

NEWSLETTER

# Bakers of Danbury

Heritage Builders Since 1878

February 2024

## WORDS FROM THE MD...PETER SMYTH

As we step through the first month of 2024 and into February, it gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our first newsletter of the year, presenting our latest case studies and company news.

In this edition, we showcase a mix of historical and new build projects, including some fantastic photos of the projects we've undertaken. These include the stunning interior of St Lawrence Jewry and a magical picture of the newly built Round Chapel taken at sunrise by our client Sister Gabriela.

Whilst we celebrate the completion of flagship projects such as the magnificent restoration of the aforementioned St Lawrence Jewry in London and Bourn Mill in Cambridgeshire, we have some fascinating projects in the pipeline including a Grade II Listed whole home renovation in Hertfordshire as well as a radical modernisation programme to a 13th century church in Essex. All our endeavours underscore our commitment to marrying traditional craftsmanship with modern restoration techniques as well as making new and contemporary spaces.

Looking ahead, our primary focus remains on delivering an unparalleled service to our clients. We have a continued focus on training to ensure the highest standards of workmanship and attention to detail so making our journey towards excellence a continuous one. We are also looking forward to supporting others and doing our bit to give back, such as working with Natural England, the Wildlife Trust and raising money for local charities.

So here's to the coming year, marked by making a positive contribution in all that we do. I encourage you to visit our newly updated website, designed to keep you informed about the services we offer and wide range of work we undertake. I wish you all the very best for the coming year.



HERITAGE | LISTED BUILDINGS | CHURCHES | RESIDENTIAL | NEW BUILDS

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### WORDS FROM THE MD

Peter Smyth, Managing Director

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### PROJECTS IN FOCUS

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Christ College, Cambridge  
St Laurence Church, Upminster  
St Peter's Church, Suffolk  
Colchester Cemetery Chapel, Essex  
Dorewards Hall Barns, Essex  
Grade II Farmhouse, Essex

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# PROJECTS IN FOCUS

## Contracts Department...

### Roof renovation and solar panels at Cambridge University

Bakers have completed an extensive roof renovation and solar panel preparation programme to the Lasdun Building at Christ College, Cambridge University. The works involved a new lead roof and a SIKA liquid membrane roof finish applied to the existing concrete to enable the fitting of phase 1 of the solar panel scheme. As principal contractor we managed the project through to completion ensuring all warranties and certificates were issued.



### The old makes way for the new as the build of a bespoke home completes

With the original farmhouse bungalow past repair, owner and conservation architect Hilary Brightman, seized the opportunity to design and build a new residential property. Bakers commenced the demolition and clearing of the area and construction began in November 2022. Effective project management always plays a pivotal role in the success of any new build project and Bakers are adept at managing this process from breaking ground through to the final fix and landscaping. Our expertise extends to adhering to required building practices with consideration to energy efficiency and high quality finishings.



### New sports pavilion nears final phase ready for green roof and solar panels

With the first foundations now laid, this sports pavilion, and soon to be home to the Maldon Saints Football Club, is taking shape. The steel frame is in place and the block and beam flooring and cavity block walls installed. The next phase is installing doors and windows, the mechanical and electrical first fix plus the heat pump system. The final phase roofing programme will involve the installation of a green roof and solar panels to give this building a top energy rating.



## Church Department...

### Tower, tomb and church repairs become part of the 800 year church history

The 27m high tower of St Laurence Church in Upminster, London underwent repairs following damage from summer storms. The opportunity was seized to address other issues with work including repointing, masonry repairs and stone replacement. Weathered and crumbling carved label stops were replaced, skillfully copying and carving new ones. The restoration efforts extended to a collapsed table-style tomb in the church graveyard which was carefully disassembled and rebuilt incorporating new stone and replicating the inscription. In collaboration with Natural England, the restoration project incorporated swift boxes to encourage roosting.



### Light and space added to this historic church in the Suffolk village of Henley

The objective of this project was to modernise and create more space whilst keeping the historical integrity of the beautiful St Peters village church. This was achieved by removing pews, relocating the font and adding a new structural steel and a glass balustrade to the balcony. A new ceiling, a limecrete breathable floor, lighting, heating and fire alarm system were also all installed. The historically precious 13th century West door was also restored.



