

ISSUE 141

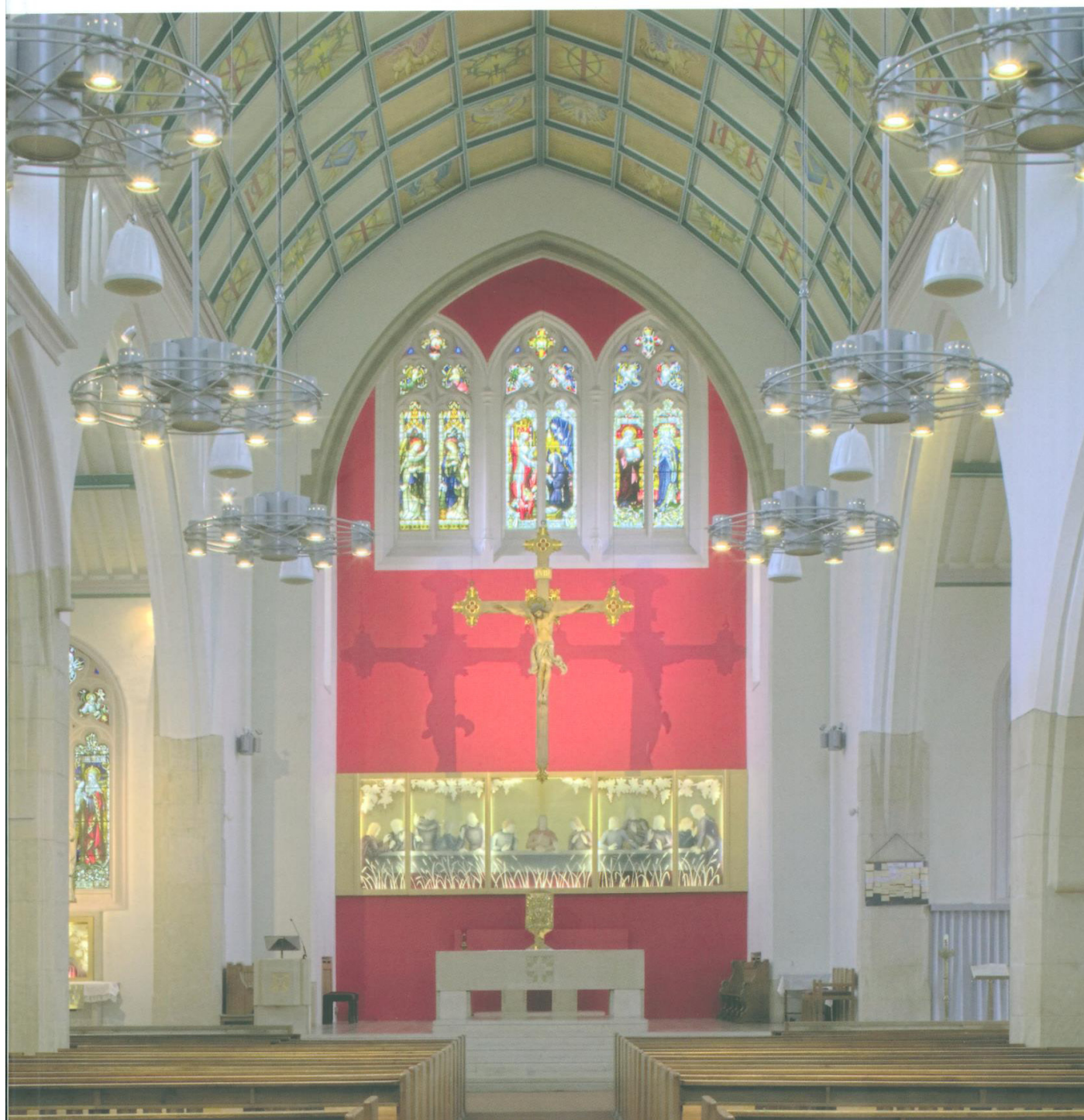
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# CHURCH

building & HERITAGE  
REVIEW





## FEATURE



## LINKING OLD WITH NEW

**Creating links between old and new in heritage buildings raises some interesting challenges.**

Constructing a modern extension frequently involves not just the owner, architect and builder but also the constraints imposed by English Heritage and other conservation officers. Consideration has to be given not just to the aesthetics of old meets new and the decision to either reflect and match the original style or aim for a wholly contemporary new addition but also to the physical interface between modern building technology and the centuries old techniques employed by the original builders.

