

Lathams

Highfield House

Nottingham



Client: The University of Nottingham

Contractors: Robert Woodhead Ltd

Scale: Restoration of Grade II listed building including a 600sqm extension

Value: £2.1million

Creating a sustainable future for Highfield House

Highfield House is a Grade II listed building based in the grounds of The University of Nottingham. Formerly used by the Theology School, it was deemed too small for modern use and Lathams were approached to refurbish and extend the house, giving it a sustainable and productive future and bringing new relevance and vitality to the listed building and its setting.

Our ultimate aim was to create a BREEAM excellent building that would mainly be used by post-graduate researchers but which could also be used for events and graduation ceremonies.

We added a 600sqm modernist extension acting as a minimal backdrop to the restoration and we carried out a series of gentle refurbishments, creating usable spaces and adding new-build elements, all with a view to retaining the essential character of the house. Internal upgrades included lighting, heating, rewiring and decoration.

“Latham’s have provided an exceptional design for the University in response to a challenging brief to blend a new extension on to one of the most prestigious listed period homes on University Park.

Special attention has been given to the restoration and preservation of the period features and historical content, whilst maximising the use of natural light and space providing a seamless and sympathetic transition from the contemporary extension design into the period building and the walled gardens.

The boldness of the vision and persuasive ability to acquire listed building consents is a credit to all involved. This development will be a distinctive and prized asset of the campus.”

Chris Jagger
Chief Estates & Facilities Officer
The University of Nottingham

Derby
St Michael’s, Queen Street
Derby DE1 3SU
t: +44 (0)1332 365777

London
70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
t: +44 (0)207 4900672

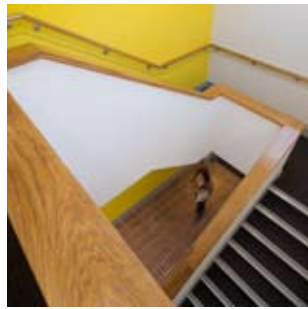
e: info@lathamarchitects.co.uk
w: lathamarchitects.co.uk

ARCHITECTURE

CONSERVATION

URBANISM

LANDSCAPE



The Lathams solution

Our approach was to create a single building from a series of existing ones, exploiting the carriage yard and linking the retained carriage house to a series of new-build elements. The carriage house was the critical element in the design although of a later date (1881) and much altered it was considered to be of physical significance in showing the arrangement of carriage yard and service block and the relationship to the adjacent walled garden.

Initially we considered a glass-box solution to make the link between old and new, ultimately deciding to create a new quadrangle or cloister informed by other venerable institutions. We retained the coach house, modifying it to become ante rooms and seminar spaces servicing the new wing beyond. The further, inner court was roofed in an all-glass structure, while an outer yard was given a sedum roof over its irregular shape which then provided further large seminar spaces linked in turn to the walled garden.

We carried out gentle refurbishment of the existing building, repairing it with extensive leadwork and use of lime renders. The country house setting has been retained, with beautiful views out and light flooding in to a fascinating series of linked and changing volumes.

The main new build element set low in the landscape is a very minimal white rendered cube with modernist lines of fenestration leading to an entrance fin of Welsh slate, which in turn takes the visitor into first a high lobby and then beneath a low stair before catching the first views of the glazed carriage court beyond. Heating is via air source heat pumps to ducted air distribution and insulation levels are well in excess of current minimum standards.

We extensively reused materials for this project, including 80% of aggregates and services achieved seven credits for the reduction of CO2 emissions.

The finished project provides a new lease of life for a long-neglected asset and a facility which provides a green calm deep in the gardens of the campus.

Background

Highfield House was built in 1797, located at the heart of The University's campus. Until the early 1990s it was used as the Vice Chancellor's residence, and subsequently used by a number of other departments. Each stayed for a limited time until outgrowing the space and relocating on the campus. The University realised that the constraints of the house and its internal room sizes were making it too difficult to occupy, and that it was not fit for purpose in today's academic environment – it was too small for a modern academic or administrative department.

The Lathams vision

- To create a BREEAM excellent building for postgraduate research and staff, which would also act as a venue for events and graduation ceremonies.
- To carry out a sensitive programme of restoration, using new-build elements wisely to retain the original character of the house.
- To offer a sustainable, productive future to the building.

