

## Welcome to the Spring Issue of the Synergy Newsletter

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Synergy Newsletter. We have been very busy over the last few months, working on some exciting projects - so much so that we have had to publish our first 8 page newsletter!

This month we are Headline Sponsors of the Independent School's Bursar's Association (ISBA) Conference which is being held at the Celtic Manor, Newport - it is our favourite Conference of the year and gives us a chance to catch up with old faces and new, having attended the conference for the last 12 years, we really do feel part of the family. If you are attending, please pay us a visit on stand 52.



the industry, due to a lag in data collection the figures are probably overstated, although it is a good time to build now, with tender prices continuing to be extremely competitive.

Inside this issue, we report on some of our current education projects in both the Independent and Public sector; look at some fascinating conservation work happening at Peper Harrow, Bath Abbey and Stowe House and celebrate the culmination of some highly successful projects at St. Paul's Church, Sussex CCC and new affordable housing in Hemel Hempstead. Don't forget to turn to our back page where there is something spooky going on...

In general news, following the results of the first quarter, it would be tempting to view the figures for the construction industry with concern, with a drop in construction activity of 4.7%, following a 2.3% drop in the final quarter of 2010. Undoubtedly there are tough times ahead for

I hope you are enjoying our early summer and that business is going well.

Graham Harvey-Browne  
Executive Chairman

## A Dream Come True at St Paul's

September 2010 saw the culmination of a long held dream for the PCC of St Paul's Church in St Albans with the completion of the refurbishment and extensions to the Church.

The original St Paul's was opened in 1910 replacing a mission founded in 1899 as St Albans expanded under the Victorians. More recently, St. Paul's have been considering how to make their buildings more accessible and welcoming to the local community by:

- providing a welcoming entrance to the whole complex
- linking the worship area and community facilities, making the transition between the 'sacred' and 'secular' easier
- extending and improving the facilities to accommodate Sunday and mid week groups, including community activities
- updating and improving kitchens, toilets and access
- providing a reception area and more office space



St. Paul's are delighted with their new facilities and the flexibility they provide. Vicar, Canon Tony Hurle, said: "Our church building plays a key part in supporting our mission to present the Christian gospel to the parish. It has been exciting to see the building so busy throughout the week with so many church and community activities taking place."

Synergy are honoured to have been involved with St Paul's Church as Quantity Surveyor and CDM-C since 2007, alongside Architects MEB Design Ltd.

The project involved the refurbishment of the existing community hall building, the construction of a new two storey link building, including a large double height entrance lobby and the turning round of the church by 180 degrees.

Works started on site in May 2009 and completed in September 2010.

Getting the scheme to completion was a challenge for all concerned but one that Synergy were proud to take on and be a part of!

## Changes in VAT Regulations to the Listed Places of Worship Scheme

In January, the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) implemented changes to the Grant Scheme in order to stay within their budget cap.

These changes directly affect what VAT can and can't be claimed for.

Additionally, it is also allocated on a capped fund per quarter basis which is

distributed among the applicants during that period, the amount is therefore unpredictable.

The deadline for claims under the previous arrangement has already passed, so please check the LPW website [www.lpwscheme.org.uk](http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk) for full details of the changes and any deadlines which may apply to outstanding claims.



# Independent Schools' Update

Consultants to 84 Independent schools, Synergy have been leaders in education, particularly the Independent sector, for over 45 years. From the smallest projects of new changing room facilities to 10 year master plans, we really have done it all. Below is an update of just some of our current Independent School work:

## Francis Holland School, London ~ Working Men's Club Transformed

Carmel Hall, once a run-down former Men's Club for the Duke of Westminster's London workers (on the Grosvenor Estate, London), has been transformed into a state of the art Performing Arts Centre for Francis Holland School. The centre was completed in August 2010 and includes 9 music rooms and additional classrooms.

The works to Carmel Hall involved the initial removal of the ground floor lounge and bar facilities and the dismantling and removal of a first floor snooker hall, complete with 2 full size snooker tables, which sadly never found a home. Within the hall, and from new reinforced concrete ground beams, a new structural steel frame was fabricated and erected, punching through the 1st floor to allow the formation of an additional mezzanine floor. This allowed the construction of the new music rooms to sound studio specification, as well as ancillary storage, stores and refreshment areas. The main area of the 1st floor of Carmel Hall was transformed into a fully functioning performing arts studio, with a state of the art lighting and sound system, sprung floor and cinema facilities, all accessed by new re-orientated staircases and a lift for DDA compliance.

