

OXLEY
CONSERVATION
HISTORIC
BUILDINGS
CONSULTANCY

Newsletter October 2006
Issue 1

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the quarterly Oxley Conservation newsletter.

The aim of the newsletter is to share interesting developments relevant to the sustainable conservation of traditional buildings that have come to our attention. It will also give us a vehicle to update our clients, colleagues and friends on developments within Oxley Conservation. We will also use it to promote upcoming events, whether featuring Oxley Conservation or not, that might be of interest to you.

This first newsletter highlights guidance that could help avoid the unnecessary insertion of damp-proof courses in listed buildings and those situated in conservation areas. It also provides information on our new premises, our newest addition to the professional team and a recent completed project.



New Premises

We have been planning to launch the newsletter for some time. The final impetus was provided by our move in May into new premises at 8a Friday Street in the centre of Henley on Thames.

The fire brigade attending a fire to our new neighbours – the week we moved in!

In keeping with the practice's environmental and conservation aims to preserve existing resources the double-hung sash windows were retained, overhauled and draught-proofed. Air pressurisation tests showed that this work provided an improved performance that

will reduce our fuel bills and improve the comfort levels of the staff. For more information about air pressurisation tests go to our web site (www.oxleyconservation.co.uk) or contact Phil Ogley.

New member of staff

Oxley Conservation continues to grow with the addition of Catharine Bull to the professional team. Catharine is a Chartered Surveyor with extensive knowledge and practical experience of building conservation. Catharine was a Lethaby scholar of the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings in 2000, has worked for the National Trust and also headed the surveying department of a specialist conservation building company.

Catharine has joined the practice to help Oxley Conservation to meet the increasing need and desire to bring building and environmental conservation closer together.

Rendering of puddingstone church tower

The works at the church of All Saints, Wokingham, Berkshire were completed earlier this year. This Grade II* listed church is constructed with puddingstone, a natural conglomerate. In recent years large pebbles had begun to fall from the weathered matrix providing a potentially serious health and safety hazard, particularly to those using the principal entrance door to the tower. Investigations produced documentary and physical evidence that the church had been previously rendered. This provided the justification to solve the practical problem by re-rendering the church with a lime putty based thrown render that was then limewashed.

Photographs before and after.



Problems were also found with repairs to a concealed part of the nave wall - the extent of these problems only became apparent on closer inspection from scaffolding. The Victorian construction was poor and had failed. Partial rebuilding of the outer skin of stonework and improved bonding detailing between the outer skin of stone and the inner core was needed to address this inherent defect.

Did you know?

That there is a British Standard that states the local authority should be consulted before the insertion of damp-proof courses in listed buildings and those situated in conservation areas! British Standard BS 6576:2005 (Code of practice for diagnosis of rising damp in walls of buildings and installation of chemical damp-proof courses) states that "Where the building concerned is statutorily listed or in a conservation area, the local authority should be consulted before treatment is conducted." This is positive guidance that will, if used, reduce the number of unnecessary damp-proof courses that are inserted.

Things seen

This red kite was caught taking a rest on the weather vane of a Chiltern church undergoing repair (or was it just getting its bearings?)



STOP PRESS



Work specified and supervised by Oxley Conservation Limited was awarded the Oxford Preservation Trust Environmental Plaque Award 2006 for an exemplary conservation project carried out at the Church of Birinus, Dorchester on Thames.

Oxford Preservation Trust's Environmental Awards aim to recognise projects which make a significant contribution to the conservation or improvement of Oxford's built and natural environment. Those making an outstanding contribution are awarded an Oxford Preservation Trust Plaque. The work was carried out by Ward & Co with Graham O'Hare and Nick Quayle the specialists stone conservators.