

HERITAGE REVIEW

No. 2

Spring 1999



KISS ME QUICK!

A famous seaside landmark
under threat of demolition...

This issue of
Heritage Review
has been generously sponsored by
Survey Services (NI)
of Lisburn and Dunmurry

Chartered Surveyors and Valuers

65 Sloan Street
Lisburn
BT27 5AG
Tel: 01846 605858
Fax: 01846 605959

188 Kingsway
Dunmurry
Belfast
BT17 9AD
Tel: 01232 605906

EDITORIAL

The work of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society never ceases. You might think that after all the years of effort, protest, encouragement and education we could rest on our laurels, or even take a slight break. No chance, it is like weeding the garden, as soon as you have tackled one growth of weeds, another springs up to take their place. Readers will find as they read this Heritage Review No.2 that many of the problems previously highlighted are still around and new ones of a similar nature have appeared.

There may be those who become discouraged because there are few triumphs, but remember that the most praised gardens are the ones which are cared for and where weeding is continuous. A clergyman stood to admire a beautifully kept garden. "It's wonderful what man can do with God's help" he said to the gardener, to which came the reply "God wasn't doing much with it when he had it to himself" For all the efforts being made by various Departments, bodies and persons in Northern Ireland our heritage garden is still a tangle of weeds.

One of the most recent triumphs in producing heritage was the completion of the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. This is a building any city, or indeed any country, would be proud of. Waterfront Hall is a building to set beside the City Hall as the contribution of the Corporation of this century to match that of the nineteenth century. But if the City Hall is allowed to stand proudly on its island site, the Waterfront Hall is spoiled by being crowded by insensitive high-rise blocks pushed against it. This is a case study where we could actually see the new tower blocks rising before our very eyes to ruin the view of the Hall. There are more to come and the site will become a jumble with all grace and space lost.

Two other public buildings feature in the following pages and they are not as kindly dealt with as Belfast City Hall. The Limavady Town Hall story (reported in our last issue) has reached a relatively happy conclusion, where at least the facade is to be saved. But at Portrush there seems to be little hope of saving the Town Hall, page 19. This fine building is to be smashed down despite the protests of many. The elected representatives who could use their influence for good do not see conservation as a vote winner.

The UAHS and the buildings of Ulster need your help. Only when we speak as a body will be able to get any messages across. The bigger our organisation, the more pressure we will exert.

THE FUTURE

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society may be dedicated to looking after the past, but it is essential, if it is to be effective in that role, that it looks into its own future also. The Society must be run efficiently, for it operates on a shoestring. It must adapt itself to changing times; the work is still crucial; our heritage is at risk.

That the Society has such a strong record of achievement is a great tribute to the many individuals, committee, members and staff alike, who have served the Society so well throughout its existence.

We are now embarking on a new phase in many areas, particularly with the new Assembly and the reorganisation of various government agencies. It is therefore important that the Society plan ahead and develop strategies to deal with change in ways that will further strengthen its position in the cause of protection of the built environment.

Among the widely acknowledged strengths of the Society, Events and Publications must share the laurels. Both are widely supported with many events being over-subscribed. The Society is very fortunate indeed that Primrose Wilson has agreed to take over from Ian Gailey as co-ordinator, continuing a long tradition of variety and quality in the lectures and outings. Terence Reeves-Smyth will be replacing Gordon Wheeler as Editor; thanks are due to Gordon (and also to Karen Latimer for her interim service) who will finish certain works currently in production. Both of these aspects of the Society's work will continue to go from strength to strength.

We are less well placed when it comes to members. Quality, no doubt, but we need quantity as well. Our voice will be heard better if it carries the weight of a larger membership, and significant emphasis will be placed on achieving this in the coming year. All existing members can help by interesting friends and acquaintances, by carrying membership brochures, and by alerting the office to opportunities to spread the word.

The Society's role in education is at its early stages. In one sense everything that we do has an educational element, from publications to lectures and outings. We want to formalise this and to develop programmes relating to school age children. To that end an application for financial support from the National Heritage Lottery Fund has been prepared, under the guidance of Lyn Gallagher, and we await news of its success. It will represent an important new thrust to the Society's work.

Finally, the changing political situation in Northern Ireland presents us all with new challenges and opportunities to try to make our community more aware of its built heritage. We need to inform the policy makers and politicians about why it is important to preserve what we have and to cherish the landscape context in which so much of our vernacular building stock is located. This relates not only to careful monitoring of the published proposed changes in existing structures but also to proposed planning legislation. We need more monitors in various parts of Northern Ireland; any members willing to help should contact the office. The role of convincing the law makers and implementors falls to us all. During the coming months the Society will be developing a co-ordinated liaison programme, probably working with other like-minded bodies, but we need the support of our existing, and preferably expanding, membership to ensure that the message gets heard loud and clear.

The next few years will be interesting, challenging, and crucial for the Society. The membership can make a difference by enthusiastic support of the Society and its programmes.

PREMISES



For many years the UAHS rented a room in the Arts Council headquarters on Stranmillis Road, and it was fortunate that when Hearth moved to Donegall Pass we were able to rent a room from this compatible organisation. The Society staff therefore all work, albeit on a staggered schedule and sharing a communal meeting room and other facilities, in one room at the top of a terrace house. It has been apparent for some time that additional space is desirable and therefore a small task force has been set up to try to find it. The Society would like to remain in close proximity to Hearth whose expertise and support are of inestimable value. To purchase and restore a needy building which could accommodate both charities, as well as have space to lease to others, thereby creating income to pay the mortgage, would be ideal. There are numerous other desirables, such as location and access to parking. It is likely that this search is going to be long and therefore it may well be that the Society needs to take interim measures. The task force would welcome suggestions regarding potential buildings to acquire.

THE FUTURE

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society may be dedicated to looking after the past, but it is essential, if it is to be effective in that role, that it looks into its own future also. The Society must be run efficiently, for it operates on a shoestring. It must adapt itself to changing times; the work is still crucial; our heritage is at risk.

That the Society has such a strong record of achievement is a great tribute to the many individuals, committee, members and staff alike, who have served the Society so well throughout its existence.

We are now embarking on a new phase in many areas, particularly with the new Assembly and the reorganisation of various government agencies. It is therefore important that the Society plan ahead and develop strategies to deal with change in ways that will further strengthen its position in the cause of protection of the built environment.

Among the widely acknowledged strengths of the Society, Events and Publications must share the laurels. Both are widely supported with many events being over-subscribed. The Society is very fortunate indeed that Primrose Wilson has agreed to take over from Ian Gailey as co-ordinator, continuing a long tradition of variety and quality in the lectures and outings. Terence Reeves-Smyth will be replacing Gordon Wheeler as Editor; thanks are due to Gordon (and also to Karen Latimer for her interim service) who will finish certain works currently in production. Both of these aspects of the Society's work will continue to go from strength to strength.

We are less well placed when it comes to members. Quality, no doubt, but we need quantity as well. Our voice will be heard better if it carries the weight of a larger membership, and significant emphasis will be placed on achieving this in the coming year. All existing members can help by interesting friends and acquaintances, by carrying membership brochures, and by alerting the office to opportunities to spread the word.

The Society's role in education is at its early stages. In one sense everything that we do has an educational element, from publications to lectures and outings. We want to formalise this and to develop programmes relating to school age children. To that end an application for financial support from the National Heritage Lottery Fund has been prepared, under the guidance of Lyn Gallagher, and we await news of its success. It will represent an important new thrust to the Society's work.