Alongside the alteration works to Carmel Hall, an existing single storey music block was demolished and a new basement formed, to provide an extension to the existing school dining room. The school required that the existing dining

## Ardingly College, West Sussex

New Sixth Form Boarding House - the construction of this 3,000m<sup>2</sup> four storey boarding house will commence on site in September. On completion, it will provide 96 study bedrooms and 7 day boarding rooms for its local and international students, together with associated social and administrative spaces, housemaster's and tutor's accommodation.



room remained in operation, necessitating extensive temporary works, including dust and soundproof temporary partitions.

The new extension led to the complete refurbishment of the existing Senior Hall, with refurbished sprung flooring, an under floor heated ballet dance area, new suspended ceilings and lighting, as well as a new AV system and Stage lighting, perimeter painted timber panelling and the complete removal and renovation of some existing stained glass windows which were of historic interest. The site can only be described as very restricted (!) with key areas of work having to be programmed to take place during school holiday periods.

The overall contract value at completion was £2.3m with construction taking place between June 2009 and August 2010. The initial enabling works contract was undertaken during the 2009 Easter break, to remove and divert electrical, CCTV, Alarms and Fibre Optic cabling away from the site.

The works were completed on time and on budget and were officially opened by the Duke of Westminster in October 2010.

Most importantly - the school are delighted with their new facilities!

The College is set in 250 acres of outstanding natural beauty in West Sussex. The new building has been sensitively designed to enhance the visual setting of the College, respecting the existing listed main school buildings, and making use of the steeply sloped site and the roof space, with regards to the massing and scale of the proposals.

## Davenies School, Hemel Hempstead

### Newton Building to Open

The Architectural division of Synergy was appointed by Jarvis Contracting to provide detail design and construction drawings (post planning permission) for a new building at Davenies School, an Independent Preparatory School in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

The new pavilion style building, to be known as the Newton Building after the schools founder, is built in two connected wings. The building has a number of different uses and includes new kitchens and a main dining room which opens on to a viewing terrace overlooking the school playing field. The upper floor accommodates two classrooms, a new library and larger viewing terrace. The other wing has a Design and Technology Suite on the ground floor and new changing rooms for outdoor sports, with a new staff flat on the first floor.

The building is to be opened by Phil Vickery on 14th May 2011.

## King Edward's School, Birmingham

We are currently working on a number of exciting projects at King Edward's School. Work is now on site for the new Performing Arts Centre, which is due for completion in March 2012, for which Synergy are Quantity Surveyors, Project Managers and CDM Co-ordinators.

Other projects include:

- Feasibility studies for a new Sports Centre
- Classroom extension (at King Edward's High School for Girls) - due on site July 2011
- Hockey pavilion and all weather pitch - due on site early 2012
- Science block extension - due on site May 2012

## Royal Grammar School, Guildford

33 Sydenham Road / Valpy Building: Planning consent was achieved for a new build music classroom and rehearsal hall building in early April this year. The project is due to start on-site in July 2011 and will be ready for occupation in July 2012. Built on a difficult sloping site it is positioned and linked to the adjacent historic Valpy building within the cartilage of the medieval Guildford town wall.

Trevone House: Refurbishment of the existing building, to provide classrooms and group teaching spaces for the economics department. Works to be completed by September 2011.

Courtyard Development: We have been working with MEB design to develop the two existing courtyards for classroom and circulation/plaza spaces, within a covered ETFE roof (similar to the Eden Project). This is at early feasibility appraisal stages.

## Reigate Grammar School, Reigate

Science Extension Project - Linking with the existing science building, a new build, 3 storey extension is currently being built providing further science laboratories and classroom spaces.

The project is due for completion in July 2011 with a construction value of £2.8 million.

# Mezzanine Floor Creates New Library for Sacred Heart Primary School

Our Building Surveyors have recently completed the refurbishment of a large atrium area at Sacred Heart School, Battersea.

