

Belle Vue House

The Spring 2012 issue of Millmount News included the granting of Planning Permission for a private house in the heart of Durham City. The multi-levelled home, designed to both give superb views towards Durham Cathedral and be seen from this World Heritage site and built by DP Builders of Amble, is now complete with living spaces on the first floor and the building heights designed to the same as the bungalow that had previously occupied the site. Externally, the house and gardens are set over several terraced levels, echoing the cascade of built form that is common in the City of Durham's hillsides.



Belle Vue House, Durham City.

Welcome to Sam & Otis

We're delighted to welcome Architect, Samantha Dixon and Architectural Assistant, Otis Murdoch to the practice.



(L to R) Sam Dixon & Otis Murdoch

Sam graduated with her second degree from the University of Northumbria in 2009 and qualified as an architect in 2012 after working for both an architectural practice in Newcastle and a specialist house builder in Northumberland.

Sam commented, "I was originally attracted to JDDK by the wide mix of both new build and conversion work across a wide variety of sectors and the way in which the architects take ownership of the various projects, seeing it right through from original brief to completion. Here, you have the opportunity to become involved with the client from the very start, working with the

client and other members of the team to ensure the project proceeds as required right up to completion and handover so that you take personal ownership of every stage."

Otis, who lives with his wife in Lemington, joined us in August and is currently working towards his full qualification having graduated from Northumbria University in 2009 with his first degree. His year out was spent working for the RIBA before returning to Northumbria University to graduate with his second degree in 2012.

It was the RSPB's Saltholme Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park Visitor Centre that first attracted Otis to the practice, as he explained, "The craft, thought and attention to detail do make the practice stand out but it was Saltholme that really fired me up and I'm so pleased to be able to work here now."

Outside of work, Otis is a keen surfer, not only locally but also taking trips afar to catch the perfect wave.



Spot the Architect!

An Evening at the Ballet

Perhaps not the usual dress for a JDDK night out but a fundraising party supporting the local Ballet Lorent at Warehouse 34 in the Ouseburn Valley, gave us the chance to bid for some of their costumes, and the opportunity to try them on was obviously too hard to resist!

People's Passions Kevin Turnbull

Kevin is well known for his love of and prowess on the golf course, so we were all a bit surprised to hear that his real passion was for a different pitch altogether - cricket, and especially Test Match Cricket.

He explained, "It may seem like living death to many, but there is nothing finer to my mind than a full blown, five days international test match - especially against Australia and if I could ever get to the Boxing Day game over there, I'd die a happy man!"

While colleagues may point out that it's the only game where spectators can fall asleep without missing anything, to Kevin that is all part of the rich pageantry that is a Test Match, as he continued, "It's not just about the cricket - it's the whole experience - having a drink with your mates, the banter, even dressing up like the barmy army! I've only been for a couple of days at Headingley and at Lords - it is very time consuming and you do need stamina - but I'd love to go for a full Test."

"My big problem is that none of my family or friends share this love so I am always looking for like minded people to go with - in choosing their suitability I'd suggest a five question test:

- Do you like a beer in the morning?
- Do you like to fall asleep in the afternoon?
- Would you dress up as an English Knight?
- Do you hate cricket statistics?
- Are Jonathon Agnew, Geoff Boycott, Henry Blowers, Ian Botham and the late Brian Johnston the very best thing that has ever been on the radio?

A 'yes' to all five creates the ideal companion for any Test match trip!"



Kevin's Barmy Army at Lords (not his usual travelling companions he hastens to add...)



The Witham, Barnard Castle

Celebrating our architecture & people over the past 26 years

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The Witham Opens at Barnard Castle



The Library frontage onto George Street.

The Witham was officially handed over to our clients, Durham County Council, in early October, marking the completion of an ambitious restoration of historic buildings and new build project designed to spearhead the regeneration of Barnard Castle town centre.