Finally, the changing political situation in Northern Ireland presents us all with new challenges and opportunities to try to make our community more aware of its built heritage. We need to inform the policy makers and politicians about why it is important to preserve what we have and to cherish the landscape context in which so much of our vernacular building stock is located. This relates not only to careful monitoring of the published proposed changes in existing structures but also to proposed planning legislation. We need more monitors in various parts of Northern Ireland; any members willing to help should contact the office. The role of convincing the law makers and implementors falls to us all. During the coming months the Society will be developing a co-ordinated liaison programme, probably working with other like-minded bodies, but we need the support of our existing, and preferably expanding, membership to ensure that the message gets heard loud and clear.

The next few years will be interesting, challenging, and crucial for the Society. The membership can make a difference by enthusiastic support of the Society and its programmes.

PREMISES



For many years the UAHS rented a room in the Arts Council headquarters on Stranmillis Road, and it was fortunate that when Hearth moved to Donegall Pass we were able to rent a room from this compatible organisation. The Society staff therefore all work, albeit on a staggered schedule and sharing a communal meeting room and other facilities, in one room at the top of a terrace house. It has been apparent for some time that additional space is desirable and therefore a small task force has been set up to try to find it. The Society would like to remain in close proximity to Hearth whose expertise and support are of inestimable value. To purchase and restore a needy building which could accommodate both charities, as well as have space to lease to others, thereby creating income to pay the mortgage, would be ideal. There are numerous other desirables, such as location and access to parking. It is likely that this search is going to be long and therefore it may well be that the Society needs to take interim measures. The task force would welcome suggestions regarding potential buildings to acquire.

interiors. Owners that have invested in listed buildings need to be encouraged, and removing the special status of their building after them having spent a lot of money and complied with all the EHS requirements seems bizarre and counter-productive, when education as to the value of historic buildings is generally regarded as the long term key to their survival.

3. Buildings in Conservation Areas where listing was used to protect large areas before the Conservation Area was designated. EHS are arguing, with some justification, that many of these buildings were listed simply to prevent their demolition in advance of the expected CA designation and that many are not sufficiently special to warrant listing in their own right. Their belief is that CA control should be sufficient to protect the buildings. The reality is somewhat different as CA controls are largely limited to preventing demolition. Owners can change windows, doors and even external wall treatment, never mind more or less anything to the rear and the inside. There is provision in the legislation for 'Article 4' directions which would remove specific permitted development rights and bring such features such as windows and doors under control, but this power has never been used in Northern Ireland. We understand that the Historic Buildings Council has reached an agreement with EHS not to proceed with delisting in Conservation Areas until a policy for the care of these buildings can be agreed with Planning Service, which looks after Conservation Areas.

Whilst the UAHS supports the need for a second survey and understands that it must be based on a set of documented criteria it is concerned about the message that this delisting of buildings sends out to unsympathetic property owners: "If you want rid of a listed building, just neglect it for long enough, or make a few inappropriate alterations, and it will cease to be a problem for you". Not only is this a disastrous tactic, but it is absolutely wrong for law abiding and sympathetic owners to be put at a financial disadvantage because the DOE fails to enforce the legislation.

What the defendants have done is to create a situation where the facility of protest was not possible. (*The RM presiding over the case of the demolished houses in Ogle Street conservation area - see page 21*).

Cities cannot have a renaissance if they are full of holes. You have to fill in the cities first. (*Lord Rogers, suggesting that there is much more "brownfield" land than the commercial housebuilders would have us believe, and very little need to build in the countryside, January 1998*).

PPS 6

This rather cryptic heading stands for Planning Policy Statement: not, on the face of it, an exciting-sounding document. However it is significant in that the draft which was prepared for consultation in 1998, and which the Society commented on at some length, starts from the government's "commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship". It sets out the legislation affecting historic buildings and archaeology in considerable detail, and spells out the responsibilities of the Department of the Environment to look after this heritage. It does not make legislation, but interprets it in some ways that hold out much hope for the future.

As an example, the statement emphasises that listing of a building extends beyond the face to the gables and rear, and beyond that to the interior as well. It is also categorical in its position that the demolition of listed buildings must be exceptional, since it is irreversible. As Lord Dubs has said on several occasions during his term here as Environment Minister, you cannot replace an historic building - once it has gone, it is gone for good. The PPS makes it plain that the same applies to alterations of internal and external character. They must be accepted on occasion, as buildings must change in many ways to remain viable and be kept in use, but the changes need to be carefully thought through and sensitively handled.

The document highlights the danger of small incremental changes wiping out the character of a building; and it points out the danger of facadism, where a front wall is retained without any chimneys or with new floors that do not correspond to the exterior. Also exciting in its implications is the statement that the setting of a listed building is important and may on occasion extend to "the whole street" in which it is set. It also states that new developments in conservation areas will be required to "preserve or enhance" the character and appearance of the area. This is stronger than current policy in English conservation areas, which have been weakened by some unfortunate appeal decisions.

The Society has welcomed the PPS, but has also pointed out some weaknesses in the legislation. These include the clumsy listing procedure where an owner is notified in advance of a listing without any prior removal of permitted development rights; the similar tardiness in designating conservation areas with much prior warning; the need to have more positive structural reports carried out on buildings for which demolition is sought (we suggest that engineers be asked not to find fault with the building, which is always easy, but to state the measures they believe are necessary to stabilise it); the

toothlessness of Areas of Townscape Character; the need for more planners trained in conservation issues to implement the ideas in the PPS; and the need to implement Article 4 controls.

It should be emphasised that this is a draft policy at present, but we have given it strong support and hope that it will take effect without much alteration.

SHIMIZU

A legal case that went to the House of Lords in 1997 has led to some concern about listed building controls. Shimizu (UK) Ltd v Westminster City Council overruled previous court decisions that a "building" could mean "part of a building". The significance of this arises when part of a building is demolished or altered in a significant way. In the past planners could interpret the works as requiring listed building consent, and SPAB and other national amenity bodies were informed of such applications, but after Shimizu minor works may not require such consents and would certainly not require statutory notification. In August 1997 the government moved to fill the breach with a circular requiring the national amenity societies to be notified not only of complete demolitions as before, but also of alterations which "compromise or include the demolition of any part of" a listed building, which is actually stronger than the previous legislation.

The legislation in conservation areas however remains weakened by the Shimizu decision, since complete demolition requires consent but partial demolition cannot be controlled without Article 4 Directions. (The UAHS has been pressing the DoE to introduce Article 4 directions in our conservation areas here for many years). It is likely that the English situation will be resolved in one of three ways. The law may be changed to return the legal definition of a "building" to include "any part of a building" as it used to be before Shimizu; or conservation area controls could be extended to include external alterations; or permitted development rights could be automatically reduced in conservation areas. Similar changes could then be sought for the province.

A report from the RIBA's environment and planning committee in March 1998 suggested that many of the 4.4m new homes government has suggested are needed could be provided by adaptation of the 800,000 vacant non-housing properties, and refurbishment of about a million empty or sub-standard houses. The report also suggested that redevelopment could be at higher densities if car parking was excluded. To facilitate such developments, the RIBA called for the abolition of VAT on refurbishment, a 5% levy on new houses, and a greenfield levy of 10-15% on all new development.

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is one of the five good causes which benefit from the substantial funds raised by the National Lottery. At its launch in November 1994 the good causes announced were the heritage, the arts, sport, charities and projects to mark the Millennium. In 1997 the Government decided to legislate for a sixth good cause to benefit education, health and environmental initiatives.

In less than four years HLF has awarded more than £1 billion to over 2,000 projects throughout the UK. In Northern Ireland by 1998 a diverse range of schemes have been awarded over £19 million. These are staggering sums and mean that HLF has now become the major source of funds for UK heritage projects. Its mission statement is 'to safeguard and enhance the buildings, objects and the environment, whether manmade or natural, which have been important in the formation of the character and identity of the United Kingdom and which will be a vital part of its future'.

