



DECIMUS

ISSUE 4 - SUMMER/WINTER 2022

The Journal of
The Decimus Burton Society



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The geometrical Ascent to the Galleries, in the Colosseum, Regents Park. Published June 1829 by R.Ackermann

Back Cover

The West Wing at Grimston Park in Winter.
Copyright Lord Richard Best.

DECIMUS

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The Decimus Burton Society was set up to encourage the study and appreciation of the life and work of this eminent architect.

To join The Decimus Burton Society
www.thedecimusburtonsociety.org

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The Journal of The Decimus Burton Society

I would like to start this special double issue of DECIMUS by wishing everyone a very happy New Year. 2022 has been another eventful year for the society. For those of you who regularly visit the society's website you will be aware of some of the progress that has been made with the project to set

up a Decimus Burton Museum. We are including a special article on the project within this issue.

In our last issue we reported the successful return to Ven House of a valuable portfolio of eleven drawings by Decimus Burton that the society had helped the owners



Fig 1. Ven House with Decimus Burton's orangery addition to the left.
Photo copyright Paul Avis

of the house secure. The drawings which show the additions and alterations that the architect carried out to the Grade I listed building, are signed by Decimus and dated 1835. In August my wife, Anne, and I were fortunate to visit this beautiful house with a view to planning a future visit for members.

Also in August, Anne and I visited Grimston Park and Fleetwood, again with a view to planning a visit for members. Grimston Park is an impressive country house designed by Burton in 1840 and is located just south of York. Our guided tour of the west wing, by its owner, Lord Best showed us amongst other gems some wonderful Adam style ceilings and the beautiful dining room with its original hand painted Chinese wallpaper and exquisite joinery details. Afterwards John Fielden, whose family has owned the Grimston Park estate for many years, took us around some of the estate's remarkable buildings, including the impressive Riding School and Observatory Tower. Our thanks must go to Richard and John for their hospitality.

At Fleetwood, an important example of Decimus Burton's innovations in town planning, we were given a tour of the town and its museum by Richard Gillingham and Keith Porter who have been instrumental in turning the Custom

House, designed by Burton, into a successful museum and tourist attraction that not only promotes the work of the architect but also the important social history of the town since its development in the 1830s. From the visit it was clear to see how this museum has become a focal point for Fleetwood and an invaluable asset to the community. Its success shows the potential for the new museum project in Tunbridge Wells. Needless to say, we are looking forward to inviting our members to the town in the future.

The society's research into the life and work of Decimus Burton continues, as does our assistance for



Fig 2. North Euston Hotel, Fleetwood, with a statue of Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood in the foreground. Photo copyright Paul Avis

those who are studying his work, or who simply have questions about particular aspects of his life. In the summer, we were invited by the RIBA to help with the archiving of Philip Miller's important collection of material relating to Burton. It was Philip who organised the centenary exhibition of Decimus Burton's life and work at the Building Centre in London in 1981. A secondary school student from Tunbridge Wells, sponsored by both the Civic Society and The Decimus Burton Society, visited the RIBA archives and made a start on the project, which remains ongoing. Also this year, members of the society were instrumental in identifying, helping to purchase and restore a watercolour by Burton of an earlier design for Clarence Terrace in Regents' Park for the RIBA. More recently, we have received enquiries about Fleetwood and Bineham which have unearthed another watercolour and an architectural plan of two of the architect's projects – further details on these can be found in the News section.

I hope you enjoy this issue of DECIMUS.

Paul Avis

Chairman

A photograph of Trinity Church in Tunbridge Wells, a Gothic Revival style building with a prominent square tower and multiple spires. The church is constructed of dark stone and features large Gothic windows. A blue door is visible at the base of the tower. The sky is overcast and grey. A street lamp and a sign are visible in the foreground to the right.

Trinity Theatre & Arts Centre

Trinity Church, in Tunbridge Wells, was designed by Decimus Burton in 1827 in what was described by architectural historian, Professor Mark Girouard, as the “creative Gothic” style. In Victorian times the church was well attended, but in 1974, the Church Commissioners considered the building “redundant to pastoral needs”. It was largely through the efforts of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society that Trinity was saved and converted into a community and arts centre. It is an excellent example of one of Decimus Burton’s buildings being adapted to meet changing needs.

For further information, visit www.trinitytheatre.net.

December 2022

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THE DECIMUS BURTON MUSEUM

A vision

By Paul Avis

Most of us who watched the recent televising of Queen Elizabeth II's funeral cannot have helped but notice the important place that the Wellington Arch played in the ceremonial proceedings. This triumphal arch, designed by Decimus Burton, suddenly took centre stage, and was seen by an audience of some 4 billion viewers.

Despite this, many feel the name Decimus Burton does not have the recognition it deserves, which is why there is the current project to create a Decimus Burton Museum. Burton was a unique architect whose career spanned the Georgian,



Fig 1. 9 & 10 Crescent Road (1827 on), home of the future Decimus Burton Museum.
Photo copyright Paul Avis

Regency and Victorian periods, and whose projects embraced a range of genres and styles. Not only did he design many villas, terraces and buildings in Regents' Park, including the Zoological Gardens

for example, but he also designed such iconic projects as The Palm House and Temperate House at Kew, The Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall, Phoenix Park in Dublin and the new towns of Calverley in



Fig 2. The Palm House, Kew Gardens (1845-8). Photo copyright Thomas Erskine



Fig 3. The Holme, Regent's Park (1817-18). Photo copyright Thomas Erskine



Fig 4. The Ionic Screen, Hyde Park (1824-25). Photo copyright Thomas Erskine



Fig 5. The Athenaeum Club, Pall Mall (1827-30). Photo copyright Paul Avis



Fig 6. Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park (1826-41). Collection of Paul Avis.

Tunbridge Wells and Fleetwood. The last two were innovations in town planning at the time. Within a career that lasted a half century he also designed country houses such as Grimston Park and Holwood House, as well as churches and

public buildings with several of his structures incorporating some of the technological and scientific wonders of the day. Indeed, there is a lot we can still learn from this remarkable architect that has a relevance in today's society.



Fig 7. Calverley Park Crescent, Tunbridge Wells (1827 on). Photo copyright Diana Blackwell.



Fig 8. Holwood House, Kent (1823-6). Photo copyright Simon Gooch.

When Tunbridge Wells Borough Council recently announced that they were looking at alternative uses for two council owned buildings designed by Decimus Burton as part of a programme to maximise community assets and raise much needed cash, it became apparent that here was an opportunity to create a museum of both local and national importance and one that could benefit communities beyond Tunbridge Wells by using Burton's connections and work throughout the country.

A Decimus Burton Museum located in Tunbridge Wells, which is less than an hour both from London and St Leonards (all locations containing examples of the architects work), is a good choice and one that would provide residents, students and tourists alike with a wide variety of educational

programmes and visitor attractions. In addition, the museum would not only help to realise one of the goals of The Decimus Burton Society - that of establishing a central archive of the architect's life and work through existing collections - but through its collections and educational programmes, could benefit communities throughout the country where Burton's work can be found. Archive material, exhibitions and study programmes could travel to, for example, Fleetwood, Phoenix Park, the RIBA, Kew Gardens, and St Leonards.

At the end of March this year Tunbridge Wells Borough Council gave the local Civic Society a year to develop a business plan to repurpose the two remaining semi-detached Regency Villas designed by Decimus Burton in 1829, and the car park in front, into

a museum. The two listed buildings in the centre of town are currently vacant save for one room which is occupied by the Ambulance Brigade on a short term lease.

The Civic Society was chosen to take the lead for the project not only because it contains several members of The Decimus Burton Society, but also because it has an established track record of having saved another building by Burton - Trinity Church - in the town. This

building has been re-purposed into a successful theatre, and after 40 years, Trinity Theatre is today undergoing further development which will add a heritage centre within the church's tower (see separate article in this issue p.66 for an update on the Trinity project).

In April a project management team was set up to develop the business plan for the museum. This team has grown in time and includes experts and advisers in

The Decimus Burton Museum's vision is that:

“By learning from the past, and inspired by the work of Decimus Burton, we will offer our visitors rewarding experiences that will encourage generations to change out futures for the better.”

Our aims and objectives are:-

- To conserve and restore 9 & 10 Crescent Road, the last surviving pair of Regency houses in Calverley terrace designed by Decimus Burton.
- To involve visitors of all ages in educational opportunities centred around Tunbridge Wells' social, cultural and architectural history, and its conservation.
- To record and celebrate the work of Decimus Burton as an innovative architect and pioneer of town planning.
- To establish the national archive of Decimus Burton's life and work within the museum, and recognise his influence within the UK and Ireland.
- To assist in the promotion of Tunbridge Wells as a tourist destination.
- To celebrate and promote sustainability and creativity through good design within the built environment.

the fields of project management, education, museum design and funding, conservation architecture, quantity surveying, banking and insurance, and local history as well as some of the leading recognised authorities on the life and work of Decimus Burton.

Since April the project team has carried out a detailed measured and photographic survey of the buildings as well as having produced a report on the condition of the building, which together with a plan for the proposed use and layout of the buildings has

been used to put costs to the work that would be necessary to set up the museum. The building has also been valued. Alongside this, the team has carried out extensive research into comparable museums, local conditions, set up and running costs. This information has been used to develop a business plan with projections being subjected to variations and influences, especially with regard to increases in building and running costs as well as fluctuations in visitor numbers.

At the end of August through to

Fig 9. The leaflet from the museum exhibition at Trinity. Copyright Philip Whitbourn

Our Vision for Calverley Terrace

Decimus Burton Museum and Study Centre

Henry Keene Room
Regency Museum Bedroom, named after former resident of No.5, Henry George Keene (1791-1864), Arabic scholar and author of "Persian Fables". Grandson of the architect Henry Keene.

Adelaide Basevi Room
Museum/Function Room named after former resident of No.5, Adelaide Basevi (1795-1803), first cousin of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

Caricature of Disraeli from Vanity Fair 1869

No.9 Dining Room
Part of the Regency Museum, but also capable of use, possibly in conjunction with the Drawing Room, for a Dining or Cream Tea experience.

No.9 Drawing Room
An authentic Regency Museum interior that can also serve as a venue for Chamber Music recitals, receptions, meetings, and other events.

Display Gallery and Lecture Room

Henry Keene Room

Display Gallery and Lecture Room

Adelaide Basevi Room

Archives and Study Area

Archive and Study Area

Meeting Room

Education Room

Education Room
For use by visiting groups of students or school children. Below: Decimus Burton's National School of 1834, the foundation stone of which was laid by Princess Victoria.

1829 Archival Plan of Calverley Terrace

1834 National School, Green Street

Shop
Selling a range of local publications, postcards and souvenirs, currently located in *The Annulet*.

Decimus Burton
Architectural and Historical Society

Decimus Cafe
A "go-to" place to meet for coffee. Proposed reinstatement of Regency style canopy on front, and creation of outdoor cafe-seating area in front garden.

Shop

Decimus Cafe

Town Planning Room
Decimus Burton's 1828 Calverley New Town, and other Planning projects.

Social History Room
NUWS shop at nearby 14 Crescent Road.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY
14 Crescent Road, c.1910
Copyright: North on the left

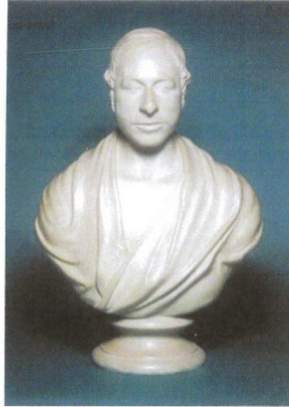
Exhibition Room
For changing exhibitions, or used for functions in conjunction with the Dining Room. Named after the novelist and former resident of No.10, Catherine, Lady Sturges.

1829 Calverley Terrace
showing canopies reinstated



Left: Portraits of The Revd. Henry Keene and his wife Anne in 1833

Revd. Henry George Keene, MA, (1787-1864), nephew of the 1st Baron Harris, and grandson of the eminent architect Henry Keene, and sometime resident of no.9, was a man of many parts. His career started as a soldier, serving in a regiment in India that formed part of a brigade commanded by Wellington. Then, after joining the East India Company, he became a Registrar of a District Court. In 1811 he entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, graduating in 1815, becoming a Fellow in 1817, and being ordained as a priest in 1819. Accomplished in Arabic and Persian, his published books included *Persian Fables* (1833) and *Persian Stories* (1835), a copy of one of which might be on display in the room.



Above Centre: Bust of George Basevi, FRS, FSA, architect of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and brother of **Adelaide Basevi (1795-1885)**, a former resident of no.9, and first cousin of Disraeli. Adelaide married Tycho Wing, and lived at n.9 after his death.
Above Right: Vincent Wing (1619-1668) of the illustrious Wing Family

Fig 10. Portraits of The Revd. Henry George Keene, MA, (1787-1864) and his wife Anne in 1833. Considerable research has been carried out into the buildings' occupants and neighbours, providing a wealth of material for local schools' projects that would fit within the national curriculum as well as being of general interest to visitors. Copyright Philip Whitbourn

the end of Heritage Open Days in September, a series of events were held at Trinity Theatre to promote the museum project to the public. These included an exhibition, an illustrated talk and a series of guided walks taking visitors around some of Decimus Burton's buildings in Tunbridge Wells (of which, there are more than seventy). The exhibition was accompanied by a short questionnaire for visitors to fill out. This proved an invaluable source

for market research and resulted in some changes to the layout and content of the museum. The questionnaire also showed that visitors to the exhibition were not only locals, with some coming from London and St Leonards. The management group is proposing to hold another exhibition early in the new year in a different venue within the town to further engage with the public. It is also planning a media campaign to help promote the project.