The project included the introduction of a new mezzanine floor to accommodate a library and group teaching area. Below the mezzanine a state of the art computer room has been created, providing 15 work stations for use by the school and community.

Synergy were able to establish that the existing floor slab was capable of supporting the new mezzanine structure, which was therefore a very cost effective way of creating an additional 40m<sup>2</sup> of valuable floor space.

The new facilities have proved to be a great asset to the school and a great hit with the children!



## Synergy group

Bare, Leaning & Bare  
CM Parker Browne  
Cook and Butler  
Johnson & Partners  
Ottley Morrison

## Sectors

Commercial  
Ecclesiastical  
Education  
Healthcare  
Historic Buildings & Conservation  
Hotels  
Infrastructure  
Residential  
Retail  
Sport & Leisure  
Sports Surfaces

## Services

Cost Management  
Building Surveying & Architecture  
Project Management  
Health and Safety  
Sports Surfaces

## Services

### Cost Management

Bills of Quantities  
Claims Consultancy  
Construction Cost Consultancy  
Cost Estimating  
Cost Management/Control  
Expert Witness Work  
Fire Insurance Assessment & Valuations  
Insurance Loss Adjustment & Claims  
Life Cycle Costing  
Project Feasibility Reports  
Quality Assurance  
Risk Management  
Taxation Advice  
on construction properties  
Urban Regeneration  
Value Engineering  
Value Management

### Building Surveying & Architecture

Advice to Landlords  
Building Maintenance & Repair Specification  
Building Refurbishment  
Building Technical Audit  
Completion & Handover Management  
Condition Surveys  
Contract Administration  
Cost Estimating  
Cost Management/Control  
Design for New Buildings,  
Alterations & Extensions  
Detail Design  
Disability Discrimination Act  
Surveys on Buildings  
Employer's Agent  
Fire Protection & Detection  
Party Wall Surveying  
Planned Maintenance Management  
Project Feasibility Reports  
Quality Assurance  
Schedules of Dilapidation  
Chartered Architects  
Full or partial Architects services  
New building design and planning  
Development appraisals  
Refurbishments, alterations, extensions  
Changes of use  
Commercial, educational & residential projects  
Architects services to property developers  
Applications for Planning permission  
Planning consultancy and appeals  
Listed buildings  
Working drawings for construction and building regulations  
Contract administration  
Contractors design & partnering projects  
Landscapes & Interiors  
Sustainability and design and access statements

### Project Management

Alternative Dispute Resolution  
Brief & feasibility documents  
Claims Consultancy  
Completion & Handover Management  
Construction Procurement/Management  
Construction Programmes  
Contract Administration  
Design Management  
Employer's Agent  
Monitoring of Construction Progress  
Office Relocation Management  
Planned Maintenance Management  
Project Execution Plans  
Project Feasibility Reports  
Quality Assurance  
Risk Management  
Urban Regeneration

### Health and Safety

Assessment of Contractor H&S Competency  
Assessment of Designer H&S Competency  
CDM Co-ordinator services  
Health & safety advice on buildings  
Health & safety advice on construction projects  
Health & Safety Audits of sites  
Health & Safety Training

### Sports Surfaces

Feasibility studies and budget costing  
Evaluation of existing facilities and advice on future treatment  
Detailed design, planning and new facilities  
Funding advice  
Full project management and quality control  
Pitch inspection service



## A Fine Farewell for Sir Ewan Harper

30th June 2011 will see the retirement of Sir Ewan Harper MA CBE, following 21 years as Chief Executive of United Church Schools Trust and United Learning Trust (see Academies article on the next page).

Following a very close relationship with Sir Ewan during his tenure, Synergy hosted a dinner on 5th May, to mark his achievements in Education. The dinner was attended by 36 colleagues and professionals from the construction industry,

who have worked on over £500 million of school projects during Sir Ewan's time as Chief Executive.

We will be sad to see him go, having delivered exceptional Academies with Sir Ewan over the last 14 years, but wish him a very well deserved long and happy retirement and our best wishes on his future endeavours.

## Lincoln Minster

The new music school and sports hall is now complete at Lincoln Minster School. It contains a 205 seat recital hall, sports hall, 5 classrooms, changing facilities, 17 sound proof practice rooms, a recording studio, galleries, administrative spaces, resource room and a large bright central Atrium.