Churches and cottages, market houses and museums, are among those which have benefited from HLF awards. One of the first buildings to receive an HLF grant was St Mary's Church, Coalisland, while the most recent included the Albert Clock in Belfast and the Downshire Hospital, Downpatrick, for the restoration of its Great Hall. Other beneficiaries include the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum, which, with HLF assistance, acquired John Luke's painting of *The Locks at Edenderry* (1944), and Enniskillen Museum, which purchased William Scott's *Still Life with Flowers*.

The availability of funding from HLF has enabled local organisations like Belcoo and District Development Group to acquire and restore Mullycovet Mill in Fermanagh as well as assisting Hearth to rehabilitate 8-11 College Square North, Belfast. The HLF is providing opportunities for preserving our heritage which is welcome and timely.

New Lottery money for Conservation Areas

In April a new scheme was launched by the Heritage Lottery Fund named the Townscape Heritage Initiative, targeting Conservation Areas in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The scheme will have three bidding rounds and aims to redress problems of dereliction, erosion of quality, and underuse of buildings in historic town centres.

A number of local partnerships entered the first bid and seven were successful, with the promise of £3.85 million to be distributed between Draperstown, Moneymore, Caledon, Killough, Downpatrick and Saint-

field, and Omagh. The UAHS thoroughly applauds this initiative as it will bring substantial financial benefits to Conservation Areas at a time when there are significant budget cuts within the Planning Service and conservation area grant has been suspended.

EUROPEAN HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 1998

The Historic Buildings Council was encouraged by the success of the European Heritage Open Days in 1997 and agreed to organise the event again in 1998. It is convinced that raising awareness of Ulster's architectural heritage is an essential prerequisite to ensuring its long term survival. One way of increasing interest in the built heritage is to open buildings not normally accessible for a well publicised week-end.

The National Trust agreed to allow free pre-booked guided tours at twelve of their properties, including Rowallane which is not normally open to the public, while the UAHS organised the opening and provided guides at two of the larger private houses, Beardville and Parkanaur.

This year, following the publicity given to vernacular buildings at the *Bliss or Blitz* conference and the television documentary featuring Dawson Stelfox on the same topic, several traditional rural dwellings were included in the programme. Another group of buildings featured in the brochure were those awarded grants by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Since accessibility to the general public is one of the key criteria for receiving funding from this source, this was a useful partnership arrangement for both the Lottery Fund and the HBC.

The launch of European Heritage Open Days was held in St Mark's Church, Dundela, and once again, Lord Dubs agreed to do the honours. Local schoolchildren who came to the launch took a keen interest in the architecture and the church's historical links with C S Lewis, and provided an air of informality.

And was it all worthwhile? Despite the frustrations and the hard work it was! Visitors to the properties appreciated the opportunity of seeing inside buildings not normally accessible, and many provided interesting additional information to owners. One gentleman who wrote to the Chairman of HBC after visiting six properties said that "each in their own way was singularly memorable. The character of the hosts and hostesses blended with the atmosphere of the buildings to make it one of the most worthwhile weekend activities for years."

A car-free development for Fountainbridge Housing Association in Edinburgh was completed during the summer, with 65 flats in a £3.8m scheme, but no car parking. Other car-free schemes are in the pipeline for the city.

BLISS OR BLITZ?

This was the title of a major conference organised by the Society, the National Trust and Environment and Heritage Service in March 1998 to highlight the rapid and accelerating decline in the traditional vernacular housing of the countryside. The conference was the culmination of two important pieces of research that had been carried out over the previous year and the start of a major campaign to change policies and practices that were contributing to the decline.

The first of these was the Townland Survey carried out by EHS, the results of which are now published under the title of *A Sense of Loss*, with copies available from EHS at 5-33 Hill Street, Belfast. This study took a randomly selected sample of townlands throughout the country and recorded the fate of all buildings shown on the 2nd edition OS maps (around 1860) and recorded as being occupied at the time in the Valuation books, and compared it with the actual situation on the ground in 1997. The results are complex, but in general terms only around 12-15% of original buildings are still occupied and bear any resemblance to their historic form and character. Another 12-15% survive but are radically altered, and the rest are either derelict, gone completely, or replaced with modern houses.

The second piece of research was the study undertaken by Caroline Maguire as the Alan Gailey Research Fellow, funded by the Cultural Traditions Group of the Community Relations Council, housed at the Institute of Irish Studies and co-ordinated and supported by the Society. Five areas around Northern Ireland were selected based on getting a variety of traditional house types and differing social conditions. Each townland in these areas was surveyed, much as described above, and a substantial part of Caroline's work was supplied to EHS for integration into the Townland Survey. A detailed questionnaire was also compiled and distributed and the results make for instructive reading. A limited number of copies of the full study - *A Changing Vernacular Landscape* - are available through the Society, but the main issues are summarised in the Conference proceedings as detailed below. It is hoped that the full study will be published by the Cultural Traditions Group in the near future.

Both these studies established beyond doubt the decline in traditional houses and how this was continuing and possibly even accelerating. Three main issues were identified:-

1. The imposition of VAT on repairs to dwellings is a significant tax on restoration and repair, and very often tips the economic balance toward new build construction which is zero rated.

2. Current planning policy, outside areas of special control (Green belts and AONB's) makes no distinction between planning permission to restore an old property and that to build new. Many planning and building control regulations actually favour new build.
3. The current NI Housing Executive grant scheme, particularly the Replacement Grant, is heavily biased towards new building in how the financial viability of a restoration scheme is assessed. It is often possible to get a higher grant for new building than for rehabilitation.
4. Whilst it is often perceived that the Ulster predisposition for neat and tidy order contributes to the desire to sweep away the old, the results of the questionnaire show significant majorities of respondents recognising the value of traditional buildings and in particular their contribution to the landscape setting.

The Bliss or Blitz conference was the opportunity to disseminate the findings of these studies to a much wider audience. It was ably opened by the Minister for the Environment, Lord Dubs, who seems to be genuinely sympathetic to the issue. There was a wide range of speakers, mostly local, but with significant contributions from Dr Salvatore di Fazio of ECOVAST (European Council on the Village and Small Towns); from Frank McDonald, Environment Correspondent for the Irish Times; Susan Denyer of the National Trust, based in the Lake District; and Hugh Dixon, now with the National Trust in Northumbria. Alan Gailey defined what we mean by vernacular, Donal Boyle of EHS presented the Townland Survey, and Caroline Maguire introduced the *Changing Vernacular Landscape*. Peter Kirkwood had the unenviable task of explaining the Housing Executive's Policy and priorities to remove rural unfitness, and Hugh McKay of Planning Service had the equally difficult task of persuading the large and enthusiastic audience that they had it about right. Dawson Stelfox on behalf of UAHS outlined a possible blueprint for changing policies and Dick Oram explained the forthcoming charter on vernacular architecture from ICOMOS (International Commission on Monuments and Sites) and the conference ended with a resolution to request the government adopt this when completed.

The proceedings of the conference are currently in preparation, and will give short summaries of all the presentations along with longer texts from Dr Salvatore di Fazio, Susan Denyer and Caroline Maguire.