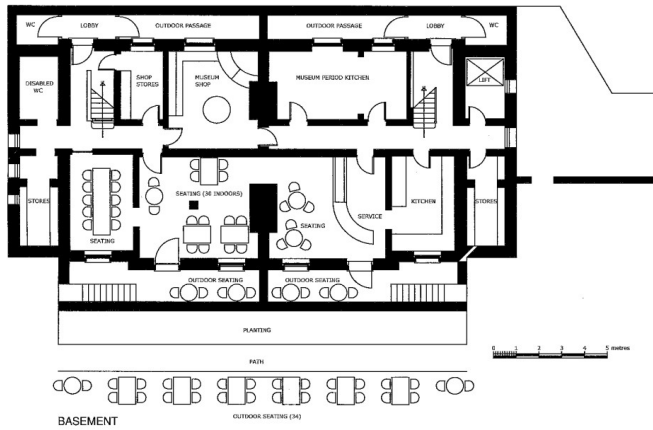


Fig 11. The Decimus Burton Museum – proposed basement plan. Copyright Paul Avis

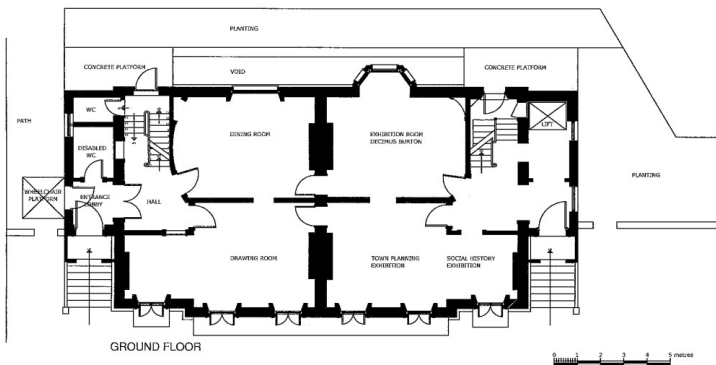


Fig 12. The Decimus Burton Museum – proposed ground floor plan. Copyright Paul Avis

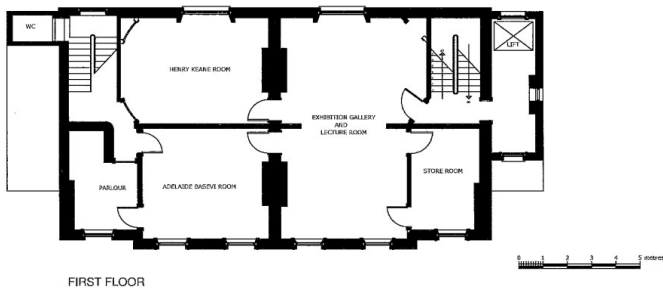
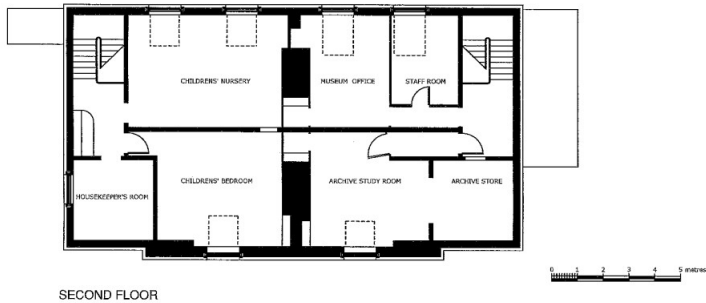


Fig 13. The Decimus Burton Museum – proposed first floor plan. Copyright Paul Avis



SECOND FLOOR

Fig 14. The Decimus Burton Museum – proposed second floor plan. Copyright Paul Avis

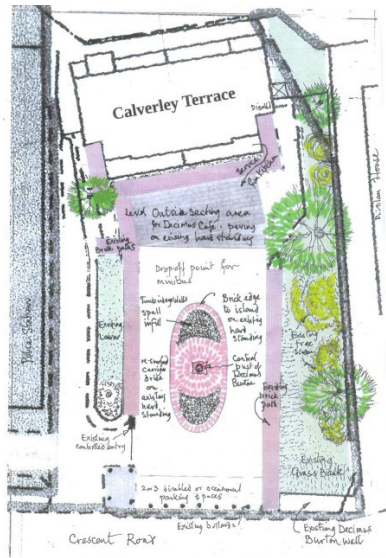


Fig 15. The Decimus Burton Museum – proposed front garden plan. The existing car park provides the opportunity to provide a sensory garden for the public in the centre of town. Around the oval planting bed which contains a statue or bust of Decimus Burton is a paved turning circle with disabled parking at the front. Copyright Philip Whitbourn

The proposed layout of the museum:

In general, the ground and first floors of the existing Grade II listed buildings are in a good condition

and retain many original features. The basement too is generally in a good condition. The second floor

has, over the years, been divided up into a series of smaller offices, and will require more work. The floor plans illustrate the proposed layout of the museum buildings and garden/car park.

The basic principle is that No9 Crescent Rd will be turned into a furnished museum illustrating the life and times of some of its occupants when it was built in 1829.

The light and airy semi-basement of both Nos9 & 10 will accommodate further period rooms, such as the kitchen, as well as the museum tea room, shop and stores. No10 will comprise on the ground, first and second floors exhibition spaces displaying not only the life and work of Decimus Burton, but local social history, and the important role that Burton played in the development of town planning at a national level. There is also the opportunity to show how current practices in architecture, design, engineering, landscaping and town planning relate to those of Burton's time, through a range of media from audio visual to models, photogrammetry and virtual reality. This approach to exhibitions will make the attractions accessible to a much wider audience including those with special needs.

It is often difficult visualising just from plans how buildings can be transformed or re-purposed. In this case, however, we have a relevant museum in the form of the Dickens Museum in Doughty Street, London, which shares many features with the Decimus Burton Museum, is proportionally very similar, and as Dickens moved there in 1837 can be considered of a similar period when it comes to interiors. I should, however, point out that it is proposed to furnish the museum in Tunbridge Wells in a late Regency style as opposed to the early Victorian style of the Doughty Street building. Nevertheless, the following images taken at a recent visit to the Dickens Museum should serve to give you a good idea of how the Decimus Burton Museum might look.

So let me take you on a tour of the period rooms. We enter the museum via the lobby in the entrance hall of Number 9 crescent Road. Wheelchair users will have access to the entrance via an electric platform on the side of the entrance. Inside, you will be greeted by a view similar to that in Fig 16. Our entrance door is to the left. The door at the end of the hall will take you to the outside, where there is a narrow courtyard garden

Fig 16. The entrance hall of The Dickens Museum, London. Photo copyright Paul Avis



separated from a town car park by decorative trelliswork (trelliswork was often employed by Burton in his projects). The stairs will take you up to the first floor bedrooms, and up another level to the nursery, children's bedroom and housekeeper's room. Behind these stairs is a further set that will take you down to the period kitchen, museum shop and tea room. A lift, located in number 10 is planned to access the other floors. If you walk through the door by the stairs on your right we can continue our tour. You will now enter the dining room.

The dining room has an interesting curved end wall with an original

curved door and corner cupboard. The table has been set for the family of the house, whose stories will be told, along with those of their staff, via a combination of traditional and audio-visual displays.

The Tunbridge Wells Civic Society is known for producing a range of local history books, and has researched not only the house, but the lives of many of its occupants as well as other local characters which will add an educational richness to the story that the museum has to tell. The society is currently working with one primary school on a local history project that fits within the national curriculum



Fig 17. The dining room with its curved door and matching display cabinet.
Photo copyright Paul Avis



Fig 18. The study. Photo copyright Paul Avis

and which will form part of a book being developed jointly.

Continuing to the room next door, we have the family's drawing room and a smaller study area.



Fig 19. The drawing room looking towards the street. Photo copyright Paul Avis

Throughout the rooms, beautifully presented information sheets will highlight particular exhibits relevant to the former occupants, local history and a wider social context. At certain times of the year some of the rooms, like the drawing

room can have a period theme, such as Christmas. A piano could provide the opportunity for musical events and entertainment. Despite the wealth of interesting exhibits, the rooms have plenty of space for visitors to move around.



Fig 20. The drawing room, set for Christmas. Photo copyright Paul Avis



Fig 21. The drawing room, with piano for entertainment. Photo copyright Paul Avis



Fig 22. Henry Keane's bedroom, complete with slipper bath? Photo copyright Paul Avis

On the first floor we have two bedrooms belonging to the master and mistress of the house. The rear bedroom we have called the Henry Keane Room after a former resident

of No9, and the front bedroom, with its parlour, we have called the Adelaide Basevi Room after another resident of No9.



Fig 23. Adelaide Basevi's bedroom, with her clothes laid out on the bed? Photo copyright Paul Avis



Fig 24. the Children's nursery. Photo copyright Paul Avis

Throughout the museum are exhibits where visitors and students can learn not only about Decimus Burton on a national and local level, but also where they can learn about their local history. There are plenty of opportunities for local residents and students to participate in the daily life of the museum, as guides for example or assisting with workshop's archives and exhibitions. It is planned to have some guided tours taken by volunteers in period costume. Linking up with the acting talent of the nearby Trinity Theatre and its educational programme could also provide participants with an ideal stage set whether for guided tours, small scale theatrical productions or book readings.

Continuing up to the second floor we have the children's nursery at the back with their bedroom and housekeeper's rooms at the

front. Tunbridge Wells has a high proportion of schools with many local primary schools, and as an integral part of the social history programme for the museum we will be emphasising the roles that staff and younger family members played in the history of the buildings, thus making the experience more relevant to a wider age group.

Back in the basement, our tour takes in the period kitchen, which has the ability to double up as a study/workshop room. Visitors can then visit the museum shop and get light refreshments at the tea room. We call it a tea room as this is the period when afternoon tea started to become popular. The opportunity to offer visitors an afternoon tea experience with staff in black and white dress, will help to set it aside from the competition of local cafes.



Fig 25 - The period kitchen, which can double up for group workshops.
Photo copyright Paul Avis

No10 Crescent Road is primarily dedicated to exhibitions, the archives, museum office, staff room and stores. On the ground floor is the main Decimus Burton exhibition space with further spaces illustrating his important contribution to town planning as well as local social history. On the

first floor is a large exhibition space for specialist exhibitions, which can double up for lectures and talks, while on the second floor is the museum office, Decimus Burton archives and study room, and staff room. Throughout the buildings there is ample storage and toilets.



Fig 26. Architectural models for sale in the museum shop. Photo copyright Paul Avis

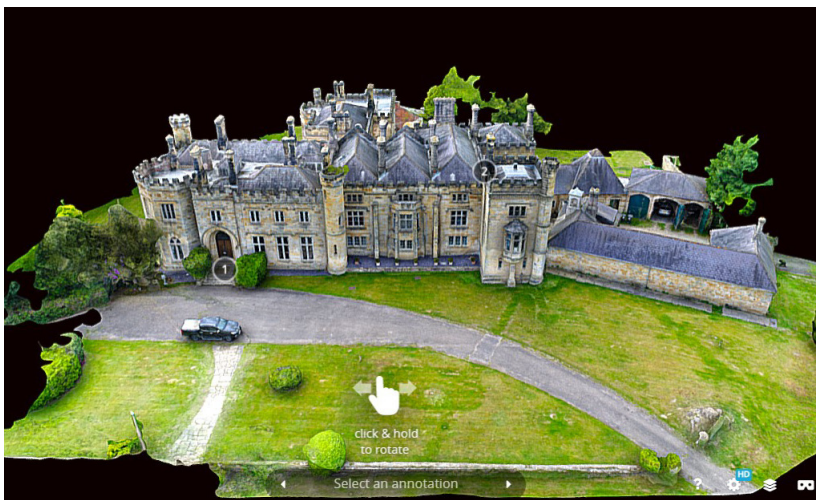


Fig 27. Mabledon, Decimus Burton's childhood home. A photogrammetry reproduction using drones that gives access to projects remotely allowing visitors to do a walk through without having to visit the building. This technology opens up tremendous education opportunities as well as accessibility to individuals that might otherwise have difficulty in experiencing an exhibit. Copyright Blayne Jackson.



Fig 28. Using photogrammetry to help local residents achieve a better understanding of current planning issues that might affect them. 1 and 2 show two sites in the centre of Tunbridge Wells that have been the subject of recent applications. Copyright Blayne Jackson.



Fig 29. Decimus Burton was a pioneer in town planning long before the profession existed.

This early view of his scheme for the Town of Fleetwood is an example of a design for a town that considers not only the built environment, but the services and infrastructure that is needed when creating large developments. We have a great deal to learn from the past.

Copyright Fleetwood Museum.



Fig 30. An exhibition room showcasing a range of exhibits on not only the built environment but the social history of the locality. Burton's Caverley New Town included housing, shops, a market, school, Town Hall, Baths and Library, which could provide a wealth of material for exhibits. Photo copyright I Royal Crescent, Bath.

With three months to go before the presentation of the business plan to the council, the team are continuing their efforts on attracting sponsorship for the project. Initial enquiries with the Heritage Lottery Fund have indicated that they believe it to be a project that would qualify for the higher level of funding (ie £250K - £5M), and we have already received pledges from organisations and individuals for museum exhibits. Understandably, the year that the council has given the team to develop a business plan is very little time to secure sponsorship for the project. Consequently, we are probably left with two scenarios: either an individual or organisation comes forward with the funds to purchase the buildings on behalf of the museum trust, which would allow it to raise the necessary capital to finance the project from funding institutions; or sufficient pledges of financial support are obtained to convince the council to enter into a partnership arrangement with the museum trust that would enable the project to proceed. Without financial support/pledges for the project it is likely that the council will sell the buildings for development, and this once in a lifetime opportunity to provide a museum of local and national importance will be lost forever.

By Paul Avis, Chairman of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society and The Decimus Burton Society



THE WELLINGTON ARCH

Part 2 - beneficial reuse
1999-2012

By Alasdair Glass

This is the second of two articles in *Decimus*, the first of which in Issue 3 described the external conservation of the arch.