A defined link between the two can create not just an aesthetic division but also provide a physical buffer between the harder more inflexible modern addition and the original heritage property. As a spokesman for English Heritage points out: 'Older buildings behave quite differently. They are likely to have more shallow foundations, be more flexible and breathable. If you build one directly against the other there will be a difference in movement.'

And sometimes it's the internal links that pose a challenge, separating different areas to



meet current requirements or opening up new spaces without obscuring or detracting from the original architecture.

Glass specialists Ion Glass have worked closely with architects and builders on a number of varied heritage and ecclesiastical projects where the properties of glass as a structural material have played a key role in designs to modernise, improve or extend the building.

Old Alresford House in rural Hampshire is a Grade II listed Georgian mansion dating back to





1750 when it was built for naval hero Admiral Lord Rodney as a family home for himself and his wife, Jane. Soon after moving in the couple bought nearby Alresford Pond, turning it into one of the country's first bird sanctuaries and they engaged landscape gardener Richard Woods to transform the 35 acres of parklands and gardens. An elaborate memorial to Jane adorns the wall of St Mary's Church next door to the house, a testament to Admiral Rodney's grief when she died in childbirth.

The house remained in the Rodney family for six generations until 1876 when it was sold to a local banker who made his mark on the property by rebuilding both the East and West wings. And later it was updated to meet contemporary Edwardian styling, with the installation of a magnificent panelled dining room and impressive front gates.

More recently Old Alresford's current owners have lovingly restored the whole house, re-capturing the elegance of this historic family home.

From the outset they were determined that all work should be carried out with the utmost care and attention to detail, ensuring that nothing was done to damage the fabric of the house. But they needed to extend and re-order the interiors of the house to provide a modern kitchen appropriate to the size of the house and to increase the size of their ballroom to enable them to use it as a wedding venue.

Designs were drawn up to separate the original building from the new extension with a glass link.

Ion Glass were commissioned to provide single panels of glass to fit in the metre wide division between the old and new buildings. Soaring fixed panels, 3.5metres high and a



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metre wide were slotted into bespoke stainless steel brackets into the brick walls allowing a level of flexibility against movement between the buildings. The five metre roof panels, which were designed to slightly overhang the vertical panels to keep rainwater off the face of the glass as much as possible, were lowered into position by crane and made watertight with lead flashing.

Whilst the new brickwork is very much in keeping with the original building and the profile of the extension reflects the style of >

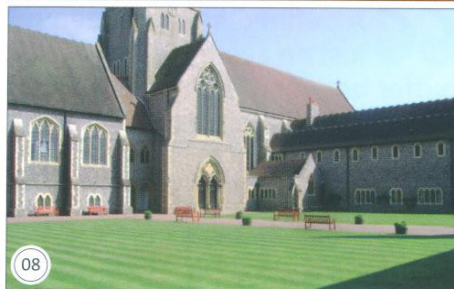
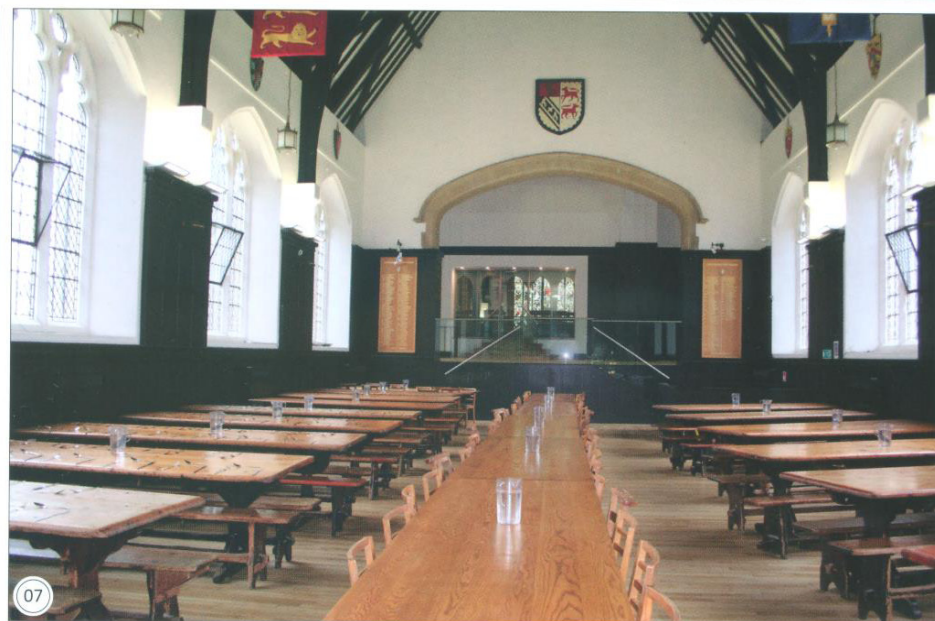