The conference was well attended and there was a determination to build on this with initiatives to change the cases for the decline. The

Housing Executive are considering a pilot project which would restore six houses spread over each of their regions. Planning Service are actively reviewing their policies, and Environment and Heritage Service are identifying and listing many more vernacular Buildings as part of the second survey. However none of these is sufficient in itself and the following measures are probably the bare minimum to ensure that at least a representative group of the these house remain:

- (a) Vernacular buildings need to have some designation or recognition if they are to be given any special treatment. Few are listed, and whilst some more will be added to this during the second survey it will never be more than a very small sample. However all will have been at least looked at and many recorded and an interim measure would be that these 'recorded buildings' be given a special status, with removal of the normal right to demolition without Planning Permission.
- (b) VAT remains a serious issue and the UAHS and others must continue to lobby for this as part of the UK campaign.
- (c) The forthcoming Housing Order needs to give the Housing Executive more flexibility in interpreting the fitness standards so that traditional buildings can be more easily retained. Restoration of derelict and vacant properties should be possible under the renovation grants, not just currently occupied properties, and the use of matching funding from other sources should be possible within the grant scheme to bridge the gap between a NIHE grant offer and the costs involved.
- (d) Planning Service need to find ways to encourage more people to remain in the urban centres rather than in the rural landscape. Those who earn their living from the land or are running businesses in the area should have a right to planning permission provided the house is built sensitively, but those who just want the rural backdrop and commute to the towns for work, school and recreation must be discouraged or directed towards the restoration of an existing property rather than given permission to build new.

There is plenty of evidence that most people see the greater public good in a policy that restricts new building; demands great sensitivity where permission is given and properly protects the special quality of the unique land and landscape of the Ulster countryside. The BBC programme *Saving the Heartland* presented by UAHS committee member Dawson Stelfox got over 116,000 viewers when first screened in March 1998 and the response to the papers and the BBC was overwhelmingly

supportive. It seems clear that the public want their countryside protected from an ever-growing bungalow blitz and still believe in rural bliss.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

One of the exciting repercussions from the *Bliss or Blitz?* conference is a pilot study being carried out by the Housing Executive looking to the possibility of full restoration of traditional buildings that are classified as unfit, rather than the allocation of a replacement grant. The UAHS has collaborated with surveyors working in the field to provide the Housing Executive with information about buildings that meet their criteria, and we await with great interest to see the results of the project. If the general public could recognise the importance and value of these buildings to our countryside and our heritage the current spate of replacement dwellings could be greatly reduced.

TALKING ROT

People living in old houses may have been surprised to learn that Dr Jagjit Singh led an expedition to the Himalayas in 1992 to track down specimens of *Serpula lacrymans* (the fungus known to Latin scholars as Weeping Tears, and to the man in the street as Dry Rot) in the wild. It is of course quite common here, since its fruiting bodies produce some 2 million spores per second and not surprisingly we breathe them in all the time (even if you live in a modern house!). After several weeks of searching the warm damp undergrowth Dr Singh eventually discovered a fruiting body growing on a tall stump.

His researches have led him to the conclusion that the rot originated in India and was brought to England with timber brought from Calcutta for shipbuilding. It is apparently very shy and fragile in the wild, and he argues that removal of moisture and warmth together with the introduction of fresh air and light will lead rapidly to its demise. The subject is still a matter of some debate, but increasingly the chemicals of the timber treatment firms are seen to be much more damaging to our environment than this rare and delicate fungus - perhaps it will come in time to replace the truffle as a gourmet's treat!

We regard the Belfast Urban Area Plan as the Dead Sea Scrolls in planning terms. (Peter Carr of Dundonald Greenbelt Association, suggesting that the BUAP has been superceded by the Rio Summit and the need to plan on a global scale.)

CASEWORK

Portrush Town Hall

Built in 1872 by the famous firm of Lanyon Lynn and Lanyon, Portrush Town Hall is a fun seaside Victorian building. Coleraine Borough Council, custodians of the listed building, failed to maintain it over the years and applied successfully for Listed Building Consent to demolish the building in March 1998. The Environment and Heritage Service supported demolition stating that most of brickwork was spalled and severe damp had destroyed the interior. Findings by Carrig, a firm of specialist conservation engineers concurred with the Society in estimating that a much smaller percentage of the brick exterior would need to be replaced, and agreed with us that restoration would be feasible. While the building is severely damp because of blocked gutters and broken downpipes arising from poor maintenance, restoration is still possible, and indeed a project to restore the building would probably be eligible for finance from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The UAHS addressed the Council on a number of occasions and highlighted the cultural and economic benefits of restoration. Councillors were shown slides of buildings which had suffered comparable problems and have been successfully restored. Local groups also made representations to the Council and a petition of over 2000 signatures in support of restoration of the building was submitted. Despite local pressure and the likelihood that a scheme of restoration would be viewed favourably by a number of sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Council voted for the option of demolition and new-build with little hope of securing equivalent funding, and with no firm idea of what would replace this fine example of seaside High Victorian architecture. The last possible means of rescuing the building is if the Council can be persuaded to hand over the reins via a lease to a local Building Preservation Trust.

Town Hall, Limavady

Listed in 1975 and delisted this year, the Alexander Memorial Hall (attributed to Thomas Turner) was constructed in 1863 and constitutes a landmark in the town. Its lofty and confident façade with original generous sash windows is topped by a pediment containing an oculus beneath which is positioned distinctive clock faces. Limavady Borough Council lodged an application to demolish the building (as reported in our 1998 issue), which ironically is featured on the front of their own tourist brochure for the Limavady and Roe Valley area. The Council

was granted permission and expressed the intention to build an Arts Centre and Museum on the site. Following strong local opposition to the demolition earlier this year, an RIBA competition was held and competitors were required to incorporate the town hall facade into the scheme. A firm of London architects recently won the open competition, and the design does indeed use the frontage in its existing location as an entrance to the complex, but it is unfortunate that the building as a whole will be lost.

Knockdene Park South, Belfast

Knockdene is an Area of Townscape Character and has been described as having the air of a verdant garden suburb. On September 1997 an application was lodged for the development of ten apartments at 39 and 41 Knockdene Park South. This involved the demolition of a pair of large red Belfast brick semi-detached dwellings which have terracotta string courses, decorative finials, cockscomb ridges and corbelled chimneys. The application was met with nineteen letters of objection. The developer was refused permission on the grounds that the development would be out of character with the area and would create an undesirable precedent for development of a similar nature. The case was brought before the Planning Appeals Commission and although the presiding Commissioner concluded that the appeal should be dismissed, the Commission later overturned his decision on the grounds that it was not persuaded that apartment development was unacceptable in principle in ATCs or that the proposals would undermine the character of the ATC. A local resident decided to pursue the matter by bringing the case to Judicial Review on the ground of illegality, procedural impropriety and irrationality. The Commission's decision was quashed by the High Court in September, setting an encouraging precedent for opposing other cases of development in ATCs. However the battle is not yet won. The case has been referred back to the PAC and the UAHS is to make further submissions.

Walking has to be part of the transport solution, and low density is the problem. (Juan Alayo of Ove Arup & Partners, speaking at a conference in April 1998, in which he pointed out that only 5% of the UK population live in densities of more than 75 people per ha, whereas 85% live in densities of less than 25 per ha. If densities were higher, it would have a huge impact on car use because people would be able to walk to shops, offices and other destinations more easily.)

Ogle Street, Armagh



Thirteen houses which formed part of a 18th century terrace in Ogle Street, in the heart of Armagh Conservation Area, were demolished without consent on a Sunday morning in November 1997. The terrace was characterised by two and three storey buildings of coursed roughly squared and rubble limestone. The terrace was featured in UAHS Buildings at Risk catalogues 1 and 4 and Hearth Housing Association had tried to establish the ownership of the properties with a view to making offers. Built Heritage were alerted to the suitability of Ogle Street for a conservation scheme as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Society was delighted that the Planning Service, encouraged by the Armagh District Council, pursued the case with great fervour and succeeded in bringing the developer, Ogle Developments - a consortium of local businessmen - before the Magistrates Court. They pleaded guilty, admitting they were aware that demolition was illegal, but claimed that the rash action was urgently necessary in the interest of safety. Clearly other precautions could have been taken to render the buildings safe.