Decimus Burton's initial modest proposals showed the interior serving as a dairy and dairymaid's cottage for the herd in Hyde Park. As built, it was intended as gatekeepers' lodges for Constitution Hill and Buckingham Palace. The northern leg was used as a police station, reputedly the smallest in London, after the arch was moved in the 1880s. The remaining lodge became uninhabitable between the wars and police use was ended by the insertion of the ventilation

shaft for the Hyde Park Corner underpass in the early 1960s, which blocked the windows on the north side of the room over the archway. The basement was used to control landlines for outside broadcasting from Buckingham Palace and The Mall until made obsolete by satellite transmission.

Reuse had been considered over the years by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) Commercial use was unlikely because of its position and planning constraints and the costs of conversion and future maintenance. Responsibility for the arch was transferred to English Heritage (EH) in 1999 with the expectation it would try to use it, not least to generate income for its maintenance.

When EH took responsibility for the Wellington and Marble Arches it took on 45 other London statues and monuments, including at Hyde Park Corner the Wellington Monument, the Royal Artillery Memorial and the Machine Gun Corps Memorial. EH's first statutory duty was to conserve and maintain the historic properties it managed; its second was to make them accessible and enjoyable to the public. Having fulfilled its first duty to the arch by repairing and conserving it, the second duty to all the statues and monuments could

be met by using the arch as a 'visitor centre' for them, all being within a mile and a half of the arch.

An interpretive exhibition supported by retailing would not alone have made the arch viable as a visitor attraction, let alone produce a surplus of income over operating costs to fund future maintenance. The ability to create access to viewing galleries over the porticoes and using the arch for hospitality functions and events could make it viable.

First Work Programme, 1999 – 2001

Work to make the arch usable was coordinated with its external conservation and done in accordance with the conservation plan, which recognised the special interest of the interior and placed a premium on its conservation.

At third floor level there was a 5m x 8m double-height room over the archway. Each of the five floors of the southern leg consists of a 5m x 5m room linked by a staircase, plus a small secondary compartment which had become a WC. The northern leg had been made virtually unusable by the insertion of the ventilation shaft for the underpass but its staircase was still intact. The interior was of much less significance than

the exterior but with a functional character worthy of retention, particularly the double-height room over the arch. It was aimed to demonstrate Burton's ingenuity in providing daylight while retaining a monumental exterior and his

use of exposed structural cast iron members, not just to support brick jack-arches but as window mullions behind the ornamental scrolls at second floor level and in carrying the stone staircases across windows.



Fig 1. The Wellington Arch from the northwest, with reinstated fire exit on the left.
Copyright Paul Avis

The admissions point and a small shop were on the ground floor of the southern leg. The first floor became a space for temporary exhibitions and the second floor housed a thematic exhibition on all London statues and monuments, not just those under EH's management. The large and small rooms on the third floor contained an exhibition on the history of the arch and Hyde Park Corner. These had a dual purpose as a functions room and ante room. A small servery and a furniture store were formed in the same level of the northern leg and WCs for staff and functions use created in the basement of the southern leg. A fractured volute from the southeast corner pilaster which had had to be replaced was put on display in a recess at the top of the staircase.

Reuse of the arch was an exemplar for equal access. Westminster City Council, which maintains the ground within the traffic roundabout, agreed to raising the pathway so that level access could be achieved through the southern side entrance. The secondary compartments in the southern leg were just large enough to fit in a wheelchair-sized 8 person lift. The narrowness and steepness of the staircase made two-way traffic impractical and all visitors were directed straight up to the third floor by the lift, to descend

by the stairs if able to. The lift was engineered as an evacuation lift and the staircase in the northern leg provided an alternative means of escape, with the ground floor doorway which had been reduced to a window being reinstated.

Level access to the viewing galleries over the porticoes was achieved by inserting a gallery in the double-height room over the archway, with newly-cut doorways to outside. Such an intervention was not to be undertaken lightly, but creation of this access was fundamental to the successful reuse of the arch. The design solution, while necessarily impacting on the building, did nothing to compromise its real architectural quality and, as was later proved, the internal access gallery was readily reversible.

The gallery ran around three sides of the room, reached by a staircase on the south side and a platform lift in the southeast corner. It was designed as a clearly modern insertion with steel channel beams and bearers and timber decking. The doorways to the viewing galleries were both offset to the north, avoiding the suggestion of originality which doors on the centreline could have made. This allowed for ramped access to platforms in the southern corners, set at a level which allowed wheelchair users to look over the

blocking course while still being safe for standing visitors and for steps up to platforms in the northern corners.

The doorways were set as low as possible so that they are not visible from ground level within the traffic island and scarcely from the surrounding pavements. The practical decision to reroof the porticos with asphalt rather than lead sheet on benching helped to achieve this and allowed the heads of the doors to align with a stone joint. The new doorways allowed the blocking of the very prominent and unsightly doorway in the north side of the attic which had been the only access to the cornice level roofs. As well as views over London, the galleries gave a close-up view of the front of the quadriga horses.

If the arch had remained unused, the service installations required would simply have been replacement of access lighting and installation of automatic fire and intruder detection systems. Reuse required a budget-busting panoply of services including CCTV, communication systems, power and a full lighting installation. Cold water services were run throughout the basement and to the servery, with local water heating. The standing-height void under the quadriga provided a readily accessible plant room in

which to install a condensing gas boiler, innovatory at the time so the plume of steam led to several calls to the fire brigade that the arch was on fire! The wet heating system was sized to prevent condensation when the arch was unoccupied and to provide comfort conditions for visitors in winter clothing. Additional electric heating was provided for the custodians' areas and for functions use. Mechanical extraction was provided for the archway room when in functions use, the servery and the basement washrooms.

The arch came to EH with non-working floodlighting, probably dating from the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977; a new architectural lighting scheme was designed by Maurice Brill. Such schemes can either just illuminate the building or create a different effect. The scheme inverted the daytime effect, illuminating the underside of the cornice and the ceilings and back walls of the porticos so the columns are silhouetted against them. Because of the high levels of ambient light from the street lighting and the unpleasant sodium floodlighting of Apsley House, the scheme emphasised the quadriga, which was above the worst effects of these and visible from as far away as the Serpentine Bridge. The plain attic was illuminated sufficiently to give visual support to the quadriga

and separate it from the body of the arch. The quadriga itself was dramatically lit with colour to emphasise the subject matter, with the bellies of the horses lit by the red flames of war and the angel of peace given an ethereal blue-white light. A trial set up over Christmas and the Millennium New Year incorporated an over-theatrical flickering flame effect which rightly was considered tasteless.

Second Work Programme, 2011-2012

The original work to make the arch useable was underfunded and suffered from a lack of interest within EH, let alone understanding of its potential, except for the project team and the Chairman, Sir Jocelyn Stevens. The subsequent phase, after a decade of use, aimed to provide enhanced facilities, at the expense of more substantial and irreversible intervention.

DCMS transferred the arch to EH with a dowry of £1.5m for its repair, spread equally over two financial years, which though agreed on a net cost basis was paid as being inclusive of VAT, immediately reducing the effective budget by £225k. Partly to offset this, and to allow the quick start on site required by the given annual spread of expenditure, as much as possible of the design work was undertaken

in-house. Fortunately the extent of external work required was less than expected, mainly because the entablatures over the porticos did not require rebuilding. Additional funding was found for the new architectural lighting scheme but none was available initially for internal work and interpretation.

The design team was obstructed by Historic Properties Directorate, which would operate the arch, failing to engage in the project, not making a business plan, providing a user requirement for visitor operations and hospitality or preparing an interpretation plan, let alone nominating an individual to act as the user client. Fortunately, the in-house team had designed visitor centres for other EH properties and was familiar with operational requirements, but it was not so capable with regards to hospitality. Since EH had abandoned the attempt to implement internal recharging, it was able to work more flexibly than consultants could, designing things which had not yet been authorised.

When Historic Properties finally engaged, they insisted that the obvious visitor entrance under the archway could not be used as it would have to be closed, briefly, twice a day for safety while the Household Cavalry rode through on their way between Knightsbridge



Fig 2. The Household Cavalry riding through the Wellington Arch. Copyright Harry Reid

Barracks and Horseguards. This required visitors to be directed round to the southern side entrance

where people waiting for the lift obstructed those queuing for admission.

The basement floor of the southern leg required complete replacement but we were specifically ordered not to install the drainage which would be required for WCs for staff and hospitality use, which I instructed to be done regardless. While the quadriga was scaffolded for conservation, I also took the

initiative to have fibreglass casts made of some of the key features of the quadriga which could not be seen close up, for eventual display in the exhibition areas.

The savings from the budget for external conservation were insufficient to provide a flexible

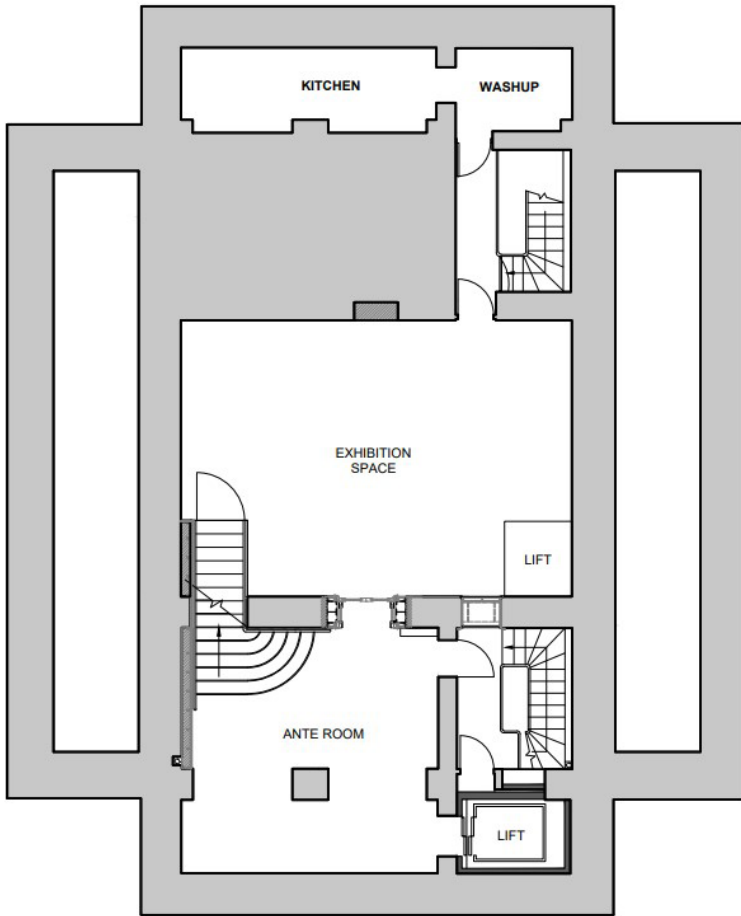


Fig 3. Third floor plan after second phase. Copyright Purcell

dual-purpose lighting system for both exhibition and hospitality purposes and it was prioritised for exhibition use, leaving a harsh and unflattering light for hospitality. Historic Properties initially refused to purchase equipment for the servery, saying that the caterers could bring it up in the lift each time which, apart from the cost, would have meant closing the arch to ordinary visitors for longer. They only relented when it was pointed out that the servery fire door and its frame would have to be taken out each time to get the equipment in and then again to take it away.

The second phase of work, designed by Purcell Miller Tritton (now Purcell), provided the dual-purpose facility which might have been realised ten years earlier if Historic Properties had got its act together as client and sufficient funding had been forthcoming. The major alteration was to replace the access gallery in the room over the archway with a full floor at the same level, reached by a dramatic new staircase to draw people up from the ante room.



Fig 4. Graphic of ante-room with new staircase to mezzanine and doorway to exhibition space. Copyright Purcell



Fig 5. Graphic of dual-purpose mezzanine room, with doorway to viewing gallery over the portico.
Copyright Purcell



Fig. 6 Third floor exhibition space, with door to escape stairs and hospitality kitchen.
Copyright Purcell

The mezzanine room on the level of the external viewing galleries was optimised as a dual purpose space for functions and art exhibitions. The unlit room under the inserted mezzanine provided a good-sized space for temporary exhibitions, to attract repeat visitors and

provide an additional attraction for hospitality guests. The narrow space previously used to store hospitality furniture was added to the existing servery to form a preparation kitchen and wash-up facility, although inconveniently a floor below the mezzanine room

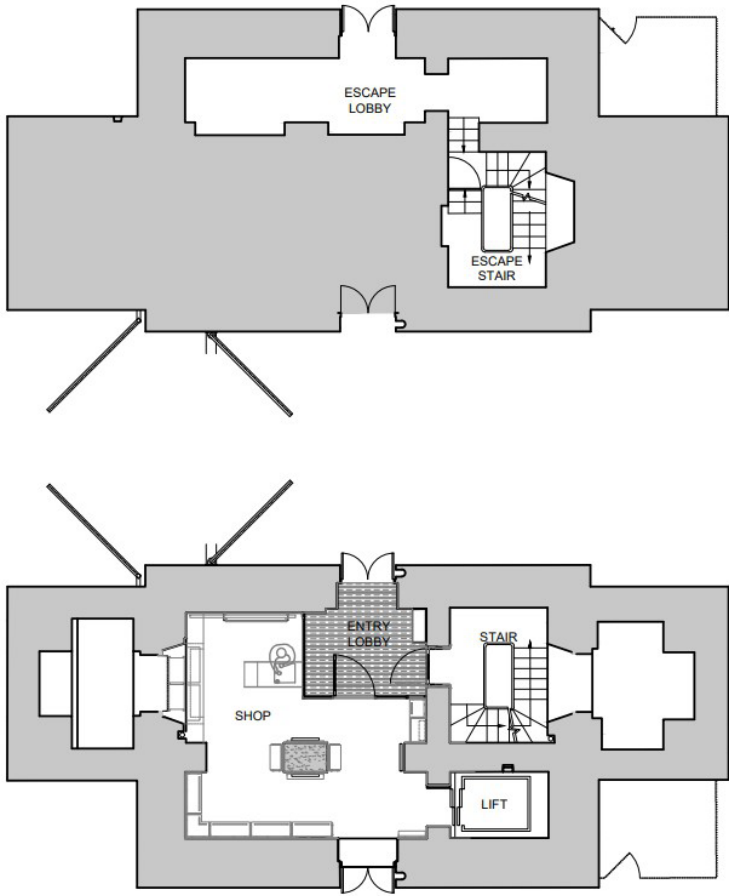


Fig 7. Third floor plan after second phase, with re-ordered shop. Copyright Purcell

and reached though the temporary exhibition space, with the platform lift doubling up as a dumb waiter.

