in 1933/34 for £15,000 to preserve and use as offices. The Mansfield Woodhouse Urban District Council occupied the offices to 1974, to be succeeded by Mansfield District Council until new offices were built. The Local Authority disposed of the offices to a Leicester Developer in 1986.

The house contained many fine features notably oak panelling, there being several panelled rooms, finely moulded doorways and an excellent late 17th century/early 18th century main staircase which one would expect to have been given some protection.

The Developers applied for planning permission for change of use to form 20 flats in November 1986, and proposals included demolition of the staircase, removal of interior panelling and external chimney stacks. A further application for 6 flats in an adjoining building was made in December 1986.

The Trust (and others) were consulted and made written objections referring to the loss of the internal features, staircase and chimney stacks. The Trust made further comments and Maurice Barley, Bob Harrison and Alan Wahlers were able to arrange an internal inspection of the house with the Developer's Architect.

A measured survey was agreed by the Architect, but strangely permission was later withdrawn. The Planning Committee granted approval to the two planning applications, agreeing to the removal of the staircase, chimneys and internal features. Subsequently the Chief Planning Officer has said that the retention of the staircase would have jeopardised the whole scheme and referred to a report that the staircase was rotten and unsafe.

The Trust wrote to the Developer asking again to be allowed to carry out a measured survey. No reply was received. After several telephone calls the Trust was finally given 4 days notice to organise a measured survey prior to demolition work starting. A survey team was assembled

with the assistance of the Old Mansfield Woodhouse Society, and a survey made.

The staircase was removed by the Developer over a weekend in three pieces and without damage. It was then taken to Leicester, to an unknown fate. Some other features are still believed to be in place, but all rooms are to be stripped of existing features.

Under Listed Building Legislation the Local Authority are obliged to inform the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments to give opportunity to record the building prior to alteration, yet the R.C.H.M. decided to take no action. However, the L.A. had sent a 1954 Listed Building Description to the R.C.H.M. which misleadingly referred to "no internal features remaining in this building." This is very surprising as the 1959 and indeed 1986 listings clearly describe the varied features already mentioned. Incompetence or deliberate, whatever, the R.C.H.M. were naturally very concerned when they were given the correct description by the Trust, and promptly despatched two members and professional photographer to record the house with immediate effect.

This raises several questions in relation to a Grade II Listed Building protected by legislation. What is the Planning Officer's role? What about the Elected members? Finally, what price development? What were the terms of the Conveyance in which the Local Authority originally acquired the building? Have the Local Authority the right to dispose of the building in such a manner?

No doubt the Manor House will survive, but undoubtedly a little more of its history and quality will have been irreplaceably destroyed.

Alan Wahlers.

ENVIRONMENT WEEK : 25th April - 4th May 1987.

The Civic Trust's Environment Week is to begin on Saturday, 25th April, and will feature displays, exhibitions and guided walks linked with other practical projects.

The Preservation Trust intend to display their work on space provided by the Civic Society in the Market Square, Nottingham. This display will be part of a larger stall shared with other amenity societies and it is hoped that visitors will be more aware of current issues.

## BUILDINGS AT RISK REGISTER.

An important element in the work of the Trust is the establishment of an up-to-date register of Buildings at Risk. By the wonders of new technology this can now be kept in a computer with, hopefully, instant retrieval of information. However, the information must be correct in the first place and to assist in a correct register being assembled, parish councils and district councils have been asked to assist, and by and large are doing so.

Computers tend to create a false sense of security - or doom depending largely on your attitude or age group, but it is feet on the ground and local knowledge that are of the greater importance. If anyone has information about buildings at risk from demolition, alteration or "improvement" please let us know.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Trust continues to comment upon planning applications which affect historic buildings and their settings when invited to do so by local planning authorities, and often when not.

The Trust also gives evidence at public local inquiries or provides written evidence in planning appeals that affect the demolition or development of historic buildings.

Buildings recently concerned are 24 Moorgate, Retford, and the iron bridge at Drury Dam, Mansfield. The Trust gave evidence at both inquiries, and the recent good news is that the Minister has agreed with the Trust and in both cases has refused consent to demolish.

## PROGRESS AT CALKE ABBEY, DERBYSHIRE

Described as a unique time-capsule, Calke Abbey was taken over by the National Trust in 1985 when the family decided to sell to meet massive tax debts. In the largest ever single grant, English Heritage have given £1 million for the restoration which will cover 40% of the five year repair programme. Work will concentrate on structural repairs including roof leadwork and work on the massive stone cornices.

The restoration programme is expected to cost £3.6 million over a period of 10 years, although the abbey is expected to open to the public in 1989.

## CIVIC TRUST AWARDS 1986

Nottinghamshire has won two commendations in this years Civic Trust Awards for housing schemes in the Meadows and in the Park, Nottingham. However, it is proper that two schemes involving older buildings, one in Lincolnshire and the other in Derbyshire, should be applauded by this paper.

The former, Chateau Gate Burton, near Gainsborough, is the meticulous renovation of a scaled down replica of an 18th century French Chateau. This folly which features prominently in a rural park landscape has been restored with painstaking detail by masons, bricklayers and lead-workers to provide residential holiday accommodation.

The second award is given to the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust for the restoration of a group of buildings in the centre of Wirksworth, close to the Market Place. The buildings are of different ages, but are predominantly constructed in limestone and positively contribute to the core of the town. The scheme included work to derelict structures, repair and restoration and also marketing to seek new occupants.

As the finer weather approaches, I will look forward to visiting both schemes.

Bryan Cather

## ST. MARY'S TRUST : An Appeal for £250,000

Despite careful maintenance, extensive deterioration of the fabric of St. Mary's has required the need for an appeal to fund a repair programme so that this magnificent church can continue its tradition as a prominent building in the history of the town. The present structure is well over 500 years old and is the third building on the site. An earlier building was mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086.

The programme includes new stonework to the window arches in the North clerestorey and new stone mullions, tracery and surrounding stonework on the North transept. In addition the work includes repair and replacement of the soft stone used on the South porch built in the early 15th century. A second phase of the project also includes work to the north aisle, south transept and tower, as well as cleaning of the Church fabric.

All donations should be sent to:

The Honorary Treasurer,  
St. Mary's Restoration and Development Trust,  
St. Mary's Church,  
High Pavement,  
NOTTINGHAM.  
NG1 1HF.

Deeds of Covenant are also possible.