

# Cornish Buildings Group Celebrate the Best in Cornish Architecture

## Cornish Building Group Awards 2018

Every year the Cornish Buildings Group present awards for the best in good design and the cream of recently completed or renovated buildings in the county.

Paul Holden, Chairman of the Group, said 'Our Awards are considered the 'Oscars' of building awards in Cornwall. They are respected and desirable recognitions of achievement and as such we receive a high number of entries from private individuals and architectural practices'.

This year was a particularly difficult for the judges as the quality of entry was so high.

Patrick Newberry, Awards Administrator' said 'we value entries that build on the Cornish precedent or take such precedents forward in a brave, courageous and aesthetically pleasing manner. This year has been a great advertisement for what Cornwall can offer – great buildings in stunning locations.'

The Awards were presented last Thursday evening at Lanhydrock House near Bodmin.

Mr Holden added 'As always our Awards scheme has proven to recognise the best in good design and conservation practice. This county is lucky to have a rich tradition of exciting built heritage so it is very reassuring that the tradition of sympathetic yet bold architecture continues.

An exhibition of winning entries will tour libraries around Cornwall throughout the year.

For more details on our Awards scheme and to see this year's and previous year's winners go to the awards page at <https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/home>

### EDITORIAL NOTES

Since 1969 the aims of the Cornish Buildings Group have been to stimulate interest, appreciation and knowledge of good building in Cornwall, and to encourage the erection, protection, repair and recording of such buildings.

Like any amenities group, we depend on numbers, strength and support of our membership, who provide the force and knowledge that have made us effective for over forty years.

We encourage the protection and repair of historic buildings whether these are listed buildings or simply good examples of traditional building. We aim to encourage good architecture and to raise the general standard of building throughout the county. We hope that our generation may leave behind it buildings which will be looked back on with that same pleasure and enjoyment that we experience when we look at the architecture of past ages.

### CONTACT

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## Citations for winners

The Cornish Buildings Group Awards Scheme is the county's most prestigious architectural prize celebrating excellence in areas of architectural design and applied conservation and restoration work. Every year the Council of the Cornish Buildings Group considers a broad range of project types ranging from housing estates to bus shelters; informed historic conservation to radical modern design and independent craft skills to small and large-scale repairs and renovations.

Previous winners of the scheme can be seen on our website.

Our judges offer wide ranging experience in many aspects of Cornish architecture and architectural practice including conservation, design, environment, heritage, planning and research. When judging we evaluate the quality of design or conservation philosophy, assess the suitability of materials, appropriateness of the solution to context and the overall impact of the building.

We value entries that build on Cornish precedent or take such precedents forward in a courageous and aesthetically pleasing manner. This lively and vigorous process ensures that the Cornish Buildings Group award scheme maintains its position as a true mark of excellence.

These citations reflect our conclusions, commending some excellent work, while on others constructively offering thoughts on what might have been done differently.

## AWARD WINNER

Dry Creek House, Polzeath (*Matt Williams for John and Maxine Fack*)



Dry Creek House at Polzeath, 2018 main award winner

Making the most of an awkward, steeply sloping, site, Dry Creek House is made up of two canted wings, one running along the hillside, whilst the other dramatically cantilevers out from the hill.

The main accommodation is on the top floor which not only maximises the views towards the beach at Polzeath, but also takes full advantage of adjoining wooded valley which can be viewed from the extensive balconies.

The overall design aesthetic is wonderfully simple, the upper storey being clad in timber and the ground floor in stone. The judges liked elements of the detailing, particularly the clever use of framing within the timber cladding to reduce excessive horizontality. On the entrance front, a colonnade with an angled rear wall cleverly guides the visitor along the back of the house to the main entrance. Inside, good use of polished concrete and timber creates a pleasant ambience and does not detract from the stunning views. The house has a strong design presence, but does not impose itself on its surroundings nor is it overly intrusive, a design much in accordance with the Cornish Buildings Group guidance on coastal development.