The second floor room which originally held a general exhibition on London statues and monuments now largely houses an exhibition relating to the Royal Artillery Memorial, which shares the traffic island with the arch, but has been partitioned to provide a replacement store for hospitality furniture. The small room on the first floor, originally intended for temporary exhibitions, now has a permanent exhibition on the history of Hyde Park Corner and the arch, displaying the casts of key elements of the quadriga.

The shop on the ground floor was reorganised to put the entrance in its logical place under the archway, which also improved it as the entrance for hospitality events. The basement lavatories, originally installed on a shoe-string, were refurbished to the standard expected of a central London hospitality venue.

The loss of the original character of the double-height room over the archway, replaced by two characterless low-ceilinged spaces, is regrettable, particularly as an enhanced lighting system and comfort cooling could have been introduced without major

alterations. It was considered acceptable for the potential benefit of a more desirable attraction for visitors and hospitality generating an increased revenue stream for the future maintenance of the arch.

By Alasdair Glass, retired historic buildings architect. His responsibilities as a project manager and then Director of Heritage Design at DOE/PSA London Region included the Wellington Arch. He was English Heritage's project director for its external conservation and for the first phase of its reuse.

This article largely derives from his article 'The Conservation and Beneficial Use of the Wellington Arch, London' in Transactions of the Association for Studies in the Conservation of Historic Buildings Volume 24, for 1999

GRIMSTON PARK, TADCASTER

A Decimus Burton country house

By John Fielden

History of the site and its owners up to 1812

The name Grimston confirms the age of the site just south of Tadcaster in Yorkshire, as of Viking origin, being occupied by a certain Grim. The Domesday Book records a small community that had survived the Harrying of the North in 1069-70, when much of the surrounding area was laid waste.

In the following centuries the Grimston estate had many noble and monastic owners. The house must have been reasonably substantial in 1601 when King James VI of Scotland stayed with its owner Sir Edward Stanhope on his way

south to be crowned in London. The Stanhopes sold the estate in the early 1700's to the Garforth family, wealthy York merchants who were patrons of John Carr, the York architect. Although Grimston does not figure in the principal biography of John Carr, it is widely believed that he was responsible for building the manor house at Grimston for the Garforths. In 1790 the estate was sold to the Townend family, but they got into financial difficulties after the Napoleonic war ended and put the house on the market. The sale particulars in 1815 confirm that John Carr was the architect, although Figure 1 shows it being a relatively modest building.



Fig 1. Grimston House in 1839, designed by John Carr. Source and copyright © John Fielden Archive

The Sale of 1815 and ownership of the Howdens

In 1815 the executors of George Townend's estate sold Grimston to General Sir John Francis Cradock (1st Baron Howden (1759-1839), who changed his name to its alternative spelling Caradoc in 1831. General Cradock had seen service in Ireland, the West Indies and Egypt, and fought with the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular wars. He was also Governor of the Cape of Good Hope and of Gibraltar. On his death in 1839, the estate passed to his son Colonel John Hobart Caradoc.

Second Lord Howden and his wife

John Hobart Caradoc, the 2nd Baron Howden (1799-1873) was equerry to HRH the Duchess of Kent (Queen Victoria's mother) and served in the Diplomatic Service in Russia. In January 1830 he married Princess Catherine Bagration, a relation of the Tsar of Russia. He spent his time between London, Paris and Grimston Park. Lord Howden also had estates near Hartlepool and part of these formed the Wingate Grange Colliery which gave him a considerable increase in wealth. This allowed him to extensively develop the Grimston mansion house and gardens, between

1840 and 1843 into much of what remains today. The house was rebuilt in an Italianate style by Decimus Burton along with some of the gardens and pleasure grounds.

The second Lord Howden had been a very handsome man in his youth, which may explain his surprising marriage to Catherine Bagration, although she was 15 years his senior. She was extremely beautiful and notorious for having many lovers and dressing in flimsy revealing garments. Howden sought to attract her to Grimston by giving Burton the Italianate brief, possibly to remind her of St Petersburg. One of his buildings in particular, the Riding School, might have stirred her memories, as it has strong echoes of the Konnogvardeyski manege in St Petersburg.

Sadly she spent very little time at Grimston and Lord Howden was appointed Ambassador in turn to Argentina, Brazil and Spain from 1847 to 1858. Unsurprisingly, they divorced in 1850 and the Grimston estate was then sold to Albert Denison, the first Lord Londesborough.

Burton's plans

Using John Carr's house as a base Burton extended and enlarged it significantly. The north front has a classical seven bay façade

topped by a balustrade and fronted with an Ionic portico. (Fig 2) It is approached by a short drive that passes through two small classical lodges, each with a roof on which sits a heraldic knight holding a sword over the Howden motto *Traditus non victus*.

The south side (Fig 4) is quite different with a two storied long central decorative Ionic loggia, flanked by two smaller ones above jutting bays and was described by Pevsner as having a seaside atmosphere with its two tiers of balconies.. At either end of the southern façade are two Italianate towers; one containing a clock and the other a belvedere with a little tower bedroom. The very west end of the house had a striking conservatory notable for its glass dome and cast iron pillars shaped like palm trees, a tiny version of Burton's later work at Kew Gardens.

Internally the house was divided into two parts; the west end had a set of Palladian proportioned rooms for the family that included a long library with extensive oak bookcases facing south behind the loggia, an ornate Yellow Drawing Room with yellow silk wall coverings and Italian and Grecian wall panels and a magnificent painted ceiling; beyond it lie the Blue Drawing Room containing the original Chinese wallpaper, a

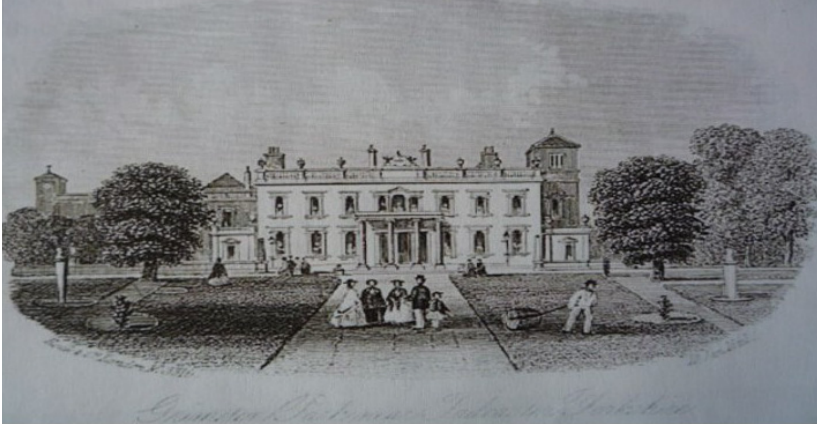


Fig 2. North facade of Grimston Park in 1861,
 designed by Decimus Burton 1840. Rock & Co, Vol. 10, No. 3316.
 Reproduced by permission of North Devon Athenaeum <https://northdevonatheneum.org.uk>

large Dining Room and a formal entrance hall. Throughout the doors are in mahogany and rosewood, while the marble fireplaces contain Minton tiles. Christopher Hussey suggested that, while the decoration of the rooms may have been altered by Lord Londesborough, their form and architectural details are Burtons.

The east end held all the traditional staff rooms set either side of a long stone passage. The full range includes a butler's pantry, servants' hall, still room, laundry and brewery.

The house had extensive grounds as shown in Figure 3. To the west a wandering woodland walk led to an impressive avenue called the

Emperor's Walk, containing the busts of the 12 Caesars culminating in an Ionic temple containing a large head of Napoleon. Sadly, these figures were dispersed in a sale in 1962. To the east beyond a stable yard lay the kitchen gardens held within tall brick walls containing flues that heated greenhouses for peaches and grapes.

The formal south garden shown in Figure 4 is much larger than its predecessor of 1846 in Figure 3 and was designed by William Andrews Nesfield, along with a rose garden to the west of the conservatory. Marble urns and statuary were purchased to adorn both the north and the south fronts.



Fig 3. Formal gardens to south and west of the house surrounded by pleasure grounds with The Emperors Walk to the west and an Ice House to the NE.
 Ordnance Survey 6" map, surveyed 1846-7, published 1849.
 Map reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland
<https://maps.nls.uk/>



Fig 4. South facade of Grimston Park mansion and formal terrace parterre in 1872, designed by William Andrews Nesfield.
 Source and copyright © John Fielden Archive



Fig 5. A Volunteer Festival in 1864 and the south front of the house.
Note the rough hewn stones at the eastern end below the clock tower.

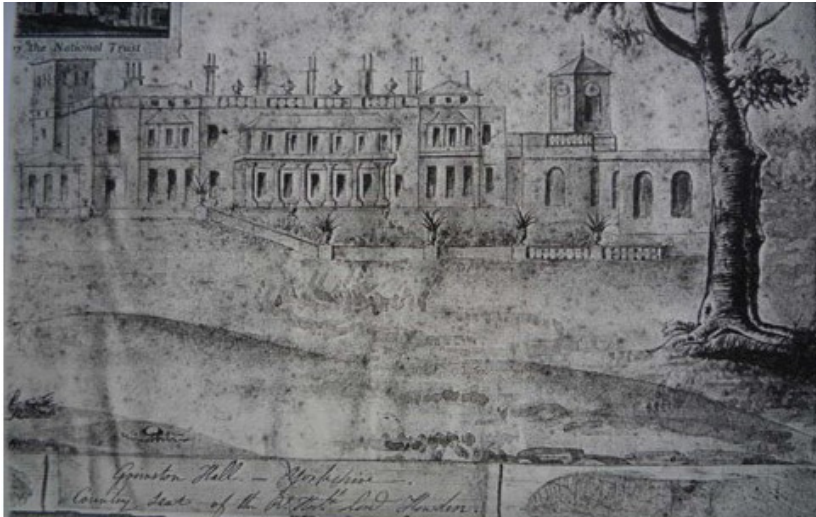


Fig 6. An earlier view from Lord Howden's time of the wing below the eastern tower.

Later owners after the Howdens

Between 1850 and 1980 the house was owned by two families, the Londesboroughs and the Fieldens. The Londesboroughs changed the façade at the east end of the south front and added another story of

bedrooms. (See the early version in Figures 5 and 6) and also added a Billiard Room and a Smoking Room linked to the main house by a curved passageway to the north east – well away from the ladies after dinner.

The first Lord Londesborough was a noted antiquarian and filled the house with treasures; he even employed an armourer to look after his fine collection of weapons and armoury. The second Lord Londesborough spent all his inheritance from his father and gave very large parties (hence the event shown in Fig 5). He sold the house and estate to the Fieldens in 1872 and the estate has since passed down to the present owners John and Thomas Fielden.

History of the house after the Fieldens

Three members of the Fielden family lived in the house between 1872 and 1960 when they moved out and sought tenants to lease it. At first they offered it to the National Trust, who, although interested, were a little overwhelmed by the costs of taking over nearby

Beningborough Hall. So they refused the offer and consequently a three day Country House Sale of the contents followed in 1962.

After 18 years of suffering poorly resourced and incompetent tenants the Fielden family finally sold the house and ten acres in 1980 to a developer, Trinity Services, who converted the building sensitively into 15 self-contained dwellings. The finest of these, the West Wing, contains the two main staterooms and is occupied by Lord and Lady Best.

Other Burton buildings on the Grimston Park Estate.

There are two significant Burton buildings in the curtilage of the house and the grounds of the park: the Riding School in the stable yard and the observatory tower.



Fig 7. The Riding School today, viewed from the stable yard.

The Riding School was a very large space for exercising horses but was severely modified in 1941

by the War Office to become an Operations Room for Fighter Command in the north of England.

Fig 8. The observatory tower in the park



The observatory tower was designed by Burton with an eclectic mix of styles. The overall design is Italianate but there is an Egyptian doorway (similar to that of his Pharos lighthouse in Fleetwood – see Fig 9 & 10), while the octagonal tempietto at the top is very Grecian.

The other listed buildings on the estate that are presumably by Burton include the West Lodge hidden beside the curved stone wall entrance and high stone pillars holding the large formal gates.

Also by Burton is Garden House which lies between the stable yard and the kitchen garden; it was formerly the head gardener's cottage but has been considerably extended firstly by Walter Brierley in the 1890's and latterly by the

Fielden family. At the east end of the long drive sits an attractive South Lodge in a cottage ornée style, that is similar to Farnborough Lodge on the Calverley Estate and is probably by Burton.

Conclusion

Both Christopher Hussey and Philip Miller are agreed in describing Grimston Park as one of Burton's finest country houses (if not the finest). We are fortunate in that its exterior and the best interior rooms have survived untouched after a sensitive internal conversion. In the house, the stable yard and the park Burton displays a wide range of styles which still delight today.

By John Fielden



Fig 9. Grimston Observatory tower



Fig 10. Fleetwood, Pharos lighthouse



Fig 11. The gates are a copy of a page from W&J Welldon's "The Smith's Right Hand" (1765), described as "A grand iron gate". They were probably made by John Walker of York (1801-1853) – see Gardener's Chronicle 1880, p.300, who was known to Decimus Burton as he worked with him at Kew.

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THE COLOSSEUM

Burton's lost masterpiece

By Paul Avis

Introduction:

From 1824-27 Decimus Burton designed one of the most remarkable buildings of his career, the Colosseum in Regent's Park for the surveyor and artist Thomas Horner. Unfortunately, the

building, which opened its doors to the public in 1829, is no longer with us, being demolished in 1875 to make way for housing, but from contemporary drawings, articles, guide books and illustrations we are able to get a sense of the uniqueness of this popular tourist attraction.



