



the welsh civic societies'
local design awards 2003-4

the civic trust for wales
ymddiriedolaeth ddinesig cymru



INTRODUCTION



Monmouth Priory
interior detail

THE AIM OF the Local Design Awards is to encourage the recognition and celebration of good design in communities throughout Wales – not necessarily “outstanding” work, but design that is responsive to context in a way that deserves to be emulated. We asked civic societies to identify development and conservation projects that responded successfully to a local sense of place and which met the needs of their intended users. It was to be local lay judgement that counted, not that of outside experts and professional leaders.

An important context for the scheme was the Welsh Assembly Government’s 2003 advice note on Design (TAN 12). An important plank in the broader and very ambitious initiative that has seen the launch of a Welsh Design Commission, the advice note guides both developers and planning authorities. It is important that civic societies, which are proactive in the causes of sound planning, good design, and social and physical sustainability, recognise its importance. Accordingly, we asked societies to justify their selections against criteria derived from the advice note.

All types and scales of projects could be nominated – conservation/re-use, shop fronts, new-build business, social, retail, educational and residential, as well as landscaping and floorscape schemes. The criteria that societies were asked to consider included:

- Response to local character and context
- Response to opportunities for innovative or

contemporary design solutions

- Response to opportunities to clarify or improve the relationship between private and public space
- Accessibility to all
- User needs
- Sustainability and biodiversity, and
- Contribution to an enjoyable, safe and secure environment.

As a first-time exercise we consider it has been successful in identifying local projects that have been positive and creative in design terms and in meeting a variety of needs. Some societies found it easier than others to couch their nominations in terms that reflected criteria ultimately defined by civil servants comfortable with the lexicon of architecture and urban design. Each project shows that quality can be achieved with a modicum of forethought. Any extra costs are reflected in added value – whether social or commercial.

It is to be hoped that publicity arising locally from these awards will help encourage other schemes to match the quality that has been achieved. The scheme itself has great potential, and the Trust will be looking at how it may be developed to involve a greater number of societies and communities in Wales.

David Cox, *Chair*

TRUSTEES

Jean Baker DipAD ED
Peter Cope DipTP MRTPI
David Cox CVO MBE DL, *Chair*
Bill R Davies RIBA
Siarlys Evans MSc FRIBA FRSA
Mike Flynn MRTPI
Roger D Gagg FTII, BA
Gareth Griffiths MSc FIPD
Henry Hodges
Tom Jones
Wynford Lewis
David Lermon MA FCA
A Geoff Mein
Maureen Kelly Owen JP RIBA DipArch
Audrey Poole
Ruth Ridge
David Suthers ERD TD
Wayne Thomas
Linda Thorp
Paul Vanner
Martell Williams
Michael Wynn William

PATRON HRH The Prince of Wales

Front cover
Washington Gallery, Penarth

Back cover
Shiloh Community Centre,
Cwm Penmachno



BRIDGEND



St Mary's RC Church, Ewenny Road

Design James and Nicholas

Completed in 1998, this building replaces a very modest older structure. Blue lias limestone from the old church has been re-used in the tower and apse. The intricate site layout has enabled a plan with both large airy spaces and smaller intimate areas. Unlike its predecessor, this church is proud of its presence, with the tower visible from the main road into town. Its circular form has a Celtic resonance, but the wholly glazed clerestory is unmistakably contemporary. The themes of old and new combine in the choice of materials and the shaping of building elements. Church, hall and presbytery are covered in Penrhyn slate, providing a harmonising and durable finish. fitting well into the environmental context. This is an outstanding building that contributes massively to the town's built environment.

Nominated by Bridgend Civic Society

CAERLEON



School House (Caerleon Endowed School)

Design Monmouthshire County Council

Built in 1724 as the Williams Charity School, this "rustic" classical structure became a model for later Welsh schools in the 18th and 19th centuries, combining classrooms and houses in the wings for a master and mistress. It is a prominent building on the High Street, and Grade II listed. By 1999 School House was in poor order. The conversion provides IT and music rooms for the primary school, new general classrooms, an office and meeting room. The works have enabled the school to stay within its existing structure, avoiding further development in an archaeologically sensitive area.

The conversion and refurbishment have been achieved with sensitivity, benefiting both school and wider community.