The £2.3m Witham and Library Development Project, managed by Barnard Castle Vision, Durham County Council and The Witham Hall Ltd, has seen the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Witham Testimonial Hall. Originally constructed in 1846 as a memorial to local philanthropist, landowner and geologist, Henry Witham, the Hall and the adjacent Testimonial Building and Music Hall have been completely refurbished with new studio units created along Hall Street to form a thriving new artistic quarter for budding local artists.

In addition, a new 'link' building has been built which will become an informal meeting point and public foyer for the 200 seat event space in the Music Hall.

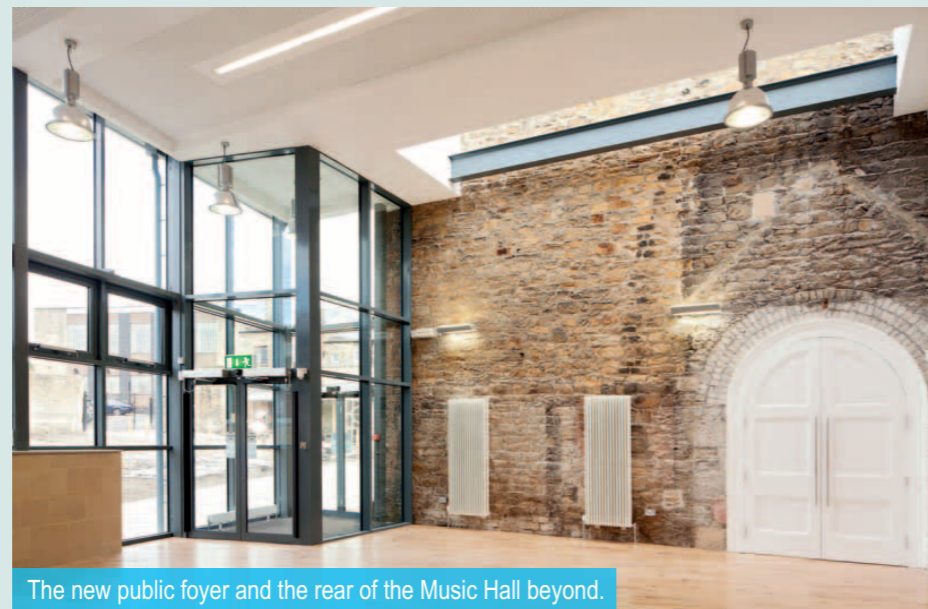
In late August, a time capsule was buried at the site and dated to be opened in 50 years time. The capsule included a number of items found during the building works including a piece of original wall paper, an envelope addressed to the Food Control Office based at The Witham in 1943, and local newspapers and documents relating to the restoration project.



Finally, the 1970's library building has been refurbished with the addition of an additional storey to include new council offices and a customer access point as well as the continued library service.

The first phase of £2.3m project was successfully completed by main contractor, Graham Construction, in mid February, followed quickly by the erection of the steel frame for the new link building.

The project has had its share of challenges as architect, Adam Vaughan, explained, "It's always a challenge to successfully introduce new build elements in a sympathetic manner into a historic setting but it was particularly so given the restricted site we had in Barnard Castle but the restoration has created superb spaces such as the original Testimonial Room which have now been brought back to life."