Fig 1 Coloured engraving of The Colosseum, Regent's Park from the 1820s.
From the author's collection.

This article is the first of three that will tell the story of the Colosseum and attempt to reconstruct how it might have looked when fully developed. The first article will tell the story of how and why the building came into being, and will describe some of its visitor attractions at the time. The second article will focus on the changes that the site underwent to maintain its appeal as a tourist attraction. The final article will concentrate on some of the architectural, engineering, technological and landscaping features that made Burton's Colosseum stand apart from other attractions of the day.

I was first drawn to the building when I saw Ackermann's fascinating interior view of the Colosseum (see front cover) which appears to show a circus like interior with tents, moving platforms, expansive panoramic views and a central tower that took visitors up to the dizzying heights of a dome and beyond. Considering Burton was only in his late 20s when he designed the building, it was a remarkable undertaking by any standards. As my research continued, I discovered that the building contained not only one of the largest panoramas in the city, but arguably one of the world's first passenger lifts, a range of greenhouses, caves, reproductions of ancient ruins,

and a wealth of other attractions. I started to reconstruct the site using a simple architectural modelling programme, at the same time collecting as much information on the project as I could.

Choosing a name:

So what was the Colosseum? One might be forgiven for thinking that the building was a reproduction of the famous ancient arena in Rome used for entertainment. The building was indeed built as a tourist attraction, initially for the very specific purpose of displaying the most ambitious panoramic view of London by Thomas Horner that the capital had seen. It was not, however, a reproduction of the Roman Colosseum, as the illustration opposite clearly shows. Instead, it was a building that was very close in appearance to the Pantheon in Rome as described by Andrea Palladio in "The Four Books of Architecture" a publication Burton would have been all too familiar with. The dome of the Pantheon was an ideal building form to exhibit Horner's panorama of London. The problem with the name was that James Wyatt had already designed a building called 'The Pantheon' on Oxford Street, which had opened in 1772 as a place of entertainment, and which was to be rebuilt as a bazaar by Sydney Smirke in 1833. Horner and Burton

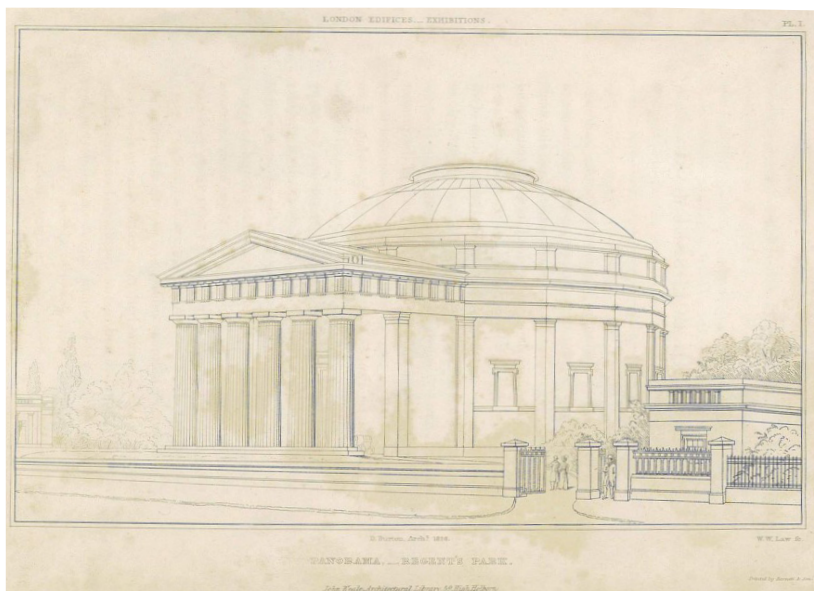


Fig 2 A print dated 1828 showing Decimus Burton's Colosseum. From the author's collection.

had to find another name to call their building. The Colosseum was eventually decided on because of the size of the structure.

The main players:

Thomas Horner (1785-1844) had been born to a Quaker family in Hull. He studied engineering and surveying under his brother-in-law, and in 1807 settled in London, where he undertook property valuations and surveys. In 1814 we find him advertising himself in South Wales as a "Pictorial Delineator of Estates", which made him a wealthy man. By 1820 he was back in London, where he saw an opportunity in the work that

was going on to repair the ball and cross atop the dome of St Paul's Cathedral. Horner constructed himself a temporary structure on top of the dome, from whence he produced a series of hundreds of sketches for a panorama of London, the likes of which had never been seen. N. Whittock, in his "Picture of London, 1838" provides an almost Dickensian vision of the process "That he might overcome the difficulties which the smoke of the vast city ordinarily presented, he (Horner) invariably commenced his labours immediately after sun-rise, before the lighting of the innumerable fires which pour out their dark and sullen clouds during the day, and spread a

mantle over this wide congregation of the dwellings of men, which only midnight can remove. On a fine summer morning, about four o'clock, London presents an extraordinary spectacle."

We will come back to the panorama shortly, but for now I will say something about some of the other key players in the project. Thomas Horner received financial backing from one Rowland Stephenson (1782-1856). In "The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832", ed. D.R.Fisher, 2009, Stephenson is described as a banker and MP for Leominster from February 1827 – February 1830. As a partner in the bank of Remington, Stephenson and Co, he invested heavily in Horner's Colosseum project. In December 1828 some unsecured advances that had been authorized by his assistant John Henry Lloyd came to the attention of the other partners, who suspended payment. Stephenson and Lloyd dramatically took ship to Savannah, Georgia, while the lord mayor of London issued a writ for their arrest, believing they had absconded with £200,000 in exchequer bills. Allegations filled the newspapers, and the bank was declared bankrupt. Stephenson was also bankrupted but managed to retain his parliamentary seat until 1830. Interestingly, although he was arrested and held in a

New York debtor's prison under the alias of Mr Smith, he was not extradited as he was not technically a convict. Instead he was released one month later, on 26th March 1829 after Lloyd had accepted full responsibility for the bank's losses and Stephenson's plight. Stephenson died in July 1856, and was buried in Bensalem, Bristol, Pennsylvania. An obituary described him as "formerly a banker in England", long since settled in Bristol, where "he was universally esteemed for his benevolence and kindness to the poor and distressed."

A 2021 article in Money Week Magazine suggests that Stephenson got the bank to underwrite the Colosseum project, and as his personal funds started to run low, he borrowed large amounts from the bank and client's accounts, altering the books to hide what he was doing. Rumours about the health of the bank started to circulate, and its reserves were soon depleted. Stephenson's clerk, a cousin (Lloyd), was aware of the discrepancies in the accounts as early as 1826 but had allowed them to continue while Stephenson repaid the loans. When it became apparent that he couldn't repay any longer, Stephenson stole a large amount of bank securities and fled. It was estimated that his frauds amounted to some £22.7m

in today's money.

Thomas Horner likewise was to join Stephenson in fleeing to America. He settled in New York in a state of poverty from 1829 until his death in 1844.

The effects of Stephenson's and Horner's flight on the Colosseum remain unexplained, but it wasn't a very good start to its history.

As to the contractors who built this impressive structure, there must have been few candidates at the time with the experience to take on such a complex project. The contract was awarded to the firm of Grissell and Peto (1830-1847), one of the largest building contractors in England. Grissell and Peto's projects included the Houses of Parliament, the Eastern

Counties Railway between Ely and Cambridge, Nelson's Column, a large portion of the South Eastern Railway, and Paddington Station. Despite their success, however, the partnership was mutually dissolved in 1847, supposedly because Grissell thought Peto took too many risks. Further research into those involved in the project remains to be done and will hopefully add to our understanding of the Colosseum.

A brief description of the Colosseum:

The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction, in its January 31st issue of 1829 describes the Colosseum as a sixteen sided polygon, 130 feet in diameter. Each of the angles contained a double square pilaster of the Doric



Fig 3. The front cover of the Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction, January 31st 1829. From the author's collection.

order supporting an entablature which continued around the whole building. Above the cornice was a blocking course, surmounted by an attic with its own cornice and sub-blocking to add to the height of the building. Above this was the cupola, which was supported by three receding scamilli, or steps, and finished with an open circle. The upper part of the circle is glazed and protected with fine wire work, while the lower part is covered with sheet copper.- see illustration. At ground level, the portico was “considered by architects as one of the best specimens of Graeco-Doric in the metropolis.” To either side was a pair of well-proportioned lodges and between the lodges and main building were gardens and conservatories enclosed by latticework. We are also reminded that this was a commercial enterprise and some of the construction materials employed were economically employed for maximum effect. Thus we find cast iron railings painted to imitate bronze and stuccoed surfaces set to resemble blocks of stone (a technique much favoured by John Nash in his work at Regent’s Park).

The official exhibition catalogue of 1829 provides us with additional information. It states that the building was commenced in 1824 by Mr Peto to the working drawings of Mr Decimus Burton. In this account

(initialled JB, probably for John Britton who was connected to other projects by Burton) the diameter was 126 feet externally with three feet thick walls at the ground. The dome, it says was crowned by a parapet forming a circular gallery from which visitors could view the park. The upper portion of the dome (75 feet in diameter) was glazed to light the interior as there were no side windows. The lower part of the dome was cased in copper sheets that were painted.

Under the entrance portico was a drive for carriages and a footpath for passengers. A tall doorway opened into an impressive vestibule with walls painted to imitate white marble, and pilasters painted to imitate Sienna marble. This vestibule was divided into three compartments and led to the main exhibition space. On the left was a flight of stairs that led to the middle gallery, while on the right another set led to the saloon, the first gallery, the third gallery under the old St Peter’s ball, and the exterior parapet-gallery on the summit of the building. A small narrow low corridor led visitors to the spacious Rotunda called the Saloon, which was fitted with draperies to imitate a tent with recesses for settees and tables. A collection of pictures, objects and sculptures are arranged throughout this area. This area is described

as mild and comparatively warm in cold weather, while cool in hot weather. In the centre of the Saloon is the circular tower like structure we see in Ackermann's print. This contained two spiral staircases,

and "a circular chamber, in which is suspended a small covered room, which will contain from 10 to 20 persons, and may be raised by secret machinery, with its company, to the first gallery."

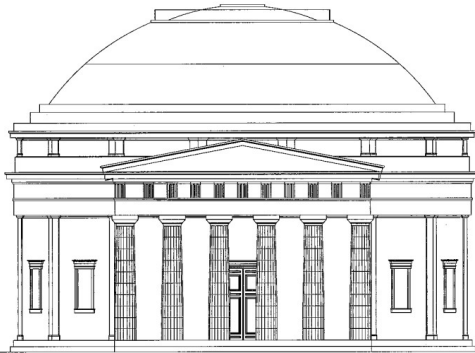


Fig 4. The author's architectural drawing of the front elevation of the Colosseum reproduced from contemporary descriptions and illustrations. Copyright Paul Avis

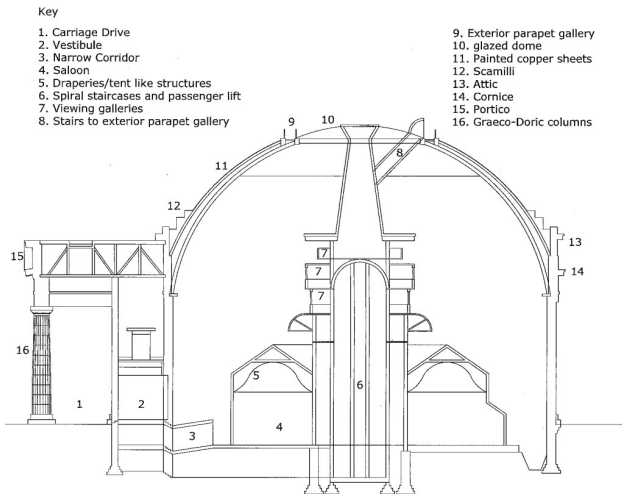


Fig 5. The author's architectural drawing of a section through the Colosseum with a key to identify the parts of the building referred to in the guidebooks and newspapers of the time. Copyright Paul Avis

The 1829 exhibition catalogue and guide also shows the 360 degree panorama in outline form and contains a description of the various views which form a fascinating social history of the metropolis at the time. Transferring the sketches into a form that could be displayed within the dome of the building was a major task on both a technical as well as artistic level. In 1825, Horner had initially employed several artists to work on the panorama, but the inexperience of many of the artists, together with their different individual artistic styles, soon resulted in E.T.Parris taking over the work. The initial task of chalking the outlines of the panorama took Parris 5 months, a remarkable achievement in itself, as the dome's panorama was 256 times the size of the original sketches. Once the outlines were completed, Parris commenced the painting in oil, this time more ably assisted by some house painters. This is where Ackermann's view comes into its own as it shows some of the platforms, bridges winches and scaffolding that Parris had constructed to assist him in his work. On two occasions he fell, although presumably he didn't suffer great injury as he was able to continue.

Visitors were encouraged to view the panorama from four separate "stations" within the gallery, so

they could take in the views to the North, East, South and West. The following are the sketches from the guidebook that visitors would use to identify the various views across the metropolis and beyond (fig. 6 to 13).

After four years, the panorama was eventually completed in November 1829. At over forty thousand square feet in area, the painting was the largest ever created and Burton's dome that housed the panorama was likewise the largest that the city had witnessed.

Having taken in the views, the visitor then descended to exit into what was described as scenes of the "romantic and the picturesque". From the Southern Pavilion, the visitor would enter into a range of conservatories approximately 300 feet in length and divided up into six different compartments of different sizes and forms. All of the conservatories were filled with exotic plants from around the world. One particular room, a dome with a pointed top had in its centre a water basin bordered with shells and corals and surrounded with jets of water that would rise to the top to fall onto a column of shells, corals and mosses producing spectacular prismatic displays when the rays of the sun shone through the jets of water. To the right of this is a Marine Grotto or Cavern.