The fine incurred for this offence was a meagre £3,000 to the developer and £1,000 to the contractor. An outline application, submitted for the gap site proposing large scale retail and residential accommodation following demolition, was refused. The developer is now steeped in negotiations with the Planning Division and has been asked by the Conservation Area architectural advisor to replicate the original

facades - advice which the developer seems willing to accept. Amended plans have yet to be submitted. This firm-handed approach should send out the right message to those with similar intentions, namely that they will not profit from flouting the legislation which offers protection to the built heritage.

Court Street, Newtownards

The unauthorised demolition of two houses which were part of a mid-nineteenth listed terrace in Court Street, Newtownards took place in November 1997. Hearth Housing Association recently carried out a successful restoration scheme on Court Street which the Society hoped would encourage further restoration. The case was highlighted in the previous Heritage Review and remains unresolved. Material has been carefully collated and has been lodged with the Departmental Solicitors Services who are due to bring it before the court. Properties on either side of the demolished building have also been acquired by the developers, so we have reason to fear that the developers will wish to use these to facilitate wider access to the site behind, for which a massive planning application has just been made. We were recently informed that Planning Service are currently pursuing enforcement action with the aim of rebuilding the two houses.

Clough House

Clough House was demolished without consent in April 1998. Situated in the heart of the small town of Clough, the house was built in about 1800 by the 1st Earl of Annesley and was in its day a gentleman's residence of some sophistication. It was a single storey, hipped roof house with basement, and the exterior was finished in rough cast with a central Ionic-columned doorcase and Regency glazed windows. One of the few remaining historic properties in the area, it occupied a prominent position in the village. The owner claimed that he was unaware that the building was listed in February 1998, and the case is now under investigation. The DoE's legal branch is sifting through the evidence with the intention of bringing the case to court.

Imperial House, Belfast

Imperial House was built in 1935 by Kendrick Edwards and is one of the few remaining 1930s faience-clad buildings in Belfast. It is situated in a prominent city centre location in Donegall Square East beside the Methodist Church. A planning application was made to replace the matt white faience with precast reconstituted stone panels. Not only is this a listed building, but it is also positioned within the

newly designated Belfast City Centre Conservation Area. We put forward suggestions on how to combat problems experienced by such buildings without replacing the faience, but the application was approved nevertheless.

Roden Arms, Bryansford

The Society alerted the Planning Service in June 1998 to works to the Roden Arms, Bryansford which appeared to be in contravention of the approved drawings. In particular the building was losing its sash windows to be replaced by a concoction of side hung and top hung casement windows. We have been assured recently that the situation is being monitored.

1 and 3 University Street, Belfast

This pair of houses set back from the normal road line date from 1848, and are among the earliest developments in the University area. Once the home of the Saints and Scholars restaurant, the building has now been converted and extended to form Opus One restaurant. The application to gut the interiors, merge the two houses and completely alter the frontage was strongly opposed by the UAHS, but was approved by the planners, and the result is tantamount to the demolition of these buildings situated within the Queen's Conservation Area, which would have required listed building consent.

Lennoxvale, Belfast

The Queen's University of Belfast submitted an application for the demolition of nos. 1 and 3 Lennoxvale and the erection of 84 bed sitting rooms, with ancillary accommodation and car parking, which was approved in June 1998. No.1 in particular is a building worthy of retention and exemplifies the spacious Edwardian and late Victorian character of the area. Some years ago, Lennoxvale was considered for conservation area status, and it has been suggested that Lennoxvale should be incorporated within Stranmillis Conservation Area. The buildings do fall within an Area of Townscape Character, but as we have witnessed all too often, this designation offers no real protection to the built heritage. There is a real fear that this approval will set a precedent for apartment development at a high density and threaten the remaining houses in Lennoxvale. The Society appealed to the Vice Chancellor of Queens to review the plan for demolition of no.1, suggesting that this house be repaired and offered for lease.

Prospect House, Carrickfergus

Thought to have been built in 1760, Prospect House, a grade A listed building, was set alight in September 1998 and the interior was badly damaged. A scheme is being devised to accommodate seven apartments within the historic shell, with a new build courtyard incorporating townhouses and apartments. The scheme is to ensure that surviving features such as the good plasterwork ceiling are repaired.

Convent, Mater Hospital, Belfast

Paul Larmour described St Paul's Convent of Mercy in Belfast as the only work in Belfast by the Irish Pugin, as the great Gothic Revivalist James McCarthy was known. More colourful than usual for McCarthy's work, the convent is built in red brick with blue brick relieving arches and Scottish sandstone details and fine traceried windows. It now faces a bleak future. Although the building is in excellent condition, the Mater redevelopment scheme, which involves its demolition, has received consent and the convent is to be demolished.

Sainsburys at Armagh

The Society received consultation plans for an application for a supermarket on an important site on the edge of the Mall in Armagh. One of Ireland's most attractive urban parks, the Mall is encircled by some of the city's best classical buildings, including the Courthouse and the Gaol. The elevations for this development on Mall West were out of scale with surrounding buildings and their lack of detail was unacceptable: the Society objected to the proposals. The scale was reduced in accordance with the advice of the local conservation area architect, ashlar stonework and brickwork were used, and the application was approved; building work is now nearing completion.

Throne Hospital, Belfast

The Throne Hospital has suffered fire damage and requires an imaginative scheme to be initiated to ensure its survival. Designed by T Jackson & Son as a Children's Hospital in 1877 this magnificent High Victorian polychrome brick building with sandstone dressings surveys the Lough from its elevated location off the Whitewell Road. Alas its grounds are being swallowed up by an inappropriate and unimaginative housing development entitled "Old Throne Park". A local interest group, the Throne Woodland Trust, are extremely keen to see the building restored.

Upper Crescent, Belfast

Sir Charles Brett described Upper and Lower Crescents as "highly imposing stucco terraces in the Bath manner with Corinthian columns and pilasters rising two storeys", and Paul Larmour thought Upper Crescent to be the "grandest Neo-classical terrace in Ulster". In January 1995 an application was submitted for nos.4-8 Upper Crescent, listed buildings within the Queen's conservation area, and sadly these were subsequently demolished and replaced with a building now housing Kainos, a computer consultancy firm. The listed buildings on the corner of nos.1 Upper Crescent and 28 University Road, also owned by Queen's University, are similarly "protected". Chimneys were removed from the buildings during 1998, and a planning application was submitted for a new office development which involves demolition with facade retention. This was approved at the end of October 1998.

OBITUARIES

The central block of The Mount in East Belfast was built in the mid-nineteenth century as a terrace of gracious three-storey stuccoed town houses. Having been converted to flats, they were poorly maintained for many years and subsequently abandoned. The UAHS tried to persuade the DoE to issue a Repairs Notice to the owners obliging them to carry out vital maintenance, but unfortunately no action was taken. In 1986, the Department of Architecture and Planning at QUB produced a report, *Conservation in Belfast*, which identified eight areas thought worthy of conservation area status. They included The Mount, and the recommendations were taken up in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, published in 1990. In it, The Mount is described as "one of the oldest remaining areas of housing close to the centre of Belfast, and one which retains much of its individual identity and original character." Most of the buildings were de-listed, and have recently been demolished.



The Society objected strongly to an extensive planning application for a new shopping centre in Coleraine, between the Diamond and the river. As well as involving the demolition of a number of important Georgian

buildings, the new proposal was for a crude version of Scottish Baronial with some very 20th century elements. The design was modified to allow the retention of some of the old buildings in Hanover Place, but as the site was being cleared a mysterious fire destroyed the interiors of the Georgian houses and left them in such a fragile condition that demolition followed almost immediately. Police were called to investigate the possibility of arson, but no charges have been made.