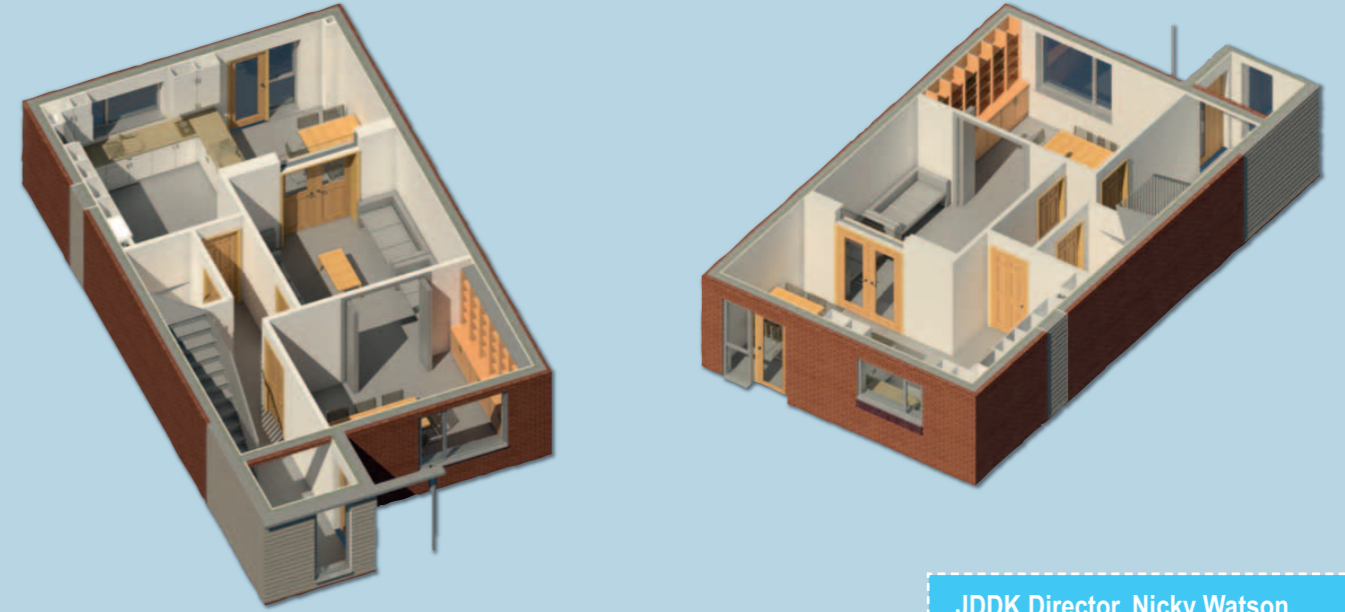
The new public foyer and the rear of the Music Hall beyond.

The Witham Testimonial building facing Horse Market.

Durham County Council's Regeneration Projects Manager, Chris Myers, commented:

"The restored Witham Hall will form the artistic new cultural, commercial and community heart of Barnard Castle which will bring enormous and continuing economic benefits to the town, the local community and visitors. The Witham will provide a range of facilities for local businesses, retailers and community groups and we're delighted with the major part that Adam and the whole JDDK team have played in bringing the project to completion."

Bespoke Designs for Specific Communities



The internal layouts of the homes are designed to meet specific cultural needs.

An important part of the practice's reputation has been our ability to not only meet but often surpass clients' expectations in answering their briefs across various sectors. For housing this is particularly important where different communities will have particular priorities for the design of their homes whether this be due to the physical or mental abilities of the prospective inhabitants or for cultural or religious requirements.

In the past, Ian Clarke's work as a CABE enabler had included work to develop design briefs for houses for the Islamic community whilst fellow Director, Nicky Watson, has recently been busy designing homes for the Jewish community which not only had to satisfy the requirements of the HCA and local Planning Authority, but also answer the specific cultural requirements of the residents.

Planning Permission for the Elysium Lane development in Bensham was granted in August with construction work commencing at the end of this year. The brief from our client, Adler Housing, a wholly owned subsidiary of the JCCG Development Trust, was for large but affordable homes which would be suitable for the specific needs of this faith community.

The resultant scheme is for 12, three storey, five bedroom homes on a compact brownfield site. The size of the homes, a response to the traditionally large Jewish family unit, was only one of the specific needs of the inhabitants, as Nicky Watson explained, "The design allows the dining and living rooms to be opened up and amalgamated for large family gatherings but with retractable folding doors which can separate them for individual uses most of the time or when for cultural reasons parts of the community need to be separated from each other. The dining room is particularly important for the study of the Torah and other religious texts and

needed extensive shelving for books, whilst in the kitchen, the designs have to accommodate the requirement to prepare and cook meat and dairy products separately, as well as provide the potential for tenants to install a separate smaller kitchen area for use only during Passover."