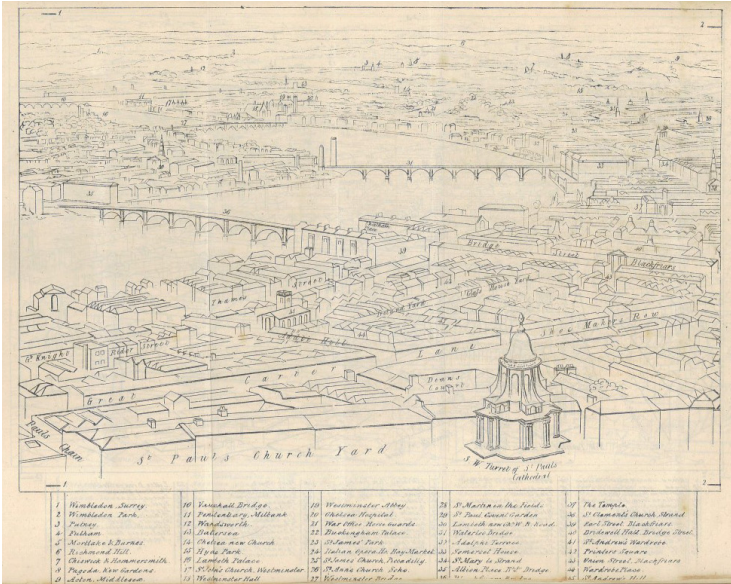
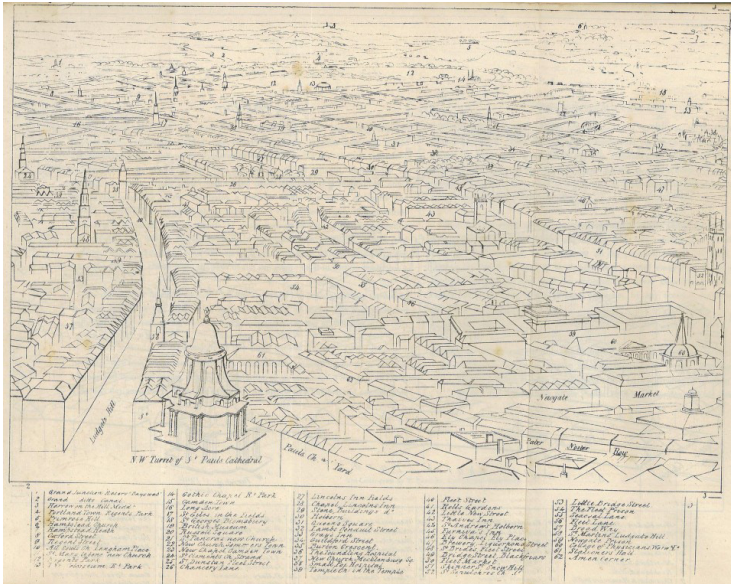


Fig 6. The first view from the of the panorama from the 1829 guide book. Looking west, In the immediate foreground is a turret of St Paul's Cathedral. Blackfriars Bridge, followed by Waterloo Bridge with Westminster Bridge in the distance can clearly be seen. On the horizon, from left to right, is Wimbledon, Fulham, Chiswick, Kew Gardens and Acton. From the author's collection.

Fig 7. The second view looking towards Harrow on the Hill, Primrose Hill and Hampstead Heath. You can just make out the dome of the Colosseum in the top middle of the view. Newgate Prison is just above Newgate Market, and a second turret of St Paul's Cathedral is in the foreground. From the author's collection.



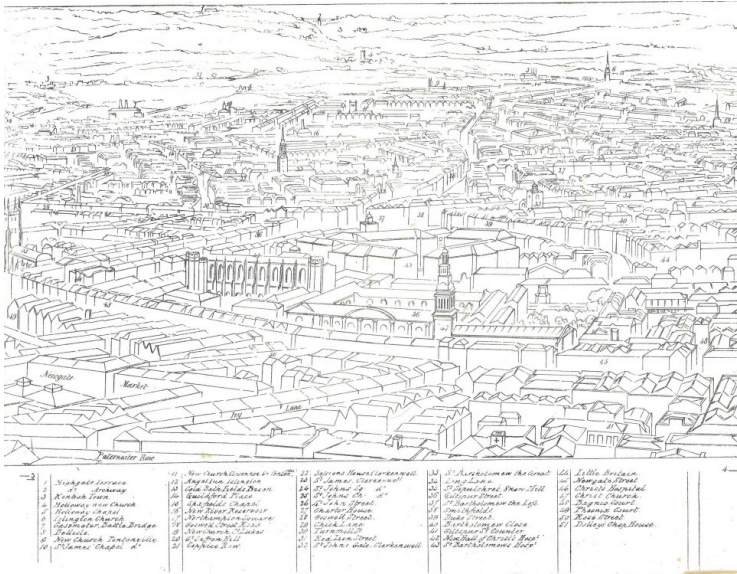
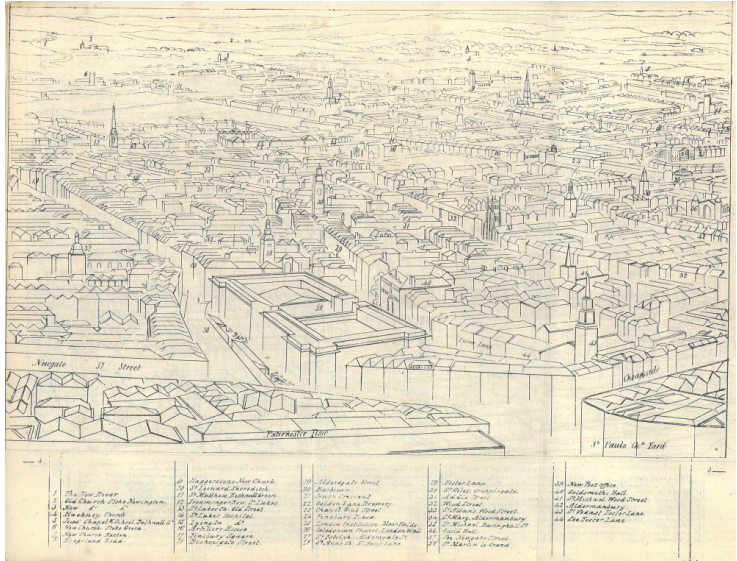


Fig 8. The third view looks towards Highgate, Archway and Kentish Town on the horizon. The spire of Islington Church can be made out at top right, while at bottom right, "Dolly's Chop House" is obviously important enough at the time to warrant identifying.
From the author's collection.

Fig 9. The fourth view looking towards Stoke Newington, Hackney, and Bethnal Green. Particularly noteworthy is the very large New Post Office building in the centre foreground.
From the author's collection.



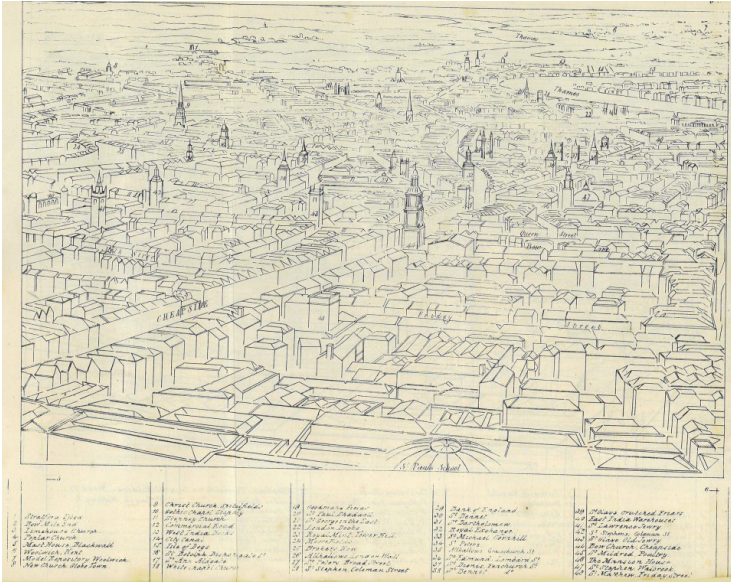
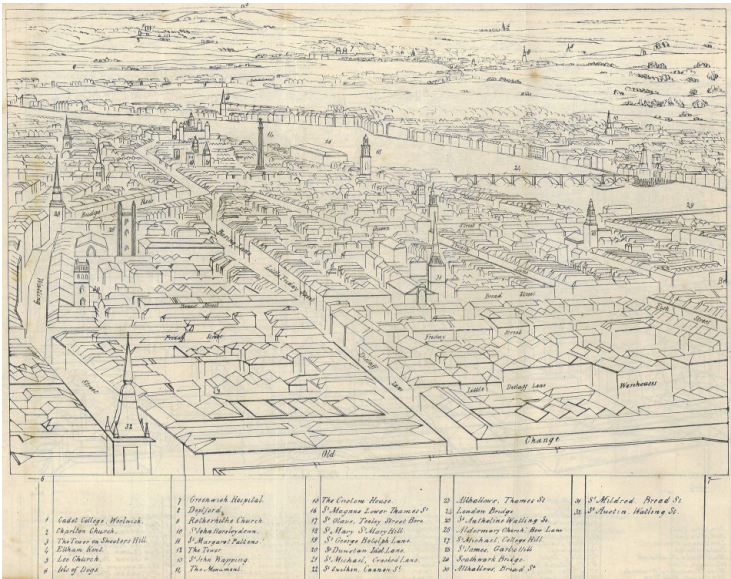


Fig 10. The fifth view looking towards Limehouse, Poplar, Woolwich, Stepney, Commercial Road and The Isle of Dogs. The Royal Mint, Tower Hill can be seen at the end of Cheapside on the river, while the Bank of England is in the centre ground with The Royal Exchange and the tower of Bow Church. From the author's collection.

Fig 11. The Sixth view looking towards Shooters Hill, Greenwich, Deptford and Lee. London Bridge takes pride of place on the river, along with The Monument and The Tower. You will notice that Tower Bridge has yet to be built. From the author's collection.



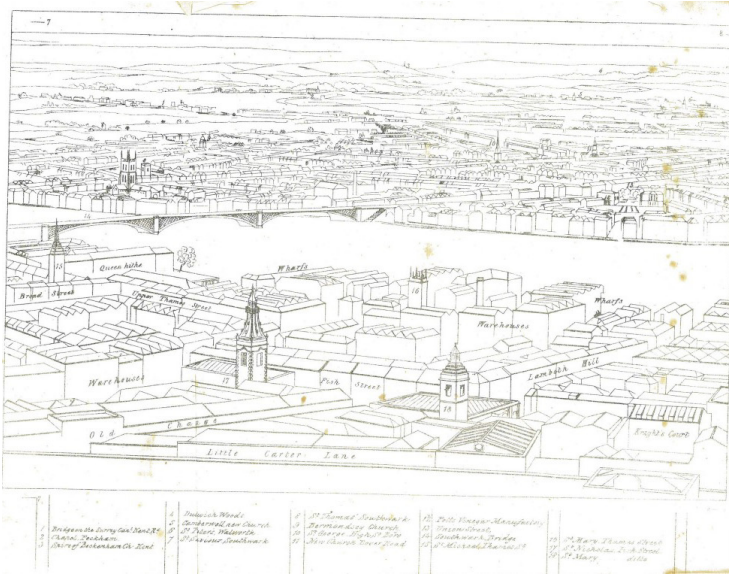
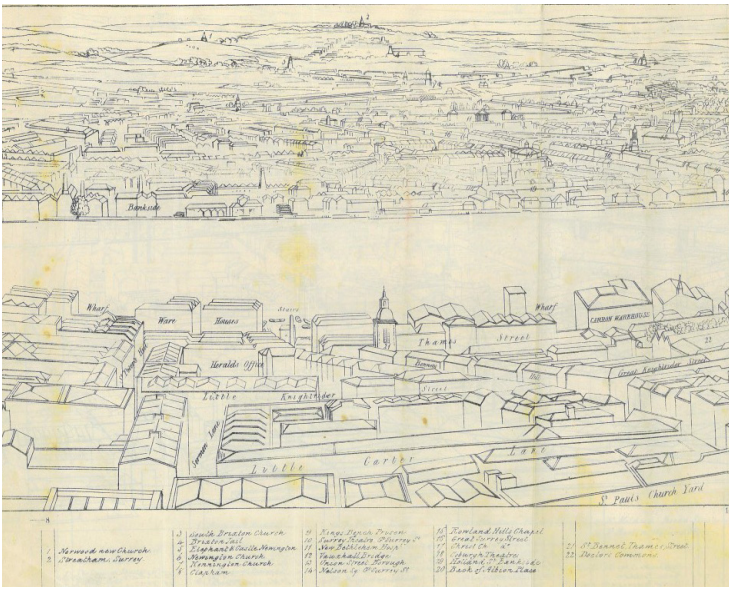


Fig 12. The Seventh view with Beckenham in the middle horizon and Dulwich Woods at the top right. Southwark Bridge with St Saviour, Southwark dominate the Thames.
From the author's collection.

Fig 13. The eighth and final view looking towards Norwood with Streatham and Brixton Jail on the middle horizon. The nearside of the Thames is dominated by warehouses and wharfs.
From the author's collection.



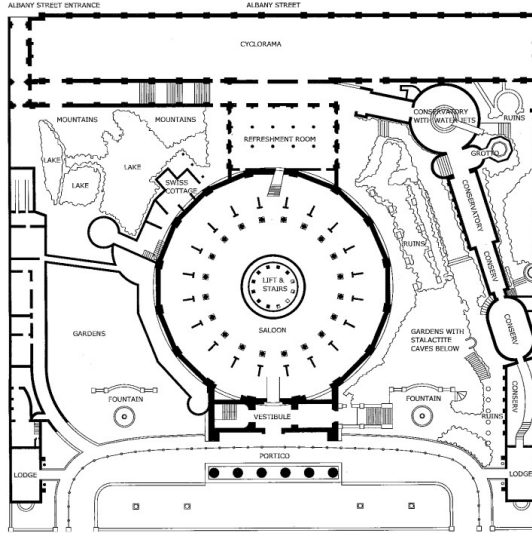


Fig 14. Plan of The Colosseum site drawn by the author after a plan in the papers that accompanied the auction of the building in 1855 by Messrs Winstanley. The Cyclorama and link to the main rotunda did not exist when the building opened in 1829. Reproduced by author.