Images 01-06  
Old Alresford House

Images 07-08  
Hurst College



## FEATURE



the Georgian architecture, the glass linkway ensures that a distinction is made between old and new, providing a buffer between modern construction techniques and a building that is more than two centuries old. What's more it adds a stylish contemporary feature to the renovation.

The architects at Old Alresford House, Haddow and Partners were also engaged to work on another Hampshire project, the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury at Worting near Basingstoke.

Built in 1848 in fourteenth century style there has been a church in the parish since the time of the Domesday survey. A pretty church at the heart of the village it recently benefitted from the addition of a new community hall where parishioners could meet, hold church events and Sunday school workshops.

The hall was designed to be quite separate to the church itself and has a separate entrance – but nevertheless there was a requirement to access the venue from the church itself. A complex project, not least because the hall was built over part of the graveyard and had to be constructed on concrete piles positioned by infrared survey to avoid disturbing the graves, it required

approval from some five different organisations in order to obtain planning permission.

Ion Glass constructed a complete linkway joining the church to the new building. It is entirely constructed in glass, including glass beams spanning into the old church wall to support the roof. Just eight feet long and six feet wide it is a modern addition to the original architecture that is both stylish and completely functional, with nothing detracting from or obscuring the simple, timeless beauty of the installation.

As part of the same project, Ion also installed huge roof panels into the new meeting room, which not only maximises the natural light, it also enables people using the new hall to see the church spire from inside the building. A porch constructed from glass and timber provide a stylish and contemporary entrance to the community hall.

#### Using glass to provide internal links

At Hurst College in Sussex, the requirement for a glass link was quite different. The college moved to its Mansion House location in 1872, with the main chapel built at this time. Intended to resemble the collegiate system at Oxford & Cambridge, Nathaniel Woodward designed the college to have adjoining inner and outer quads, with the chapel and dining hall distinctly separate.

But as the school expanded space in the chapel had become increasingly limited and a suspended gallery was proposed above the main chapel entrance. In addition and flouting Nathaniel Woodward's original concept, a link between the chapel and the dining hall would



connect the chapel to the hub of the school, allowing pupils to embrace the ecclesiastical heritage and culture as an integral part of their daily school life.

John D. Clarke Architects were engaged and designs drawn up which included extensive use of glass to maximise the flow of light, open up the views into the chapel from the dining hall and create additional space within the chapel itself that met the dual requirement to be both robust and visually unobtrusive.

As with any ecclesiastical project, a key priority was to ensure the contemporary design did not detract from the tradition and beauty of the building and existing surroundings.

Glass balustrades were installed around the suspended gallery to cause minimal visual intrusion, channel set for accurate positioning. Glass screens dividing the dining hall from the chapel ensure that visitors are able to enjoy uninterrupted views of the magnificent altar. The finishing touch is a set of curved timber steps leading into the gallery with glass balustrading to provide a focal point to the division between the hall and chapel. The glass was wholly bespoke and had to be templated

prior to manufacture to ensure a perfect fit. A further constrain on the whole project was the need to complete it within the summer holiday period in readiness for the start of the new school year. All the work was carried out by Ion Glass.

Chaplain Jeremy Sykes states that he is "very pleased with the new gallery," describing it as "beautiful architecture that does not detract from the rest of the chapel." This sentiment is echoed by the college's headmaster Tim Manly who states that "although modern in construction and style, the new gallery fits beautifully within the building. It is an outstanding addition linking our chapel to the day to day life of the school."

Glass has been incorporated into buildings for centuries and the contemporary use of structural glass to link old buildings with modern additions or to open up and link spaces internally can achieve the best possible result – both structurally and aesthetically. ■

*For information about Ion Glass and their work on other ecclesiastical and heritage projects*  
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