"A household of 9 generates an awful lot of clothes and linen washing and it was a particular wish of the families we met during community consultation that the washing machine and tumble drier be on the first floor, accessible from the landing, in actual fact a common location for laundry facilities in European homes."

The scheme consists of 12 three storey terraced homes, identical internally but to avoid a repetitive streetscape they are designed with two different arrangements of external finishes. All of the homes have a defined semi-private area in front of the entrance door and private rear gardens. The homes



The 12 home development for Adler Housing is based on three storey terraced homes.

JDDK Director, Nicky Watson, commented:

"Each of the new houses includes a particular requirement of Jewish households with a Sukka, a room with an opening roof to enable male members of the household to eat, sleep and generally reside in the open air in the Sukka for eight nights each year, during the Sukkot festival."

are set out in pairs and triple combinations to create a high quality built environment that respects the privacy of adjacent existing residents as well as those of the proposed development. All of the outside areas are well overlooked by the houses with views from kitchens at the rears right through the houses to the outside space to their fronts, encouraging sociability and children's outdoor play on the site and maximising the sense of community on the development.

When Listening Becomes a Way of Life

At JDDK we firmly believe that more successful places can be created when the people who will experience them on a day to day basis are given an opportunity to contribute to the design process. We are not talking about simply consultation which too often can be just a demonstration of "what you are going to get, like it or not" but instead a truly two-way participative design process.

This is a design approach whereby all stakeholders are given the opportunity to be actively involved in, and most importantly have influence on, the process of design for their built environment - the antithesis of some design processes which include solely the paying client and the relevant consultants.

The end objective is to ensure that those who will use and experience a completed development project will have an increased sense of ownership for it as well as its meeting their needs and aspirations along with those of the persons holding the purse strings. Such a participative design process brings further benefits in the long term, the participation also often being an opportunity for participants to increase their knowledge of matters relating to design quality and the process of design development, all skills and knowledge that they can then bring to the rest of their lives and communities in the future, so supporting the development of high quality environments all around us. In addition, the process can also allow us as designers to tap into previously unknown expertise and knowledge as the building users or wider community share their knowledge with us during the process.

Over the years we have developed a number of projects where the design was genuinely lead by communities rather than the design team and we have developed a number of techniques for engagement and participation activities that have been successful at involving and drawing out thoughts and opinions of even the most shy and reticent in a group. We are able to communicate complex design and construction matters to those with little or no experience in the field, and we are comfortable engaging with adults and children alike.



The completed Amble Town Square

New Town Square, Amble

Working with the local community over a series of evening workshops we took the local community through the design process. First "The Good, the Bad, the Ugly" focusing on what they liked and didn't like about the existing square; then looking at inspiring as well as badly design public spaces from around the world; and discussing what could be included in a new square to create a "Vision".

Perhaps most interestingly we then brought in the subject of money and budget, the third workshop focusing on "The Reality" where each group was given a scale site model and to-scale footprints of items in the "Vision", with cost in £'s written on. Groups worked to a budget to identify and arrange on the model their favored selection of items that were both affordable and could fit the site. This physical outlet helped those who were reluctant to speak in a group to express their opinions. Common themes were identified between the groups' proposals leading ultimately to the final proposals for the new town square, which on completion was well received by the local community and was awarded RTP1 Award for Best Town Regeneration.



The photomontages of different types of building superimposed on the site fired young people's imaginations.

Mill Lane Youth & Community Centre

Working with young people in an area of Newcastle with high levels of socio-economic challenges, who had little exposure to any environments other than the few streets around their own homes, we created photomontages of a wide variety of building types/styles superimposed on the site which widened the scope of what they believed was possible and generated really valuable discussions about building styles that appealed and did not appeal to them.