Exiting the range of conservatories, the visitor entered a suite of rooms via a subterranean passage. These rooms were designed by the architect P.F.Robinson to imitate a Swiss Cottage comprising four

areas, one of which had a large fireplace, and a window with a view over the man-made landscape that included a lake, mountains and waterfalls in miniature.

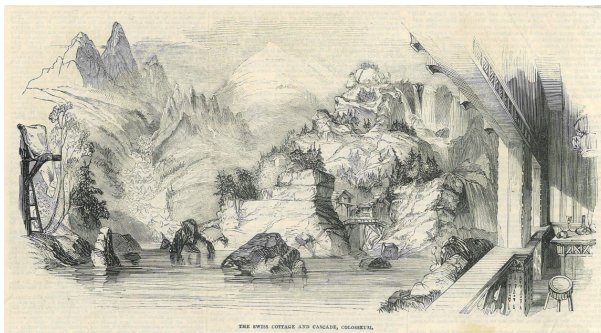
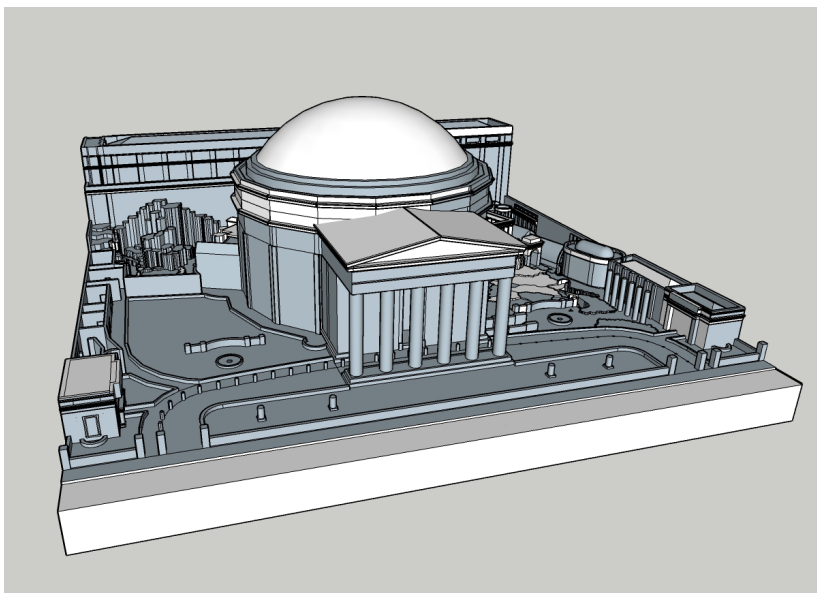


Fig 15. The view from the window of the Swiss Cottage, showing a picturesque Swiss landscape in miniature including mountains, waterfall and lake. An image from *The Illustrated London News* (date unknown), from the author's collection



Fig 16. Another view from the Illustrated London News (in 1875 just before it was pulled down) showing the exterior of the Swiss Cottage. From the author's collection.

Fig 17. Reconstruction model (in progress) of The Colosseum c.1855 by the author. This view shows the building seen from Regents' park. You can clearly see the carriage drive and pedestrian path leading visitors to the entrance under the portico. Either side of the carriage drive is a lodge. The lodge to the right gave access to the range of conservatories. That on the left appears to give access to a range of service rooms, at the end of which may be the machinery that operated the lift. Copyright the author.



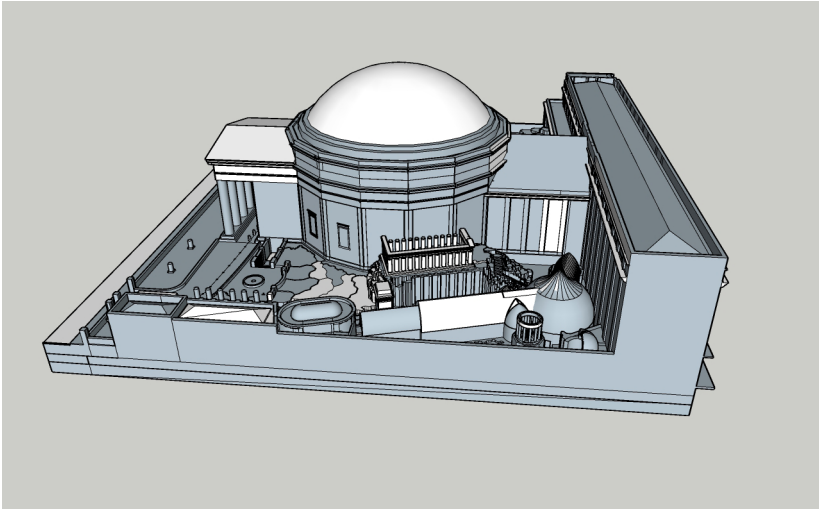
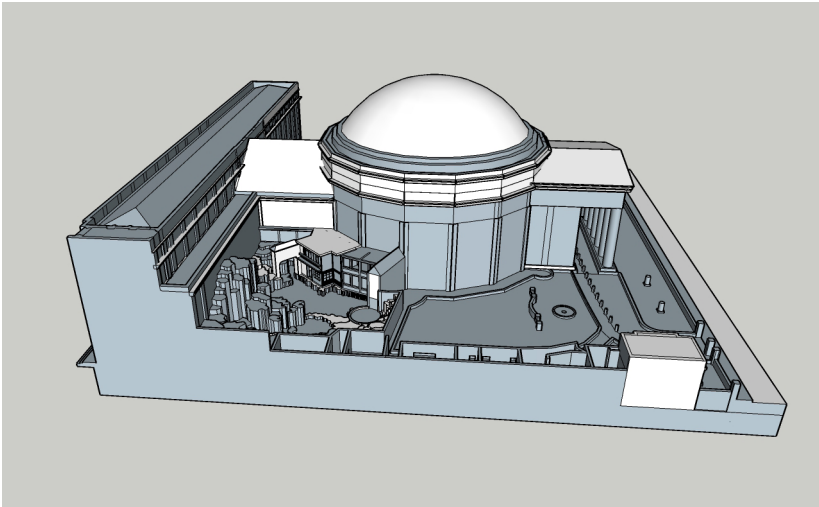


Fig 18. A second view showing the range of conservatories in the foreground. The large building to the right is the Cyclorama which faced Albany Street and had its own entrance at the top right of the model. Between this building and the main rotunda, was a link which accommodated at one time a Hall of Mirrors and a refreshment room. Copyright the author.

Fig 19. The Swiss Cottage attached to the rotunda, surrounded by its lakes, mountains and waterfalls in miniature. Between this and the carriage drive were gardens. You can also make out a circular fountain with a serpentine retaining wall that acts as a viewing platform for the gardens. Copyright the author.



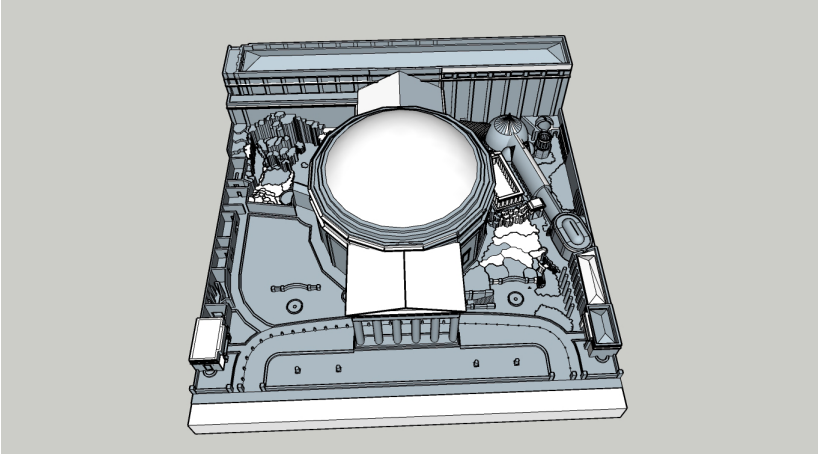


Fig 20. An aerial view providing an overall impression of the scale of the site. Still to be added in this and the previous images are the details of the viewing platform, glass dome and copper cover atop the dome. Copyright the author

The Colosseum started life as a popular attraction for visitors, although as its novelty wore off, visitor numbers declined. When the property changed hands in 1835, some alterations were made, but these did not maintain its popularity and there were fears that the building would be pulled down and the site developed for housing – forty years later, this was indeed the fate of the building. In 1844, however, the building was acquired by a new investor who turned The Colosseum’s fortunes around. Our next article will follow the rejuvenation of the Colosseum and some of the new attractions that would entice visitors through its doors.

By Paul Avis

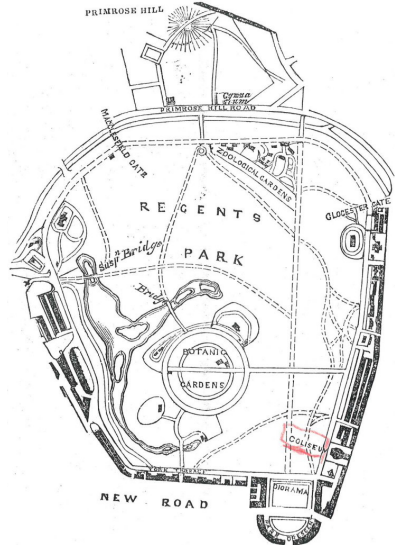


Fig 21. A plan from the 1851 Handbook of London showing the position of the Colosseum. From the author’s collection.

THE TRINITY THEATRE

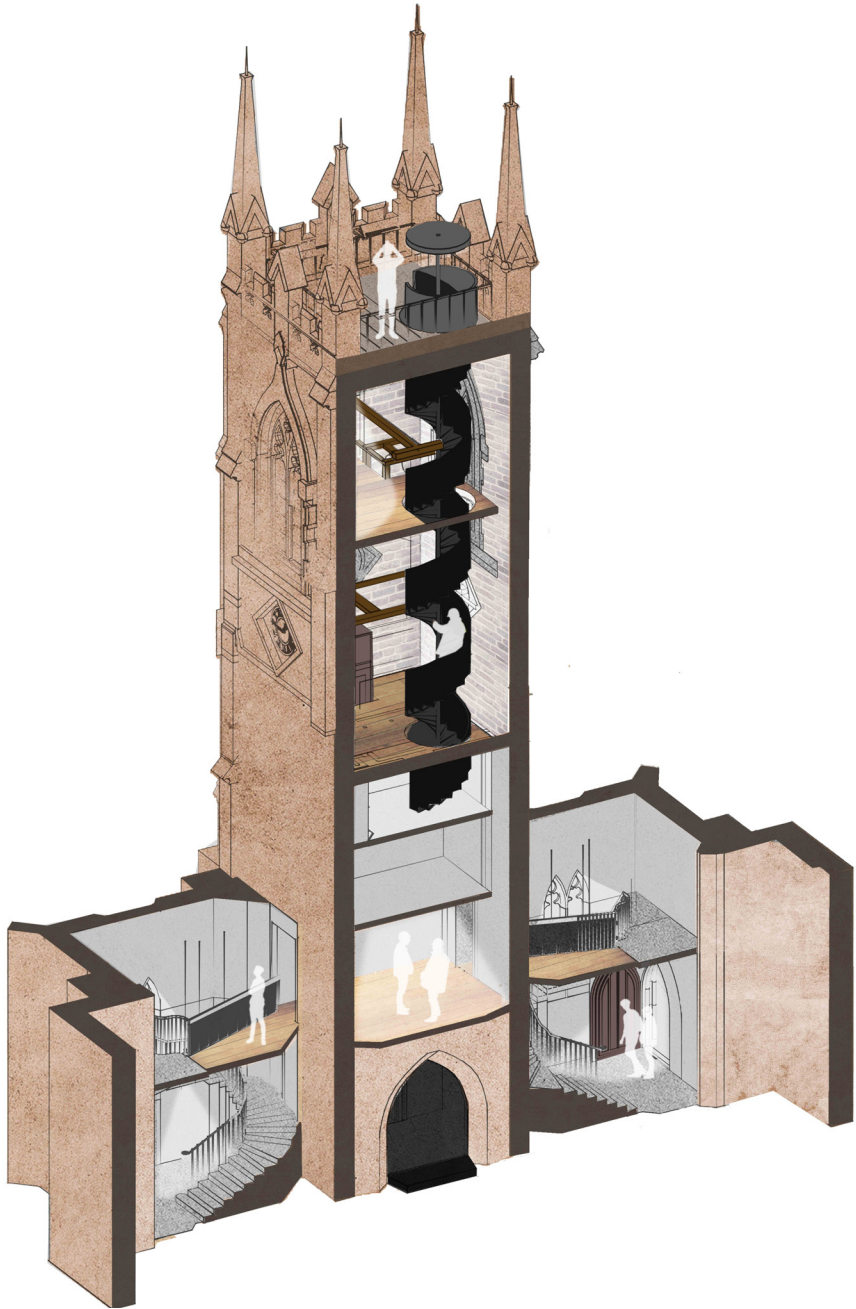
Progress of the Clocktower project

By Kaner Olette

Back in 2021 we featured an article on the work that was being carried out to the tower of Trinity Church. The church in Tunbridge Wells was designed by Decimus Burton in 1827, and forty years ago was saved from demolition by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society. Since then it has been repurposed as a theatre and is currently undergoing work to restore its tower and create a heritage centre within the space. The following is a brief update by local project architects, Kaner Olette, on the work currently being undertaken.

Following a successful Stage 2 National Lottery Heritage Fund





grant, construction work has begun at Grade 2* listed Trinity Theatre (formerly Holy Trinity Church) to bring its clocktower into public use with a vertical route to a new viewing platform on the roof and various heritage and interpretation features.