## COMMENDATION

### **Voss, Trematon (*Martin Penk for Viscount and Viscountess Boyd*)**

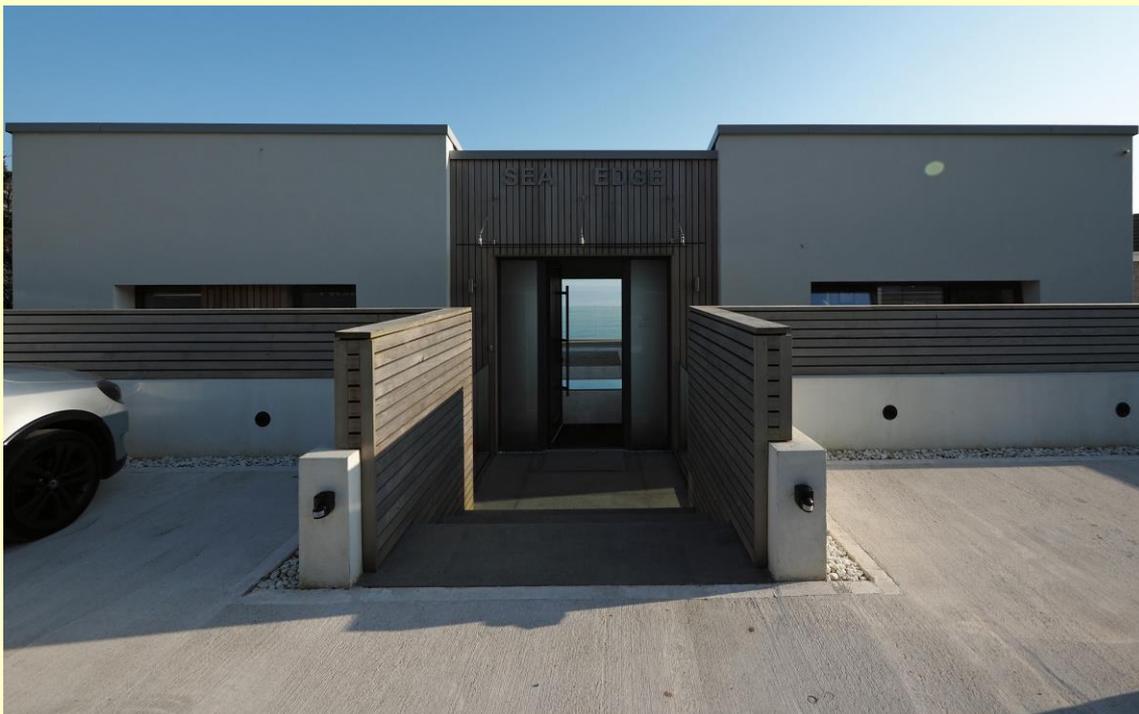
Every so often a house is built in Cornwall which, we feel, will be talked about for many years to come. Voss is just such a house. Positioned in open country with far reaching views, the house is truly distinctive in character and bold in its design having a crescent shaped ground floor wing on one side (bedrooms and staff accommodation) with a pavilion-style living space on the other. These principal masses are divided by a giant concrete staircase which leads into the garden with its radiating walls and paths.

The house makes clever use of its sloping site, being positioned so that the impact of the building, which is quite tall, is reduced, particularly when approached from the lane, where only the pavilion is visible. The pavilion contains a large open living space, with one complete glass wall facing south under a complex over sailing roof, the asymmetric and tapering shape of which is determined by the radial focus on the central point.

Whilst the judges liked the way in which the design focused on the axial point, it was evident that this design feature had caused a few challenges in detailing. We were also divided on the central stairway, which, although draws the eye of visitors arriving at the main entrance into the garden, would perhaps have benefited from being even bolder.

## COMMENDATION

### **Sea Edge, Downderry (*Kast Architects for Mr & Mrs Knudsen*)**



Sea Edge, Downderry

Designing houses for prominent coastal sites is not without its challenges. Perhaps the most challenging is how to design a distinctive building that capitalises on the prospects of the site, but does not adversely dominate the coastal landscape. Sea Edge handles these challenges well: indeed, we felt that the simple, well proportioned, white box of the upper storey, which contains the principal living spaces with superb sea views, happily blends against the neighbouring row of cliff top villas.

Considerable attention was paid to detailing such as ensuring that the roof overhanging the balcony provided effective protection from excessive sunlight for the living spaces during high summer. The external hanging staircase was also a nicely detailed feature which attracted favourable comments from the judges.

We wondered if the entrance to the house could have been arranged such that the stunning sea view was not revealed quite so quickly, creating more of a sense of intrigue as people enter the house, however, this was a small point which does not detract from the overall quality of the house.

## COMMENDATION

**The Old Cathedral School, Truro (*Koha Architects for the Dean and Chapter of Truro Cathedral*)**



Koha Architects, Arthur Bradley the stained glass restorer and the Dean of Truro receive a commendation for Old Cathedral School, Truro

The original plans for Truro Cathedral drawn up by J.L. Pearson and his son Frank included provision of a cloister, chapter house, offices for the Chapter and a school. In the event, only the Cathedral School was built and, for many years, it stood against the imposing north side of the cathedral, somewhat neglected and unloved – a stump of unfilled ambition. Thanks to the thoughtful restoration carried out by Koha Architects for the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, this lost building of Truro has been brought back into full use as a multi-purpose space.

This admirable restoration has revived original features and removed insensitive later partitions and false ceilings to reveal the original proportion of internal spaces. Impressive stone chimney pieces and stone window frames have been cleaned and repaired and the striking stained glass has been repaired and stabilised where necessary, enabling the visitor to enjoy the full richness of the original decorative schemes. The planned entrance to the building from the cloister has been unblocked and a plain glass screen inserted, allowing light to pour into the new reception area whilst allowing visitors to look out at the cathedral's soaring north front.