We also used physical activities around the creation of "mood" boards and structures involving participants using images of activities and different qualities of spaces (e.g. light/dark, cosy/open-plan, colourful/monochrome) according to their preferences. The sessions were lively and the young people certainly expressed themselves, in many cases choosing their own way to demonstrate their aspirations, the end results being extraordinary graphical representations that were then used as a basis to develop a design brief for the project.

The Sill

The initial design proposals for the Sill - the proposed national landscape centre in Northumberland - which triggered our appointment represented only a starting point. Working closely with our client, Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) and the Youth Hostel Association (YHA), Glen Kemp Landscape Architects and Cundall as planning consultants, we undertook two separate community participation exercises to gauge what exactly the local community in the Northumberland National Park wanted. As this is such a large area, our first event in May was held across Northumberland National Park dually at both Once Brewed and at Rothbury to give all residents and other stakeholders equal access.

During the well attended event, we basically started from scratch, presenting a number of interactive display boards under the headings such as Materials, Building Type, Landscaping, Sustainability and Activities and then asked attendees to place previously prepared cut outs on the boards to show their preference. For the site layout, we had a 1:200 scale model of the site on which we asked the group to place blocks representing different functions of the building in different configurations.

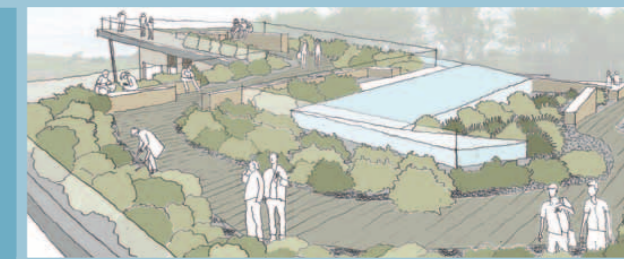
Following the event we analysed and tallied up the results of these initial preferences which were then used to inform us as part of our design brief for the next stage of the design development. As a result at the next community event in June we presented two designs concepts; Option (a) was a 'streamlined' version which had the building rising seamlessly out of the landscape and took on board many of the communities' preferences and design ideas, while Option (b) was a development of the 'crystalline' concept. The attendees were asked to vote on their favored proposal.

The 'streamlined' design, Option (a), was clearly the preferred version by most attendees, as well as other stakeholders, including the clients the Northumberland National Park Authority and the Youth Hostel Association, and it is this one that is now being developed to the next design stage.

One feature that came out strongly at public consultation was the desire to see a green roof. The design team took this and drew on the brief to create a building "inspired by the landscape and of the landscape". The result is a proposal for an innovative, publicly accessible roof made from whin vegetation - some of the rare species that grow in the Northumbrian landscape. This promises to be the stand out feature of the building.



Community Participation Events to find what the local community wants for the Sill.



"Over the years we have developed a number of projects where the design was genuinely lead by communities rather than the design team."

A "Home" created during engagement with homeless men.



Elliott House

During the development of a housing project for vulnerable adults we collaborated with homeless men, using physical activities to create model "homes", that they decorated with images and words to express what was important to them, particularly successful for one to one interaction with the quietest, most reticent individuals.

Supported Flexible Living at the Elms

The Elms - elevation drawing



In mid-September we applied for Planning Permission on behalf of our clients, Keepmoat who are working for Cestria Community Housing, for The Elms, a 56 home sheltered housing development on the site of the former Lawson and Riddell Homes in the centre of Chester-le-Street.

Designed specifically for the over-55's, the £6m development will consist of 45 two bedroom apartments and 5 one bedroom apartments in a central five storey building with six two bedroom detached and semi-detached bungalows to the South of the main structure.

Mura Mullan, JDDK Director and project architect, explained the scheme, "The basic philosophy of Cestria's brief was to provide not only high quality living accommodation for those over 55, but also to include elements of flexibility for those residents in anticipation of their needs changing over time."