The top floor of the building has balconies which provide fantastic views of Lincoln Minster Cathedral.



Photograph courtesy of Franklin Ellis Architects

Construction took place over 18 months which began with an enabling works package of service diversions, demolitions, piling and major earthworks to create the lower ground sports hall. The total cost of the project was £10 million, which was carried out under a Partnering Contract. Synergy provided Quantity Surveying, Project Management and CDM-C services and we are very proud to be part of this major development programme, which has been ongoing for over 10 years.

## SEN Centre of Excellence at St Ann's

An aspiration became reality for Merton Council with the construction of a new state-of-the-art secondary school, to provide a first class education to pupils with profound learning difficulties and physical and sensory disabilities.

The new St Ann's School, completed in April 2011, will ensure Merton is able to provide the best specialist educational resources, for pupils not only within the London Borough of Merton but also in boroughs throughout South West London.

The school has been built on under-used playing fields with the agreement of Sport England. Both outdoor and indoor environments have been treated as equally important in the design and delivery of the curriculum at the school.

The new school site incorporates a football pitch, multi-use games area, trim trail play area, horticulture area, a sensory garden and a variety of stimulating and calming spaces.

The building has a gross internal floor area of 3,301m<sup>2</sup> for a construction cost of £9 million. Comprising one two storey block alongside three single storey blocks, easy access to and from the second storey is key to the design, with wheelchair-accessible routes within and linking the blocks. Inside there is space for a production kitchen, rooms for occupational and hydro-therapy, a dance studio, music room, ICT suite, library, soft play area, sensory room, food tech classroom and gardens, nursing, administration, catering and supervisory staff and a premises manager.

A significant reduction of 35% in CO2 emissions (50 tonnes) is set to be achieved through the school's central on-site biomass boiler, which is fuelled by wood pellets - it is a cost effective way of slashing carbon dioxide emissions, whilst providing the building with heat and hot water. The combustion process is carbon neutral, as the CO2 released when burning this matter is equivalent to the CO2 the trees absorbed in their lifetime. The CO2 reduction will amount to well over the Mayor of London's recommended 20%.

The building's architecture minimises the surface area exposed to the elements, helping to cut heat loss through the walls. Shallow plan spaces allow for natural ventilation and daylight, reducing the need for fans and artificial lighting. Natural ventilation and daylighting was a priority, given that grid supplied electricity is responsible for over twice the CO2 emissions as gas fired heating. The majority of classrooms are cross ventilated from windows on the external façade, to clerestory windows above the corridors.

This project is an exemplar for planning and design, its success can be attributed to the effective partnership between Merton Council and community agencies, the design team and contractor, working under a PPC 2000 Partnering Contract.

Synergy are very proud of our involvement as quantity surveyors and employers' agents on this project, the result of which is a school at the heart of the community, that offers a stimulating and inspiring learning experience for young people with special educational needs across South West London.

## United Learning Trust Academies Programme

The United Learning Trust (ULT) is the largest single sponsor in the Government's Academies Programme, with 20 academies and one City Technology College currently open, with more set to open in the future. Synergy has worked on 17 of these Academies under the scheme, 3 of which are currently on site:

### • Midhurst Rother College

Construction of the new £29million Midhurst Rother College commenced in November 2010, which is due for completion in December 2012. It will specialise in Science and cater for students between the ages of 11 to 19. It is being built as part of the West Sussex County Council Partnership for Schools Academies Programme.



### • Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Work on the new £24million Kettering Buccleuch Academy will commence on site in June 2011 and is due for completion in the autumn of 2013. It will cater for students between the ages of 4 to 19, specialising in Mathematics, ICT and Sport, supported by the theme of business and enterprise. It is part of the Northamptonshire County Council Partnership for Schools Programme.



### • Shoreham Academy

The new £30million Shoreham Academy commenced in July 2010 and is due for completion in the autumn of 2012. It will cater for students between the ages of 11 to 19, specialising in English and Enterprise. The school is part of the West Sussex County Council Partnership for Schools programme.