Despite a vigorous campaign by the Society against the demolition of a B+ listed building in the heart of our capital city, the bulk of Donegall Square Methodist Church was demolished in 1997, and only the portico now stands as the entrance to the ongoing eight-storey Ulster Bank development in Donegall Square East. Sadly, most passers-by were unaware of what was happening and assumed that the church was still intact.

Manor Lodge, Donaghadee, was an impressive two-storey five bay parapetted late Georgian house in the Donaghadee Conservation Area. It was disappointing to learn some years ago that Listed Building Consent had been granted for demolition of the rear of the building leaving the facade. However when work started in 1998, that front elevation was demolished and retrospective permission granted on the grounds that retention of the facade would have been too difficult. This story is particularly tragic because an excellent rescue scheme for the entire building and its attached coach house, including restoration of the interiors, had been prepared by a building preservation trust only five years previously. The project had been fully financed and received planning permission, but was brought to a halt at the eleventh hour when the owner sold the building to the present developers.

TRADITIONAL BUILDING SKILLS

The third edition of the Society's Directory of Traditional Building Skills was launched in October. The Directory aims to provide the aspiring restorer with basic conservation guidelines. It contains the names of consultants who have a proven record of architectural conservation work, and the names of building contractors and craftsmen who have conservation expertise. It should help solve such tricky problems as where to find the appropriate lime mortar mix, who can eradicate dry rot, where to get cast iron spouting or a new fanlight, or to replace the sliding sashes in your home. Encouragingly, more and more conservation architects are listed in the Directory, but we have fewer skilled craftsmen willing to put themselves forward - partly because some are far too busy to take on additional work!

BUILDINGS AT RISK

The course of the year's work has been largely determined by the contents of the 5th Buildings at Risk catalogue, which was launched in March 1998 at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast. As well as the depressing number of fine listed buildings that are in need of some tender loving care and a large injection of money, this volume highlighted the fate of the large number of derelict traditional buildings that are all too familiar in the Ulster countryside. These rural dwellings are rapidly disappearing. Various surveys undertaken in the province all came up with the same broad conclusion: that of the stock of rural dwellings present on the 1909 edition of Ordnance Survey maps, a large percentage have disappeared altogether, and of the remainder only a very small percentage are unaltered.

This rapid loss of our traditional buildings is not echoed across the water where a much larger number of small rural dwellings have survived and are still in use. The scale of loss is a cause for alarm as these buildings are an integral feature of the landscape, and their siting, scale and building materials make them locally distinctive. The replacement dwellings that spring up in their wake show very little sensitivity towards such features.

There are many economic and social reasons for the disappearance of such cottages, but what is very worrying is that there is little protection for them. Very few cottages are considered appropriate for listing and so they have no statutory protection, nor is there grant aid available for owners who would like to restore them.

What is necessary is a change in public perception towards these buildings, as sadly they bear a certain stigma. We need more well publicised successful restoration schemes such as the restoration of the Hanna's Close clachan in the Mourne, or the Tourist Board's Rural Cottage Holidays scheme in the Glens of Antrim, demonstrating that these buildings can be restored and brought back into use.

We were delighted to reinvigorate the UAHS's declared intent to foster the appreciation of architecture in the nine counties as the Cavan-Monaghan Rural Development Co-operative Society invited us to record buildings in parts of Cavan and Monaghan with the view to establishing their own Buildings at Risk project. Two days were spent using the invaluable early surveys of Maurice Craig and Sir Charles Brett, and tapping the considerable local knowledge of Theo McMahon. The work culminated in a lecture at the conference *Our Drumlin Landscape: a rich heritage resource* held at the Slieve Russell in April.

HEARTH

Hearth is the housing association managed jointly by the UAHS and the National Trust to provide a mechanism for rescuing historic buildings in the province at risk of demolition or dereliction.

Careful readers may have noticed the picture of Sharp's House in our last issue, which had no explanatory text. Sharp's is a two-storey stone-built house, set within the demesne of the Norman Revival Gosford Castle near Markethill. It pre-dates the present Castle, and is thought to have been built in the



latter part of the 18th century, but had been vacant for many years and listed building consent for demolition had been sought. Hearth was able to acquire it, and work was carried out in 1995-96. This involved restoration of the attractive staircase, with its saddle-back ramped handrail and ornamental balustrades, and of the tented ceiling to the main first floor room, along with reinstatement of a tripartite ground floor window, evidence of which was uncovered in the course of the restoration. Hearth's Revolving Fund successfully sold the property in 1996, and its new owner opened it for both European Heritage Open Days.

Also in the last issue, a building known as Woodbine Cottage was mentioned briefly. It was built about 1850 as a free-standing cottage on the Antrim Road going north out of Belfast, which at that time was little developed. At first it seems to have been known simply as Antrim Road Cottage, and then possibly as Ivy Cottage, but by 1870 it had become Woodbine Cottage. It is two-storey and double-fronted, but modest in scale, built of smooth-rendered brickwork, with pilasters at each corner and moulded architraves to windows on the front elevation. A shallow Doric portico leads into a small hall, with three rooms on the ground floor, the front ones being complete with folding shutters, moulded cornices and panelled doors. The staircase has a steeply curved handrail and moulded balustrades.

For a number of years it had been essentially abandoned, and was getting vandalised. In January 1995, youths broke in, stole the newel-

post and set a fire at the back of the house. While the actual fire damage was localised, firemen ripped out adjacent timbers in the course of dealing with it, and the risk of further arson leading to more extensive destruction was very high. Hearth reached agreement with the owner to take over the building and was able to start work in advance of obtaining full legal ownership. A caretaker tenant was installed in the course of the works to reduce the risk of further damage, and restoration was completed in the course of 1995. Although latterly it had been painted red, paint scrapes revealed many layers of a sage green paint, and it was obvious that when it had been occupied by a firm of painters in the 1920s they had repainted it the same colour every year, always in a green that (no doubt quite coincidentally!) matched the Woodbine cigarette packets.

In the course of 1997-98 Hearth has undertaken the restoration of another small building in North Belfast, the gate lodge at the entrance to Alexandra Park, which was probably designed by J C Bretland about 1885. It is a two-storey rubble-stone building with steeply pitched roofs and tall stone chimneys, and the windows are plain sashes with an unusual shouldered design. It was badly damaged some years ago in an arson attack which destroyed the staircase, first floor, and most of the roof. No internal doors survived, although some windows remained in scorched and rotted condition. The structure was generally sound, but the stonework had been repointed in hard mortar at some stage, leading to deterioration of some of the stones.

Restoration involved new roofs and cast iron gutters, and new windows and doors throughout. A considerable amount of stone was replaced where the original stone was badly spalled or damaged by the fire and ongoing deterioration. Internally, a new staircase was put in, and flooring was replaced throughout. Originally there would have been three bedrooms upstairs, but one is now a bathroom. The park suffers from serious vandalism, and the contractor experienced considerable difficulties in the early phases of the job, but again a caretaker tenant was found to provide a watch during the job. He and his family moved in properly at Christmas, bravely decorating a Christmas tree in a freshly-plastered living room while there were still boards in front of a vandalised window and the builders had several more months' work to do around them. However they have made a very handsome home out of the lodge and the vandals have now moved elsewhere.

After many years of negotiation, Hearth is currently on site at important late Georgian buildings in College Square North Belfast, which will be reported on in our next issue.