Nominated by Caerleon Civic Society

CHEPSTOW



Methodist Church extension, Albion Square

Design Liddell + Associates

A new two-storey hall replaces two separate buildings and integrates the whole with the church. The church now has a distinct presence next to the local supermarket, shops, and offices. Meanwhile the extension creates a unified whole of church and hall. There is a wide entrance hall and stairway, enabling wheelchair access to the whole building. Its central location ensures that this is an asset used by the community. The project has enhanced both the listed church and the Chepstow conservation area.

Nominated by Chepstow Civic Society

CONWY VALLEY Llanrwst



Llanrwst Almshouses and Museum

Design Sir John Wynn of Gwydir Trust/Llanrwst Almshouses and Museum Trust

These alms houses were founded in 1610 by Sir John Wynn of Gwydir, but fell out of use in 1976. The Sir John Wynn Trust was formed to rescue and restore this historic building, and this has been done in an outstanding and painstaking manner.

The Museum Trust has now taken over the restored building and presents it in an imaginative and attractive manner. Two of the upstairs rooms are shown as they might have been in the early 17th and late 19th centuries. There is an exhibition space, meeting room and sales area on the ground floor.

The project is staffed by local volunteers and provides a useful community and visitor facility in the centre of the historic market town of Llanrwst.

Nominated by Conwy Valley Civic Society

CONWY VALLEY Cwm Penmachno



Shiloh Community Centre

Design Cwm Community Action Group with Colwyn Ffoulkes and Partners

Cwm Penmachno was once a thriving slate-quarrying village. Its population dwindled with the end of quarrying in 1952, and the remaining villagers were left without community facilities in the 1970s. The Cwm Community Action Group was formed to provide a centre for village life, and acquired the lease of Shiloh from Conwy CBC.

The plans for the building were developed from the ideas of local residents. The restored chapel provides two floors of activity space, together with ICT training facilities.

Space has been reserved for a future shop and post office, and there is a safe play area to the rear. The building is fully accessible.

The project has revived a disused building of strong local character and given new life to the whole community.

Nominated by Conwy Valley Civic Society

LLANELLI



Careers Wales Office

Design Trevor Smith

The offices stand at the junction of two secondary streets in the town centre, and are part of a late-Victorian parade of shops designed in an Italianate style.

Over the past few years the building suffered from lack of maintenance. The new owner has sought to restore the building prior to letting. The original design and detailing has by and large been retained and the stucco rendering has been repaired and painted. The slate roof has been renewed. The replacement of the original timber sash windows in uPVC is controversial to many, but the oriel bay window moulding has been retained and the replacement windows and doors follow the style of the originals, albeit in casement. The project has restored much of the character of a prominent town centre building by responding to the aspirations of owner and users.

Nominated by Llanelli Civic Society

LLANELLI



Cilfig Lodge
Design Pat Morris

Cilfig Lodge is the Grade II late 18th-century lodge to Cilfig House. It is a remarkable survival of the Regency “Gothick” style, otherwise not represented in the area. Once in a rural setting, it is now surrounded by Victorian and Edwardian villas and town houses.

The new owner removed a hideous 1950s flat-roofed rear extension, and has sought to restore the original character of a neglected building. The new living extension is sympathetic in height, scale, appearance, materials and colour. The project fits successfully into the site and its wider topographic and landscape setting.

The building contributes to the local environment, enhances the townscape, and improves the setting of the adjacent listed Ivy House.

Nominated by Llanelli Civic Society

LLANELLI



Llanelli Crematorium
Design Chichester Nunns Partnership

Located on a green-field site at Dafen, the crematorium serves Llanelli and south Carmarthenshire, obviating travel to Swansea or Narberth. The building is predominantly a brick single-storey structure with a first-floor public gallery above the main entrance to provide for overspill from the main congregational area, which is itself open to the roof space. It is distinguished by a sweeping pitched slate roof and the two-storey windows in the southern gable, framing a pleasant rural aspect. The architects have created a structure reminiscent of the late-Victorian and Edwardian Arts and Crafts movement. The building nestles on a levelled plateau, closely hugging the hillside in a manner that mirrors the original contours of the land.