## Synergy Batting Well Towards a Successful Win at The Sussex County Cricket Club (whilst Elton puts on the pressure!)

Things are taking shape nicely down at The PROBIZ County Ground of Sussex-by-the-Sea at Hove. Synergy have been project and cost managing the £5.5 million Phase 2 Ground redevelopment, which has taken place in just under 26 weeks.

The Victorian Pavilion has had a virtual re-build following the discovery and rectification of some major timber decay and damp problems. The Long Room and Hospitality facilities within the Pavilion have been magnificently restored and now accommodate two new restaurant areas, kitchens, passenger lifts and new toilets. The vaulted undercroft to the Pavilion - once the groundsmen's store - is now the home of Sussex's Cricket Museum - a fitting home for the collection of the oldest County Cricket Club in England.

The ground development includes the construction of two new stands; the South Stand, accommodating the PROBIZ Media Centre for broadcasters, together with the Ground Control Room and a physiotherapy centre; and the



The new South-West Stand - soon to accommodate fans of the 'Sussex Sharks'

The South Stand and Media Centre: to be opened by Sir Elton John Summer 2011

South-West Stand which will provide fantastic views of the cricket for approximately 2,000 spectators. Its undercroft, which is due to be fitted out by the end of September 2011, will house a new club shop and reception, food and beverage outlet and additional toilet facilities.

At the end of March 2011, Synergy oversaw the completion of an extension to the existing "Farnrise Indoor School" at the Hove ground. This facility includes a 20 piece fitness Gym and an 'endless pool' for fitness training and physio treatment, along with male and female public toilets.

Sir Elton John has been booked to open the new Ground Facilities at a grand out-door concert at the Ground on 26th June 2011 - no pressure to complete on time then!

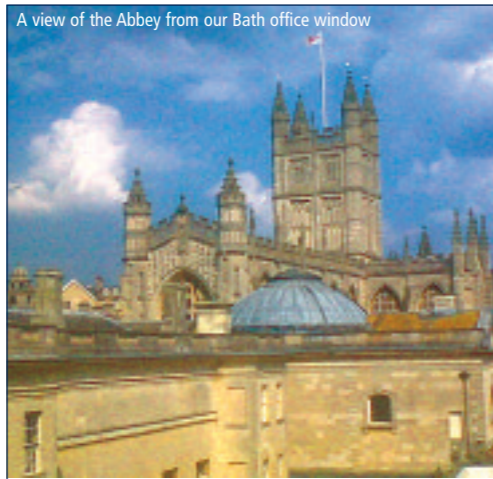
Synergy are also project managers to MCC for the Masterplan "Vision for Lord's" at Lord's Cricket Ground, London, up to the submission of a planning application - working with Architects, Herzog & de Meuron.

## Looking to the Future at Bath Abbey

Bare, Leaning and Bare, part of the Synergy group, are delighted to announce that their long term relationship with Bath Abbey continues well into the 21st Century.

Bath Abbey is currently looking at a major scheme of redevelopment, which not only looks at work inside the building but also incorporates work in the adjacent vaults and existing office building.

The works inside the Abbey are looking at how best to present and use the building for all who venture through the doors, whether they come to worship, to see the architectural splendour or listen to the many evening performances which happen throughout the year. One of the most ambitious plans is to replace the current floor throughout and incorporate under floor heating, possibly exploiting the waste hot spa water running through the Roman Drain.



A view of the Abbey from our Bath office window

The works outside the Abbey are to develop the existing vaults, Kingston Buildings (current Abbey Offices) and other underground spaces, to provide facilities for all users, including much needed toilets, a refreshment area and modern office space.

Following the feasibility study completed at the end of 2010 and the opening up contract carried out after Christmas, the current work is to update the Cost Plans to assist the Abbey's future planning over fund raising and phasing of the work.

Bare, Leaning & Bare's relationship with the Abbey goes back over 20 years, having worked with the Abbey on the restoration of the West Front and development of the adjacent vaults to provide a Heritage Centre.

## Note to all Building Operators and Owners - Refrigerant R22 Phase Out

Following the ban of refrigerant gases such as R12 in the 1990s, aiming to reduce the damage to the Ozone layer, another greenhouse gas, known as R22 is currently being phased out.

R22 is a powerful greenhouse gas and a high Ozone depleting substance. It has been used in air conditioning systems as an alternative to other more harmful gases in transition arrangements, pending the development of more suitable and compliant refrigerants.