At first floor, the integration of two new bridge platforms from the existing cantilevered stone stairways into the tower are nearly complete and form a new north south link through the 1 metre thick herringbone brick tower walls. The balustrades utilise redundant cast iron floor grilles as guarding panels set into a new painted steel structure.

From first to third floor level a



new timber stair brings visitors past two small stained glass windows into the main clocktower volume. From here a new 14 metre high powder-coated steel spiral staircase fabricated by





Zedworks will provide access to the roof with stopping points at two intermediate levels. The panoramic rooftop views will provide a number of vistas across Tunbridge Wells and the countryside beyond.

Conservation works will be carried out to the historic clock mechanism which includes working gears and a seven metre long spindle. This has been taken off-site by professional horologists Smiths of Derby - the same company that first installed it when the building was still a church. The historic timber housing of the mechanism is also

due to be repaired and restored. Later phases of conservation work at the site will include the specialist restoration of the significant east window 1839 stained glass believed to be the work of Joseph Hale Miller.

An intermediary level will serve as further interpretation space and will allow a closer view of Trinity's original historic single bell. Where possible, original elements such as the original floorboards, have been carefully retained and restored and brickwork has been carefully brushed down to preserved the historic patina.



The logistics of the site works have been particularly challenging as the project has been constructed whilst keeping the theatre open and working around the technical spaces retained within the tower.

Heritage Interpretation, meanwhile, is being developed across the scheme by Victoria Maytom to tell the stories of the Grade 2* listed building and the people associated with it.



The project is due to finish in Spring 2023

Client:
Trinity Theatre Arts Centre

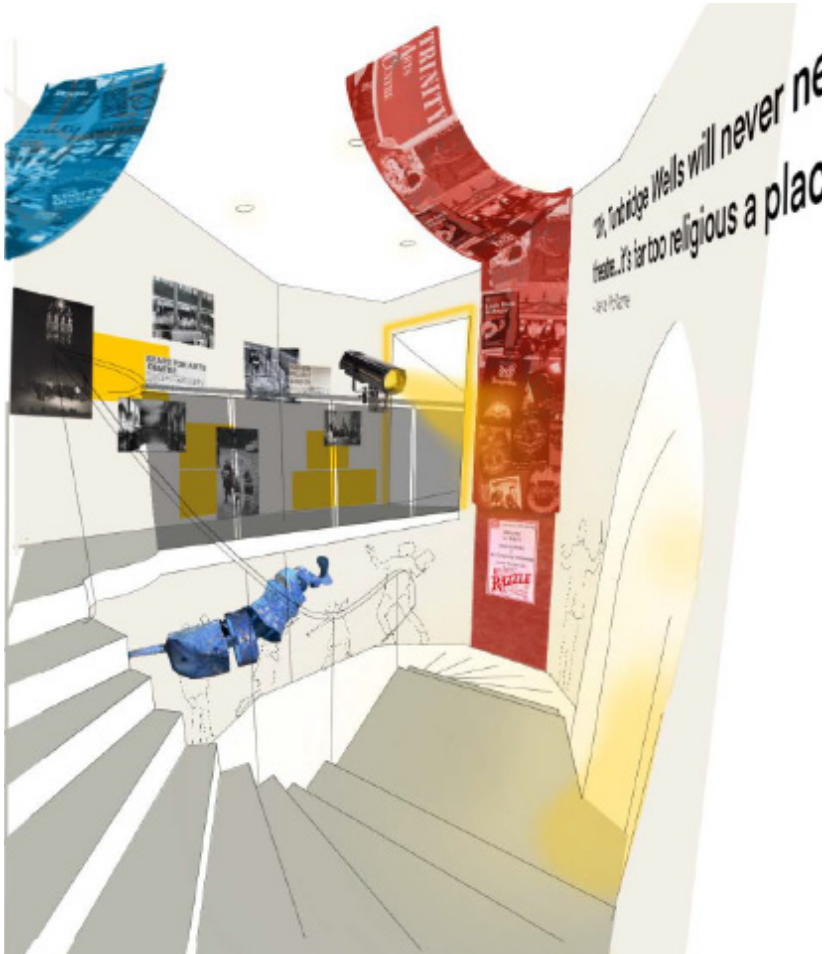
Quantity Surveyor:
Huntley Cartwright

Architect:
Kaner Olette

Main Contractor:
BW May

Structural Engineer:
Paul Molyneux Associates

Heritage Adviser:
Stuart Page



Book Review

“Decimus Burton – Gentleman Architect”

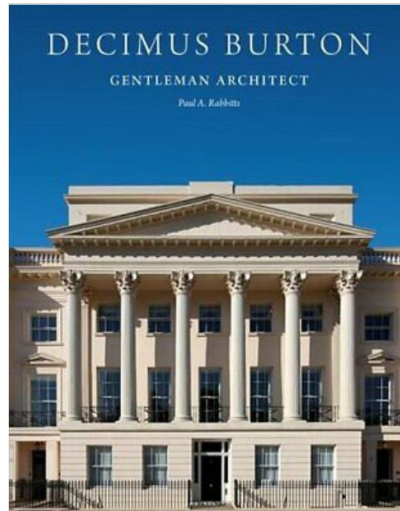
By Paul A. Rabbits

It has been over 40 years since Philip Miller’s 1981 exhibition of the life and work of Decimus Burton at the Building Centre in London, and nearly 20 years since Philip Whitbourn’s scholarly monologue on the architect, titled “Decimus Burton Esq – Architect and Gentleman (1800-1881).

Paul A. Rabbit’s book, which runs to some 208 pages and contains an abundance of photographs, drawings and illustrations, must therefore come as a welcome introduction to anyone wishing to obtain an overall view of the life and work of this remarkable man, whose career uniquely spanned the Georgian, Regency and Victorian periods.

Acknowledging and calling on previous research into the architect by notable Burton scholars, including Philip Miller, Philip Whitbourn, Dana Arnold, Edward J. Diestelkamp, Chris Jones and

Elizabeth Nathaniels, to name but a few, Paul takes us on a journey of the life and work of the architect. Through what is probably one of the largest collection of photographs, drawings and illustrations that has been put together to illustrate Decimus Burton’s work, the author leaves the reader with an understanding of the considerable range of projects that the architect



was involved in, from domestic buildings large and small, to public works that included hospitals, zoological and botanical gardens, churches, glasshouses, and the planning of new towns and estates. The ample use of illustrations also helps to explore the range of design styles that Burton was comfortable in using in his projects, from the Classical and Italianate to Old English and Gothic.

For anyone wishing to gain a general understanding of the life and work of Decimus Burton, Paul's book must surely be on their wish list.

Paul is Head of Parks, Heritage and Culture for Watford Borough Council and has written several books including *Bandstands: Pavilions for Music, Entertainment and Leisure*. His interest in Burton came while researching the history of Regent's Park.

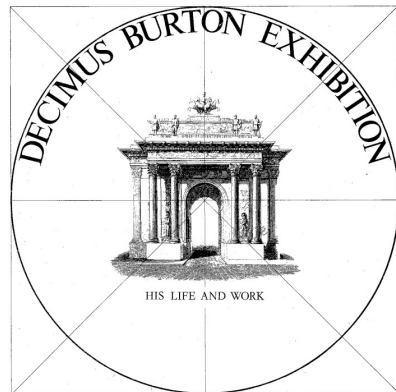
"Decimus Burton – Gentleman Architect"

By Paul A. Rabbits, Published By: Lund Humphries, London 2021 - ISBN: 978-1-84822-524-4

News

The Society's education programme – archiving Philip Miller's work for the RIBA.

In the summer, a student from a secondary school in Tunbridge Wells, for work experience, joined one of our members in a visit to the RIBA archives, with the purpose of working on sorting out Philip Miller's archives that had been donated to the RIBA. The student, who was sponsored by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic



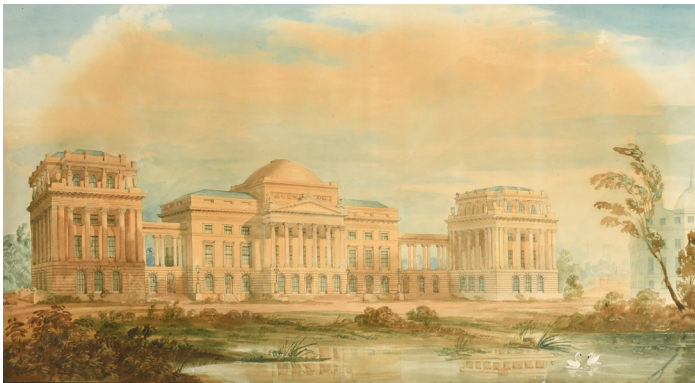
Front cover of Philip Miller's 1981 Catalogue for the exhibition held at The Building Centre in London

Society and supported by The Decimus Burton Society, spent time with the archivist who gave an overview of the process of archiving such material, and then went through the boxes of donated material to get an understanding of what would be involved in the archiving. This is an ongoing project and one which we hope will provide students not only with an understanding of the architect, but with a valuable and enjoyable experience that will help in their future careers.

News

Clarence Terrace – an early design by Burton at the RIBA.

Earlier this year the society was approached by the curator of the Heinz collection at the RIBA to confirm that a watercolour which had come up for sale at auction was by Decimus Burton. The society was able to confirm that the watercolour, pictured above, did indeed portray an early unexecuted design by the architect of Clarence Terrace in Regents Park. Since then, and with a financial contribution by one of our members, the RIBA was successful in their bid to purchase the watercolour, which then underwent some minor restoration.



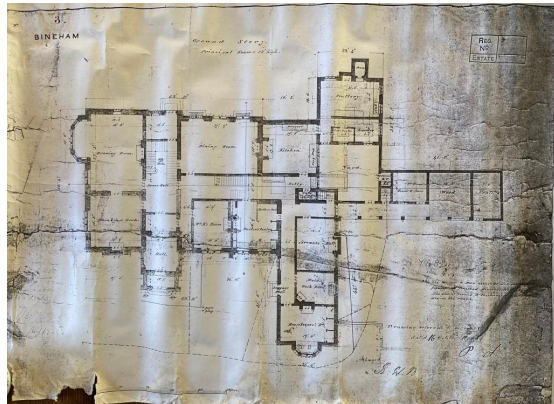
Watercolour design of Clarence Terrace, Regents' Park.
Copyright RIBA Heinz Collection.

News

Burton's plan of Bineham discovered.

Another recent discovery was this plan of Decimus Burton's Bineham, a country house built for John George Blencowe in 1858, the date on the drawings, which also referenced Burton's office at 6 Spring Gardens in London.

The discovery was made by an enquirer's contractor who had come across it in some old basement walls while preparing their site for a new project. The drawing also contains a signature with the initials RWB.



Ground Floor Plan of Bineham. Copyright homeowner

Howard Colvin's Biographical Dictionary of British Architects notes Decimus Burton as the architect of "Bineham" in Chailey, Sussex, which he designed for John George Blencowe in 1857. The building has since been demolished and we are not aware of any other drawings or images of the property, so the discovery of this plan is very important.

We do, however, have some information on J.G. Blencowe, and are able to shed some light on who "RWB" may have been. John George Blencowe was the only son of Robert Willis Blencowe, a leading Lewes magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant, and antiquarian. Born in the Midlands, Robert moved to Chailey, after marrying Charlotte Elizabeth Poole, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Henry Poole, who owned a mansion called the "Hooke" there. Colvin states that Burton made some additions to the Hooke for R W Blencowe between 1838 and 1844, so presumably

the couple had inherited this property by then. The Hooke was largely demolished in 1958.

In 1857, aged 40, John George Blencowe married Frances Campion, who brought with her a substantial dowry, including the Elizabethan mansion of Danny in Hurstpierpoint. Frances' mother was Harriet Kemp, the daughter of Thomas Read Kemp, MP for Lewes and Arundel, and a developer after whom Kemp Town is named. John and Frances went on to have eight children, two born at Hurstpierpoint and six at Chailey. The 1871 census shows John, Frances and family living at Hooke with Robert Willis Blencowe, by then a widower with 19 servants. The 1891 census, however, shows John, his wife and children living at Bineham with 17 servants.

With the above family connections in mind, it is likely that the initials R W B on the plan of Bineham are likely to be those of John George Blencowe's father, Robert.

News

Fleetwood Museum purchases watercolour of early Burton design for Fleetwood at auction.

Recently, Fleetwood Museum was able to acquire at a US auction a pencil and watercolour aerial perspective of an early Decimus Burton design(c 1838) of the town of Fleetwood, commissioned by Peter Hesketh. The work is fascinating but unfortunately in a poor condition, being discoloured with tears and abrasions, and painted on a board that is very fragile and cracked in places. The board measures 585mm x 920mm.

As the watercolour came from America, the auction house there was unable to provide any useful provenance information. The museum in Fleetwood believes the watercolour belongs to an

early stage in the promotion of Fleetwood, and must predate the plan that Burton published in 1841.

The museum would, however, like to ask the members of The Decimus Burton Society the following:

- Are there any extant drawn records of Fleetwood by Burton or his office, which are not yet published?
- Is there correspondence, or other archival material, particularly involving Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood from the late 1830s? or published accounts in newspapers, or prospectuses, of the proposals?
- Do we know anything of the rendering watercolourists that Burton worked with at this time in his career?
- Is there a record of a possible public exhibition of this drawing at the Royal Academy or the Royal Watercolourists Society?



The aerial pencil and watercolour view of Fleetwood. Copyright Fleetwood Museum.

For those of you not familiar with the history of Fleetwood, the museum has suggested reading Decimus Burton, Gentleman Architect, pp 138-143 by Paul A Rabbitts. Published by Lund Humphries, 2021.



Kaner Olette Architects is a Kent-based RIBA Chartered Practice with a wealth of experience in heritage and public sector community projects across London and the Southeast

We are passionate about creating high quality sustainable environments. We believe that, whatever the context, people's lives can be enhanced through inspirational and sustainable design.

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