"The internal layouts therefore take into account the differing levels of dependency the residents will encounter and are flexible enough for people to stay in their homes for as long as possible. The internal layouts of the apartments can be configured to individual needs, ranging from a low level dependency layout to a high level layout which would be an open plan layout giving maximum space for carers and equipment."

The living rooms of all apartments open directly onto a private terrace or balcony, while each kitchen has a window onto the internal communal corridor to minimise any sense of isolation and to contribute to a sense of community within the development. The bedrooms have full length windows to ensure the residents can enjoy the external views whether standing, sitting or even lying down. The entrance lobby to all apartments is open plan to the living room to ensure a light filled space whilst the bathrooms are spacious enough to accommodate a large walk-in shower or bath, if required.

All the homes are designed to fully comply with the relevant guidelines, which include wheelchair use, Lifetimes Homes, Design Quality Standards, Housing Quality Indicators, HAPPI and HAPPI2 (see Millmount News Spring 2012) and the University of Stirling Dementia Design Guide.

Built into a sloping site, the design includes lower ground floor with communal facilities including a café with IT suite, beauty/hairdressing room, laundry

Paul Fiddaman, Chief Executive, Cestria Community Housing, added:

"This is a hugely innovative development that will help to change perceptions of older people's housing, by embracing lifetime community design principles. We believe that The Elms has the potential to become the blueprint for older people's housing in the future and that this type of housing solution will have a huge positive impact on the lives of residents and the wider community."

and carer's office. The ground floor includes two communal lounges and a community exhibition space to further integrate the facility into the immediate neighbourhood.



A CGI of the new Highland Hospice at Inverness.

Ian Clark, JDDK Director responsible for the design, commented:

"This is a lovely site, and its fine character and expansive outlook over the river disguises some major design restrictions, particularly a shortage of space to work with. The major design challenge has been to provide a new environment which feels spacious and responds effectively to the beautiful setting and outlook, but uses every square inch of the site to its best advantage. The organic shape of the new building helps to liberate views towards the river but also enables the available space to be used very efficiently. We are very much looking forward to developing the detailed design with Highland Hospice in the coming months."

Inverness Hospice

In August, we were delighted that our design proposals for a new In-Patient Unit for Highland Hospice was granted Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent. The Highland Hospice at Inverness is the only hospice serving adults with incurable life limiting illness in the Highlands of Scotland.

The new facilities will provide accommodation for 10 in-patients in en-suite rooms which will overlook the River Ness which runs adjacent to the site,

together with two additional 'flex' bedrooms. It will replace the existing in-patient accommodation which had become outdated. In addition, the scheme includes reorganised facilities for counselling and relatives over-night stay in the existing areas, amongst others. A new central double-height Sanctuary space will form the spiritual heart of the building. The new construction will integrate sensitively with the listed Ness House, which is a familiar local landmark on the riverside and is the original home of the hospice.



A typical three bed room.



Interior view of the proposed Nurse Base.

The Sill

Here's a chance to see our latest designs for The Sill project developed after months of consultation and refinement of the existing design concepts. Stuart Evans, Project Director for The Sill, Northumberland National Park Authority, said:

"In response to the original brief, JDDK have taken on board public and peer feedback throughout the development phase, to produce a design concept for Northumberland's new landscape discovery centre, which is truly reflective of participative design. We are delighted with the result and look forward to sharing the updated designs with the community at our next public event."

Members of the public are invited by Northumberland National Park Authority and YHA (England and Wales) to view the latest designs for Northumberland's new landscape discovery centre, on Tuesday 15 October (2pm - 7pm) at Once Brewed YHA, off Military Road.

If you miss that, for more information about The Sill and the upcoming events, visit www.thesill.org.uk, find The Sill on Facebook or follow The Sill on Twitter @thesillproject.

You can read more about the participative design process on page 5.