R22 was banned for use in new equipment in 2001 for large air conditioning plants and from 2004 for smaller systems, such as splits and VRV VRF installations found in more recent office and similar buildings.

It was however legal to use 'virgin HFC's' to top up and maintain existing systems until the end of 2009.

### Key dates to note:

- From the 1st January 2010 it is illegal to use virgin HFC's to service refrigeration and air conditioning plant

- It is illegal to stockpile virgin HFC's

- From the 1st January 2015, it is illegal to use recycled or reclaimed HCFC's to service refrigeration or air conditioning plants

- With the shortage of recycled and reclaimed HCFC's, the cost has already increased by approximately 5 times and is likely to escalate further before the 1st January 2015, as a consequence of their phase out

### Inspect and Action

In England and Wales, part 5 of the Energy Performance in Buildings Regulations 2007, requires regular inspections of all air conditioning systems over 12 kW capacity intervals not to exceed 5 years, in order to identify opportunities to reduce energy use and optimise operating costs.

Building Operators and owners can make sure they adhere to the regulations and the R22 Phase Out in time for the balmy summer ahead (we hope!) by following the steps below:

- Check if your cooling system is run on R22 gas
- If so, assess the risk of your business in the event that

the air conditioning system fails and cannot be recharged

- Are there alternatives to the use of comfort cooling just in case? Can business functions ie. IT spaces cope with temporary cooling measures?

- If the system is over 10-15 years old consideration should be given to replacement, with new installations having an increased performance, reduced energy use and hence costs, whilst at the same time improving the asset value of the business. There have and continue to be major improvements in controls and system efficiencies from the introduction of new and better refrigerant gases and equipment

- Review the current and as far as possible future business requirements. It is almost inevitable that the demand for cooling and heating will have changed over the years since the original installations were installed. The systems should not just be replaced with new as now but a strategic review should be undertaken as a matter of course

**If you want to know more about how you can meet the new legislation, whilst safeguarding your business, call Stuart Hawkes in our Hemel Hempstead office: 01442 212755**

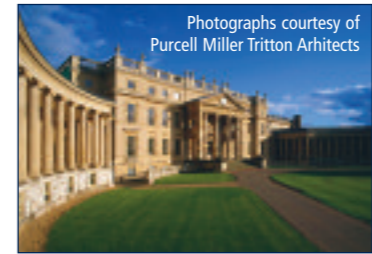
## Stowe House Restoration Plan Steams Ahead

Featuring designs by Vanbrugh, Adam, Gibbs, Kent and Soane, Stowe is one of the finest 18th-century houses in Europe. Like many great estates, it declined in the 19th century as the owners' fortunes became depleted, and the Estate was eventually sold in the 1920's to become a public school.

Stowe School thrived educationally but the governors struggled to maintain the landscape gardens and the mansion house. In 1989 the gardens were passed to the National Trust, and in 1997 the Stowe House Preservation Trust was established; they took ownership of the House and embarked on an ambitious six-phase programme of repair and restoration, led by Architects Purcell Miller Tritton. Considering its history, the house today has not changed significantly from its arrangement in 1780 following dramatic extensions and rebuilding.

Bare, Leaning and Bare (part of the Synergy group), joined the project at its inception in 1999 and have provided quantity surveying services through Phases One and Two, which were generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and are currently on site with the third Phase of the programme, which is supported by the World Monument Fund.

Phase One, which involved the restoration of the north front and colonnades, was completed in 2002. The stonework, which had been suffering from cracking, was carefully pieced, the ornamental stucco was renewed and the backing brick extensively repaired.



Photographs courtesy of Purcell Miller Tritton Architects



The colonnade roofs were re-laid in Westmorland and local stone slates, and grass was reintroduced into the forecourt.

The second phase of work to the central pavilion and the south portico was completed in 2006. The work included structural repairs to the central mansion roof and repairs to much of the stonework on the south portico, including the south steps, which were in poor condition. During Phase Two, the spectacular marble saloon interior was also restored. The saloon is an elliptical, domed room, loosely modelled on the interior of the Pantheon in Rome. It needed structural repairs as well as expert conservation to the plasterwork, scagliola columns and marble floor, together with replacement of the missing sculpture. The decorative scheme was re-presented and new lighting was installed.