Nominated by Llanelli Civic Society

LLANELLI



Knut House 2 (3 and 3a Cowell Street)
Design C and D Dunning/ D Strasdun Joinery

This unit is a purpose-built end-terrace shop that is part of a block of late Victorian buildings which have surprisingly retained much of their character. No 3 and 3a is in a cottage style that is rather incongruous alongside its three-storey neighbours. The owner, a local builder, has completely refurbished the dilapidated building, successfully reinstating its original appearance (apart from Tudor-style timber framing to the first floor, possibly original, and omitted when the stucco rendering was renewed). The fenestration to the shop front and first-floor has been replaced with identical units and part-leaded glazing; the original timber signage boarding has been retained.

The project restores much of the structure’s original character in a Victorian town centre townscape, whilst adapting it for a modern use as a hairdresser’s.

Nominated by Llanelli Civic Society

LLANELLI



Llwyn Hall

Design P K Johnson

This small late 19th-century mansion is set in spacious grounds at Llwynhendy, outside Llanelli. Its owners over the past fifty years neglected to maintain and repair the building. The present owner has rescued it from dereliction and converted the property to a country house hotel and restaurant.

The original Victorian villa design has been sympathetically restored, together with the quirky touches to its fenestration. A tasteful extension balances the frontage.

Nominated by Llanelli Civic Society

MONMOUTH



Glendower House

Architect Graham Frecknall Design Anthony Sully

This structure was built in 1844 as a congregational chapel with a classical frontage. The chapel was abandoned fifty years ago and deteriorated to a point almost beyond repair. Now it enhances its residential setting through a dramatic conversion to family house, design studio and exhibition space. The exterior has been restored to the original design, save for the insertion of two feature circular windows high in the rear wall enabling viewing of the garden. The gallery has been retained, as have two stone spiral stairs. The outstanding feature of this renovation is the high standard of contemporary interior design alongside a careful and wholly sympathetic treatment of the exterior.

Nominated by Monmouth Civic Society

MONMOUTH



St James Mews

Architect Liddell+Associates; construction overseen by BS Technical Services

Once the Judges' Lodging House the main building became a car showroom and workshop (1920s-1990s), while the rear was covered with individual garages. The restoration removes all traces of the showroom and returns the front elevation to the original design. The garages have been knocked down and in their place two terraces of small houses have been built. The original rear buildings have been converted to living accommodation. The development provides fourteen dwellings with a private courtyard in a neat and pleasing style, within easy walking distance of the town centre.

Nominated by Monmouth Civic Society

MONMOUTH



The Priory

Design Keith Murray

A much altered medieval building, used as a school until 1973, subsequently as a youth hostel. The building has been renovated to equip the building for use by the church and the parochial church council. This involved clever and imaginative design that incorporates newly revealed medieval features and enables disabled access. The 1884 extension has been unified with the large ground floor area.

Nominated by Monmouth Civic Society

PENARTH



Washington Gallery and Cafeteria

Design Keith Munro for Penarth Arts and Crafts Ltd

Originally an Art Deco cinema (1938), this is a fine example of the conservation and re-use of a building that gives an extra dimension to the Edwardian and Victorian town centre. The rear auditorium has been converted to a store, the finely sculpted front section has been developed as a gallery and cafeteria. The internal development of a keynote building has been managed with sensitivity. The 1930s style has been continued in the heavy metal railings on the external terrace, enhancing the public realm. The whole emphasis has been on sustainability in a quality environment.

Nominated by the Penarth Society

RUTHIN



Rose Cottage

Design TACP for Mr Eifion Hughes

On the very edge of Ruthin's town centre, Rose Cottage is one of the very few surviving cruck-framed vernacular houses in Wales, and much more modest in scale than typical survivals. Of early 17th-century origin it was virtually derelict, with a tin roof and no mains services.

The restoration of the cottage includes a new, sympathetic thatched roof and a carefully-handled rear kitchen/bathroom extension.

Nominated by the Ruthin and District Civic Association

Promoting civic pride

The Civic Trust for Wales and its associated civic societies

- promote civic pride as a means to improve the quality of life for all in the places where we live and work
- encourage community action, good design, sustainability and respect for the built environment amongst people of all ages

The Civic Trust for Wales
Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig Cymru
3rd floor Empire House
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff CF10 5FN
Registered charity no 242672

T: 02920 484606
admin@civictrustwales.org

www.civictrustwales.org