Dame Jennifer Jenkins

An appreciation contributed by Sir Charles Brett, CBE:

Jennifer Jenkins, President of Hearth, takes a close interest in its work, holds regular meetings with its Committee, and has visited, at one stage or another, almost all of its projects and properties.

Married to Roy Jenkins, she has had an enormously distinguished career of her own. She is the daughter of Sir Parker Morris, whose admirable minimum quality standards for housing Harry Simpson and I introduced for the first time in Northern Ireland in the early days of the Housing Executive. She has been chairman (not, be it noted, "chairperson" or "chair"), in succession, of the Consumers' Association; the Historic Buildings Council of England; the National Trust; the Royal Parks Review Group; the Architectural Heritage Fund; and the Architectural Advisory Panel of the Heritage Lottery Fund. She is the author of "From Acorn to Oak", a history of the National Trust from 1895 until 1994.

So far as Northern Ireland is concerned, she paid several visits during her chairmanship of the Trust, and is perhaps best remembered here for the diplomacy she showed in handling the unfortunate controversy over the redecoration of Castle Coole. But she also took a close interest in the acquisition of the Crom estate, in the north coast, and in several of the smaller and more modest properties. Of the four Chairmen of the Trust with whom I worked on its governing Council, Lord Antrim, Lord Gibson, Lord Chorley, and Jennifer Jenkins - each excellent, but each with a very different style - she was the most unassuming, the most friendly, - and, should the occasion arise, the most steely. I greatly admired the skill with which she handled the meetings, some of which had to deal with highly contentious issues, such as hunting, on which feelings ran high.

Both as Chairman of the Architectural Heritage Fund, and as an adviser to the Heritage Lottery Fund, she has been very helpful to Hearth, providing both good advice and access to much-needed funds for a number of projects. I hope we shall see her at the opening of Hearth's current ambitious scheme in College Square North, which has been supported by both. She is always a most welcome visitor.

Mussenden Temple at Castlerock is now considered off the danger list after the National Trust has completed stabilisation works to the cliff top only yards from the precariously-sited little building.

BOOK REVIEW

The Architecture Pack by Ron van der Meer and Deyan Sudjic; Van der Meer Publishing; Price £30.00.

There is every year the perfect coffee table book. The book that is the perfect decoration for any room. Last year it was *Buildings of County Antrim* by CEB Brett and next year we hope it will be *Buildings of County Armagh* by the same author. To fill the gap between these two masterpieces there could be no better choice than *The Architecture Pack* by Ron van der Meer & Deyan Sudjic. This is a large impressive book that lies foursquare on the coffee table inviting inspection. The surprise and delight that is the reaction of those that open it is worthy of observation.

This is no ordinary volume, even though it is packed with architectural information. This book really takes a most necessary step forward in explaining architecture. It illustrates many important buildings in three dimension - the buildings pop up from the page as one opens the book.

Be assured this is not a book for children. The chosen buildings are there to explain an aspect of the development of architecture. A timber frame house that develops to become more fashionable as the years pass. One can look right down into the Villa Rotonda (Villa Capra) to appreciate the masterly internal layout created by Palladio. Study the development of the dome and the arch, brought to life as Chartres Cathedral jumps up from the page.

There are special glasses supplied to allow the viewer an animate diagrams, making it possible to see the structure that lies behind the exterior. A pack within the pack gives the reader a chance to become builder and assemble a model of Reitveld's Schroder House. There is also a tape to listen to with a glossary of Architects and Architecture for further pleasure.

On the back cover the publication is described as "*The most irresistible, informative, fun-filled creation*" and it is hard to disagree with the view. The book is manufactured in China, for it seems that only in the Orient do such skills with paper sculpture exist. When you do buy this book preserve it carefully so that some of your heirs may have the pleasure of taking it to an Antiques Road show, in about one hundred years time.

WBB

St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, Belfast, reopened at the end of 1997 after extensive restoration following severe fire damage. A significant painting by John Lavery in its nave has been fully restored in keeping with fresh setting.

THE RAPIDLY CHANGING FACE OF DOWNPATRICK

Throughout last summer and autumn the long-suffering citizens of Downpatrick have been picking their way through a quagmire of mud, plaster and cement arising from no less than four major sites within a few hundred yards.

On the outskirts of the town at the Ballydugan Road, thirty acres of reclaimed marshland immediately below Cathedral Hill will accommodate a 50,000 sq ft supermarket, four shops, a petrol station, and a 350-space car-park, at a total cost of £18 million. In Market Street £5 million is being spent on expanding and rebuilding the former Downtown Shopping Centre to provide a 15,000 sq ft supermarket and eight shop units. Behind this, the site for the £6.2 million St Patrick's Visitor Centre, so vehemently and, alas, fruitlessly opposed by the UAHS, has already been cleared amongst the trees of The Grove below the Cathedral. Further along Market Street, the old Post Office building has been demolished and replaced by 18,000 sq ft of shopping space in seven units, with office accommodation above. In addition to all the work so far described in the centre of the town, a £6 million business park is being sliced into the drumlins near Inch Abbey, off the Belfast Road to the north.

By the time you read this, a decision will have been reached on a planning application for yet another new supermarket, which has been proposed for an eight-acre marshland site in the immediate lee of the mound of Down on the northern approaches to the town. This is to be a single-storey building of 40,000 sq ft costing £8 million. The choice of site could hardly be less appropriate, and the space devoted to the adjoining 436-space car-park cannot be acceptable in so sensitive a position. The Society has lodged a strong objection to the use of an area which was not designated for development in the Downpatrick Town Centre Plan of 1992.

A recent survey carried out for the Council for the Protection of Rural England has highlighted many of the adverse effects of supermarkets, which can kill off more jobs within and outside the retail trade than they actually create. Small town-centre shops are much more likely to be selling local farm produce and small to medium-sized family farms become victims of the expansion of supermarkets into market towns. Small shops will undoubtedly be forced to close in face of supermarket competition: the Retail Planning Forum has established that 270 local retailing jobs alone are lost every time a new large out-of-centre food store is opened. Why then have these developments been approved?

UAHS ACTIVITIES/EVENTS 1997-8

The Society has many unsung heroes, but one of the most prominent of these must be Ian Gailey. For over twenty years he has organised events and outings for UAHS and cajoled people into assisting him with its activities. There are few voluntary societies which can boast that they have educated and entertained members of all ages with such success over several decades. The final year of Ian's chairmanship of events was as interesting and varied as any previous one.

David Evans not only led an outing in April 1997 to visit some interesting modern buildings, but lectured on the subject in November. Highlights of the outing were Glenveagh Special School and Billy Hanna's own house. At the school members admired the ingenuity of the architects who designed Glenveagh to suit the needs of profoundly handicapped children, and those who care for them. They also gained an insight into the complexity of designing the building.

In complete contrast Michael Coulter led members on an exploration of defensive structures in July. This was followed by a tour of great houses of County Antrim led by the President of the Society. This brought to life several of the houses featured in Sir Charles' highly successful *Buildings of Country Antrim*, published in 1996.

In December members had the opportunity of visiting the society's new headquarters to enjoy some early Christmas cheer and purchase its publications. Though members are always welcome to call at 66 Donegall Pass, few take the opportunity and the success of this event means that it will be repeated in 1998.

In January 1998, Marcus Patton's lecture on the work of Hearsh started the year's activities in a suitably upbeat manner. John O'Connell's March lecture entitled 'The architect and his work' provided an interesting contrast with the work of Hearsh. While Marcus works with the modest but architecturally important buildings of Ulster, John showed slides of his work on grand buildings across Europe.