The third phase of the programme is currently underway. Again the work involves specialist stonework, re-rendering, re-roofing and joinery repairs. Internally, the ornamental plaster ceiling to the Library which was in a parlous state, has been stabilized, repaired and gilded. The floor has been strengthened where defective and the book presses restored.

In the immediate future a campaign of repairs will begin in the Staterooms. The work will be undertaken a room at a time whilst the remaining rooms, anterooms and corridors remain in occupation by the school. These internal works comprise the stabilizing and conservation of the highly decorative ornamental plasterwork, joinery and floor repairs, specialist decoration and conservation of painted scenes, as well as associated mechanical and electrical work.

## Good Will and Hard Work triumphs at Peper Harow

When a nearby resident noticed the sky lit up above Peper Harow Church on Christmas Eve 2007, there was fear the St. Nicholas Church, which dates back to 1301, was damaged beyond repair.

Fifty fire fighters battled to save the burning church throughout the night but the fire ravaged the church; the bells came crashing down as the Tower and Nave were gutted and the roof destroyed, leaving no trace of the magnificent church organ; only the Midleton Chapel and the Chancel survived, with relatively minor heat and smoke damage.

Despite the chaos and amid the rubble, all hope was not lost, as the rector, the Rev John Fellows, rallied his parishioners in a bid to turn the disaster into a positive - the Church was insured and the rebuild could be a chance to invigorate both the building and its people.

Work began on site in early December 2009, both the Midleton Chapel and Chancel contained extensive works by Pugin, which required sensitive cleaning and conservation work. The ceiling of the Chapel had to be repainted, including all gilding, though an original panel was left for records (see picture). The Nave and Tower both had to have new floor constructions, re-plastered lime walls and new



roofs and much of the internal stonework also had to be replaced, due to fractures caused by the high temperature levels, which exceeded 550°C.

Due to the insurance policy terms being on a 'like for like' basis, the PCC took the decision that improvements would be funded by forgoing other insurance work that they deemed could be left out of the re-building works. Before the fire, the Church was heated by a basic electric warm air system and heaters on the pews; the restoration allowed for a new under floor heating system to be installed in order to give more constant heat, which is powered through solar panels on the Tower roof and an air source heat pump. In addition, where possible, new insulation Hasopor recycled foam glass has been used under the new Limcrete floor slabs and hemp batts used in the new roof construction. The renewable energy elements carried their own issues as the Church is Grade 11\* Listed, though work with the Conservation teams ensured that this was not compromised.

The Church is due to open in June 2011 and all are delighted with the results to date. Purcell Miller Tritton is the Architect and has ensured the Church has been restored over and above its former glory. The re-building works were carried out by Valley Builders Ltd of East Grinstead.

## New Affordable Housing Highly Commended

We are pleased to announce that a project for six new affordable homes in Mimas Road, Hemel Hempstead was Highly Commended at the Dacorum Business Excellence Awards in the category of Building Design.

The homes, built for Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association and constructed by Jarvis Contracting, were built on the site of a former Council garage court and were developed as part of the Dacorum Partnership between Hightown and Dacorum Borough Council.



To date the Dacorum Partnership has delivered 87 rented and 16 shared ownership homes on land owned by Dacorum Borough Council, mainly underutilised garage sites.

The next phase will deliver a further 31 affordable homes on three sites.

Architects in Synergy's Hemel Hempstead office have completed the design for the entire programme.



## Synergy's Most Haunted!

It is well known that the UK is one of the most haunted countries in the world and Synergy has worked on a number of haunted properties over the years. For a bit of fun, we thought we would share the tales of some ghostly happenings that have occurred in two of the most famous cathedrals in the world, both of which we have had the privilege to work in.

### 'Whistler' at St Pauls...

The current incarnation of St Paul's Cathedral was started in the late 1600's and took 35 years to complete, however, there has been a St Paul's Cathedral on Ludgate Hill since 604AD. The Cathedral, regarded as one of London's most famous landmarks, has had many famous visitors and hosted the Royal Wedding of Charles and Diana in 1981. It seems however, that there is one famous visitor who refuses to leave...