In restoring this building, the Dean and Chapter have not only created a valuable new facility for Truro but have also brought the green to the north of the cathedral back to life. The only regret is that the building is not linked to the cathedral by a cloister garth as originally planned – perhaps the Chapter's next project?

## **COMMENDATION FOR CREATION OF PLACE**

### **The Old Station Master's House, Fowey (*Atelier 3 for Acorn Blue*)**

Fowey's industrial heritage, as a thriving port, is far from obvious from the centre of the town. However, the observant visitor, who approaches from the Bodinnick Ferry or down Passage Lane from Four Turnings, will benefit from seeing converted former warehouses and industrial buildings lining the road, reminders of the heyday of shipbuilding, trading and clay exporting. One of the most poignant reminders of Fowey's industrial past was the Old Station Master's House, built by the Cornwall Minerals Railway Company as part of the construction of a through line linking Newquay and Fowey.

Atelier 3 has turned this derelict ruin back to a building the town can be proud. The distinctive Tudor Gothic façade has been painstakingly and systematically rebuilt, stone by stone, making a powerful impact on the surrounding area and its sense of place. Not only does the new façade create a distinctive visual reminder of the importance of the railway to Fowey but it also enables a modern development of handsome new apartments overlooking Caffa Mill Creek. It is unusual for a developer and architect to carry out such a painstaking recreation of an important piece of industrial heritage and Acorn Blue and Atelier 3 are to be applauded for their endeavours.

## **COMMENDATION**

### **Stable Cottages, Rosewarne House, Camborne (Lesley Price )**

Rosewarne House is a handsome Greek Revival mansion in Camborne, home originally to the great Cornish mining families of Harris and Holman. The house has long been empty and inevitably over time has become riddled with rot and decay. Thanks to the heroic efforts of Lesley Price and her team, the decay has been reversed and the house beginning to return to its former glory. The restoration of the old stable block marks the completion of the first habitable part of the project. Four highly imaginative two bedroomed dwellings have been incorporated into the old building, creating much needed smaller housing for Camborne. The judges felt that the historic fabric has been well repaired and sensitively handled in the restoration and the interior spaces have been treated responsibly, creating quirky, unusual and are very characterful modern dwellings.

If this was not enough, the project worked in partnership with Cornwall Council and the Cornwall Colleges Group to test four different insulation schemes, a different insulation system being deployed and evaluated in each unit.

The judges were very impressed not only by the saving of this lovely old building, but also by the imagination and determination to use the opportunity to improve the collective knowledge of the efficacy of different insulation approaches.

#### ***The Old Vicarage, Cubert (CSA Architects for Ms L. Northridge)***

Cubert Old Vicarage is a distinguished house, located at the heart of the village, dating from the seventeenth century (possibly earlier) with significant nineteenth century additions. CSA Architects have carried out a sensitive restoration of the building bringing it back to life as a family home. The restoration included returning to full use the earliest parts of the building and painstakingly repairing an original cob wall in the process.

A minimum intervention approach to restoration was adopted, which the judges applauded. Where new work was required, it was carried out sympathetically, using simple modern designs where new features had to be created or accurate recreation of lost features, where the original form was known. Careful repair of sash windows and replacement with accurate replicas where the original window had been lost means that the house has recovered its quiet distinction. We also liked the way in which the back of the house, which forms an important feature in the centre of the village, has been carefully repaired and restored, contributing considerably to Cubert's delightful ambience.

#### ***The Old Mill, Probus (Stephen Knightley Partnership for Angela Perlmutter and Diana Pride)***

Small mills were once a feature of the English landscape, dotted liberally across the land, sited where a plentiful supply of water was readily available. With consolidation of agricultural support services such as milling, most small mills fell into disuse, often decaying quietly at the bottom of a

sequestered valley. Probus Mill was just such a mill. When acquired by its present owners, it was little more than a tumble down shell, marred by later concrete block additions and on the point of merging irretrievably with its surrounding landscape.

The Stephen Knightley Partnership worked with the new owners to create a charming three bedroomed house from the remains of the Old Mill. Inevitably much of the building had to be taken down and rebuilt and a significant addition was made to the original structure to provide further accommodation. The work was carried out with sensitivity and to a high standard, with the new works clearly delineated from the old. The judges were particularly impressed by the effectiveness of the internal planning – it was very refreshing to find a new smaller house laid out with flair and thoughtfulness, creating good sized, well lit spaces.

The judges did wonder if more could have been made of surviving original features, such as the mill wheel wall, but recognised that it was a great triumph to create such an enchanting house in such a wonderful setting.

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You can find out more about us and our Awards Scheme at <https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/>

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