The Society's return to its former AGM venue, 143 Malone Road, after a year's absence, was welcomed by members. For many years the UAHS has enjoyed the hospitality of the Construction Employers' Federation for this annual meeting. The guest speaker, after the business of the evening was concluded, was Dame Jennifer Jenkins. The warmth of her personality and the fascinating way in which she outlined her experience of the preservation of heritage made it a memorable AGM.

The visit to the Antrim Technology Park in April brought modern architecture to the forefront again. Robin Wylie's guided tour of

Schools of the Route provided an opportunity for members to view several of the buildings featured in his recently published *Ulster Model Schools*. In July Michael Coulter and Primrose Wilson led a joint outing to Caledon. The opportunity of walking around this attractive conservation area which has so much of architectural and industrial interest was enjoyed in the company of members of the Caledon Regeneration Partnership.

Peter Marlow led a successful expedition to Fermanagh in September when members viewed a revitalised Florence Court following the gift by Lady Enniskillen of many items original to the house. In the afternoon, by kind permission of Lord Erne, the Society had the opportunity of visiting Crom Castle.

The Society does not often take to water to view Ulster's heritage but, judging by the success of the outing when it did, it should consider doing so more often! Lord O'Neill and Terence Reeves-Smyth showed members around Antrim Castle Gardens before embarking on the Maid of Antrim for Portglenone. On the way members were invited to admire architectural delights and interesting birdlife. This outing was so oversubscribed that it was organised again a month later when it was led by Lord O'Neill and Marion Meek.

In October and November the Society's lectures provided an insight into different aspects of the architectural heritage. Roy Johnston, a music historian, discussed the succession of auditoria in which the musical life of Belfast developed. The following month Peter Pearce, Director of the Landmark Trust, illustrated the work of this organisation. The properties in the care of the Trust, mainly in Great Britain but also in Vermont USA and Italy, are available as holiday accommodation. The prospect of staying in Palladio's Villa Saraceno seemed particularly attractive on a cold, wet November evening!

The society is much indebted to the industry of Joan Kinch in co-ordinating its activities, and the expertise and knowledge of outing organisers. While Ian Gailey is enjoying a well earned retirement, the new committee, chaired by Primrose Wilson, hopes to maintain the high standard set during previous years of UAHS activities.

[Councillor Bell] queried why the Planning Service had recorded only 212 letters of objection from residents, when she had understood there were 225. Mr King [the planning officer] responded that around 15 letters did not include the address of the sender, and so no acknowledgement of receipt could be dispatched. *(So that was all right then. Approval was duly granted. Co Down Spectator, November 1997).*

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Society depends on an active membership for its effectiveness. Members can help its work in many ways - by monitoring planning applications, for example, or drawing attention to undesirable development. The Society organises regular outings, expeditions, lectures and social events. Members also enjoy the privilege of buying all the Society's publications at a 25% discount (see overleaf for a full list).

To: The Secretary
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
66 Donegall Pass
Belfast
BT7 1BU

Full name (s)

Address

Post Code

Telephone (home)

(work).....

Area of Particular interest or concern (if any)

Please indicate the type of membership applied for:

Annual Membership	£14
Joint Annual Membership	£20
Corporate Annual Membership	£45
Student up to 25 years Annual Membership	£7

Members paying by direct debit will receive a £1 reduction in their subscription rate.

UAHS PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS, MONOGRAPHS AND ESSAYS

An Introduction to Modern Ulster Architecture	£4.00	Classical Churches in Ulster	£1.00
Fishmongers' Company in Ulster	£8.00	Roger Mulholland	£4.00
Moneymore & Draperstown	£8.00	Architectural Schizophrenia	£4.00
Irish Church Monuments	£8.00	Malone House	£4.00
J J McCarthy and the Gothic Revival in Ireland	£8.00	The Workhouses of Ulster	£4.00
Northern Gardens	£2.00	Ballywalter Park	£4.00
Diamond as Big as a Square	£2.00	Hillsborough Castle	£4.50
Mausolea in Ulster	£4.00	Ulster Model Schools	£7.60
		Buildings of Co Antrim	£24.00
		Gate Lodges of Ulster	£13.95

LISTS AND SURVEYS

1. Queen's area of Belfast	£4.00	18. Mid Down	£4.00
3. Banbridge	£4.00	22. Donaghadee & Portpatrick	£4.00
8. Town of Monaghan	£4.00	25. Rathfriland & Hilltown	£4.00
9. West Antrim	£4.00	27. Malone & Stranmillis	£7.50
10. Craigavon (Omnibus)	£4.00	28. Buildings of Armagh	£6.50
11. Joy Street area, Belfast	£4.00	29. Central Belfast	£9.50
St Helier, Jersey	£4.00		

Orders for all the foregoing publications, and standing orders for future publications, may be sent to the Society at 66 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1BU, and will be fulfilled subject to availability, and at the charges for postage and packing ruling at the date of order.

Many of the Society's early Lists are now out-of-print, and while we hope to bring out new editions of some them, the Secretary is happy to assist enquirers by making photocopies on request at cost from the copies held in the Society's office. The following Lists are now out of print.

2. Lisburn	17. East Down
4. Portaferry and Strangford	19. Island of Rathlin
5. Antrim and Ballymena	20. Mourne
6. Downpatrick	21. North Derry
7. City of Derry	23. Carrickfergus
12. Dungannon & Cookstown	24. Town of Cavan
13. Glens of Antrim	An Introduction to Ulster Architecture
14. North Antrim	Palm House and Botanic Gardens, Belfast
15. Coleraine and Portstewart	Court Houses and Market Houses
16. Enniskillen	Clandeboyne

Bangor and Groomsport is due to be reprinted in a new edition in 1999.

The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society exists to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of good architecture of all periods - from the prehistoric to the contemporary - in the nine counties of Ulster, to encourage the preservation and restoration of buildings of merit or importance; and to increase public awareness of the beauty, history and character of local neighbourhoods. This newsletter outlines some of the major activities of the Society during 1998.

President: Sir Charles Brett, CBE

Vice-Presidents: Dr M J Craig
Mr J Cornforth

UAHS Committee for 1998:

Rt Hon the Lord O'Neill (*Chairman*)

Mrs Lyn Gallagher (*Vice-Chairman till mid-1998*)

Mr Peter O. Marlow (*Vice-Chairman from mid-1998*)

Mr Sean Hagan (*Hon Secretary*)

Mr Keith McCleane (*Hon Treasurer*)

Mr Kevin Baird

Mr Douglas Black

Mr Brian Boyd

Lady Carswell

Mr John Cowdy

Mr Stephen Douglas

Ms Helen Hossack

Mrs Karen Latimer

Mr Brian McKee

Miss Caroline Maguire

Mr Annesley Malley

Mr Marcus Patton

Mr Dawson Stelfox

Secretary: Miss Joan Kinch

Buildings at Risk Officer: Mrs Harriet Devlin

Research Officer: Miss Rita Harkin

The Society is always looking for members interested in taking an active part in its activities. In particular, monitoring of planning applications in different areas, preparation of new lists, and assistance in organising outings are always appreciated. If you would like to help in any of these ways, please contact the Secretary, Miss Joan Kinch, at Belfast 550213. Our e-mail number is uahs@btinternet.com.

Our front cover shows Portrush Town Hall, under threat of demolition by Coleraine Borough Council. The back cover shows Alexandra Park gate lodge, Belfast, recently restored by Hearth.

Contributors to this issue: Brian Boyd, Sir Charles Brett, Lady Carswell, Harriet Devlin, Rita Harkin, Peter O. Marlow, Marcus Patton, Dawson Stelfox, Gordon Wheeler and Primrose Wilson.



Alexandra Park Gate Lodge, Belfast - restored in 1998.

HERITAGE REVIEW is published for its membership by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 66 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1BU.