There have been numerous reports of people in The Kitchener Chapel - a memorial Chapel to Lord Kitchener - looking upon his memorial, experiencing a sudden chill, this is said to be the first sign that the Cathedral's resident ghost, "Whistler", is about to make an appearance. Next, the low, barely audible sound of mournful whistling is often heard...

Gazing into the chapel, an old clergyman with flowing locks of grey hair, dressed in old fashioned robes, has been seen gliding across the chapel. His doleful, tuneless whistling is said to grow steadily louder as he crosses the room, before he disappears into the wall to the right of the gates. Everyone who has seen him says he follows the same path and that he always vanishes into the same section of the wall.

During renovation work to the Chapel, following the First World War, workmen uncovered a hidden door behind the exact section of wall where the ghost always disappeared. It opened onto a narrow, winding staircase that led up to a secret room within the main body of the Cathedral. Nobody had known of the room's existence or purpose, with the exception of "Whistler" it seems, whose identity remains a mystery...

### Who's that Ghost at Westminster Cathedral?

Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, the first Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, passed away in 1865. Following unprecedented public grief, the Church decided to build a Cathedral in his honour and temporarily placed the Cardinal's body to rest in Kensal Green Cemetery. They found a site in 1884, in the district of London we now know as Victoria, and commissioned the Architect, John Francis Bentley to create their vision of Westminster Cathedral.

The Neo-Byzantine style that Bentley adopted for this new project was greatly admired, and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) visited the ongoing build in 1900 and proposed to nominate Bentley for their highest honour, the Royal Gold Medal - despite Bentley not being a member of RIBA. However, due to Queen Victoria's death, the medal nomination was placed on hold.

Bentley, who was struck down by cancer, died in 1902 just before the completion of the Cathedral, and a day before his deferred medal nomination. He did not live to see his greatest work come to fruition, nor gain the Royal Gold Medal many thought he so richly deserved. Some believed that Bentley should have been buried at the Cathedral, but he was laid to rest at St Mary Magdalen in Mortlake. It was reported that RIBA, after failing to award Bentley the medal, intended to erect a silver tablet to commemorate Bentley in the Cathedral or award the medal posthumously, but in the end, neither happened.

In 1907, the body of Cardinal Wiseman was lifted from its resting place in Kensal Green and moved into the crypt of the new Cathedral. He now lies in a Gothic tomb with an effigy of the recumbent Archbishop in full pontifical dress, above.

Westminster Cathedral, described as a "work of extraordinary beauty and grandeur" (S H Goodheart-Rendel, 1934), is almost brand new compared to St Paul's and yet has already acquired a spectre. During the 1960's, reports of a shadowy figure hovering near the main altar, led to much speculation as to whether it was the first Cardinal, rising from his resting place to see his tribute, or the Architect, Bentley who never received his... the mystery remains unsolved!

## Help for Heroes Gig Raises £5,500!

In March 2011, the Construction Industry's finest musicians took to the stage to raise funds for 'Help for Heroes' - a charity which supports members of the Armed Forces who have been wounded in the service of their country.

'The Instigators' members include Chris Liddle and Roger Matthews - HLM Architects, Faye Liddle - News International, Mike Warren - Scott Brownrigg, Peter Barringer - DWB Music, Terry McMahon - Hip Productions and our very own Executive

Chairman - Graham Harvey-Browne. They began performing together in 2007 at venues across the country, supporting local charities, BSEC national events, and industry event 'Construction Rocks' for the past three years. They were joined by a number of guest performers, including recording artist Jon Ross.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the gig. It was great fun for a great cause.

## An historic 'synergy' amongst our teams

Clearly influenced by our work on historic buildings, our designer Neil Bryson, is, in his spare time, becoming a bit of a specialist in drawing heritage buildings.

Currently working with Strawberry Hill House, Horace Walpole's classic Gothic Castle, and Ham House, both in his area of west London, Neil has recently been accepted as a National Trust supplier and invited to prepare drawings at Cliveden.

With his design agency, Ice Designs, Neil has helped create and manage our brands and marketing materials over the last decade or so and we are not sure we approve of his becoming too distracted - but if you wish to see more of his work, his personal website is [www.neilbryson.com](http://www.neilbryson.com)



Chimneys, Strawberry Hill House



Ham House from the Orangery garden



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