### Repaired, restored and bats protected as Colchester Chapel Cemetery is brought back to life

Bakers are nearing completion to restore an Anglican cemetery chapel with a history spanning 160 years. The chapel, which had been derelict for several years, had become home to a population of bats. The restoration process involved collaborating with the Bat Conservation Trust to pinpoint the 'bat window'. Our operational plan was designed to avoid obstructing the natural passage of the bats and hand tools were used in the maternity roost area to protect their well being. The restoration work included the replacement of weathered masonry, lime mortar repointing, ragstone walling, roof repairs and newly carved stone elements and label stops. The project marries heritage and craftsmanship and has rejuvenated this beautiful chapel for visitors to enjoy.







## Heritage Special Works Department...

### Preserving a slice of history with the renovation of the 15th Century Dorewards Hall Barns

The incredible restoration of seven mid 15th century barns continues at this Essex countryside site. The barns were found to be in various states of disrepair, where the original oak frame arches, braced tie beams and arcade plates were in near pristine condition in some but experiencing severe structural decay in others. The stripping of existing weatherboards also revealed major areas of failed brickwork.

The process involved carefully dismantling, recording and numbering the original frames then reconstructing the frames either by preserving decayed timbers or substituting with new oak timbers in cases of irreparable decay. The frames were rebuilt using traditional mortice and tenon joints, mirroring the age-old craftsmanship of constructing oak-framed buildings. New limecrete foundations and imperial stock brick plinths with lime mortar were constructed with new green oak sole plates and spliced studs ends. Barn doors were repaired or remade and the original critical windows were meticulously overhauled. An incredible restoration project.

### A traditional programme of repair to resurrect a beautiful Grade II Listed farmhouse

The removal of the existing sand and cement render exposed significant decay to the timber frame of this Grade II Listed farmhouse. Over time, the render had prevented proper ventilation, leading to the development of wet rot, beetle decay and dry rot. Collaborating with the conservation officer and architect, the primary goal was to safeguard the historical integrity preserving the appearance and as much of the original timber frame as feasible.

To achieve this, the farmhouse was carefully propped and limecrete foundations were laid. Brickwork and lime plinths were repaired or replaced and following remedial treatment to the timber frame, new render was applied. The opportunity was taken to carry out a full re-wire within the property, internal repairs undertaken and new doors and window frames crafted in our joinery workshop. This was an extensive project, with the approach and construction methods used ensuring the property is preserved and protected for years to come.



## Joinery Department...

### Creating traditional and bespoke joinery

The creation of curved arched chapel doors required a mathematical mind. The springing point was calculated and the arch shape was then templated onto plywood, precision machined and seamlessly fitted together in sections. These beautifully shaped doors are now ready for installation as an integral part of our Round Chapel project in Essex.



The team also worked on restoring a decaying 500 year old church door - part of a larger project being run by our Church department. A limewash application was key to blend the old oak with the new, creating an aged, timeless appearance. The original 500 year old hand forged lock was also restored.



Looking forward, planning is underway to restore a large 1930's porch at a residential property in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex by replicating the original hardwood sculptured timbers, not possible using PVC, and encasing the original stained glass windows all to retain the charm of the past. Project management by Bakers will also include re-roofing, adding a balcony, laying new tile floor and installing lighting.



## Get in touch...

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## OTHER NEWS

### What's been in the news at Bakers?



#### ISO 9001 and Heritage Approved Contractor

We are proud to have been awarded two valued accreditations; ISO 9001:2015 and the National Federation of Builders, Heritage Approved Contractor Mark, as shown by Gary Fenner, our Special Works Department Manager. Together these demonstrate our commitment to customer satisfaction and our adherence to the NFB's code of conduct and experience of working on heritage and traditional buildings.



#### Our joinery workshop receives a makeover

Our joinery workshop underwent a recent makeover under the new management of Paul Revill with the upgrade to the pully system to allow the large items we produce to safely leave the workshop plus a new layout and a reordering of work benches, machinery and tools to give more space, more light and a place to inspire the creation of traditional, bespoke and hand carved joinery.



#### 'Twas the season to be jolly!

This Christmas our team donned a bumper crop of Christmas jumpers in aid of Save the Children as well as collecting donations for a local food bank. What a festive bunch we are! We were also delighted to provide the 20 foot Christmas Tree for Danbury Parish Council which stood proudly outside our offices at Eves Corner throughout the Christmas period.

### Hear from our valued partner companies



As Pickford Builders continue to work on insurance related building works, a recent project highlighted the significant damage that can result from an escape of water. A spacious early 20th century six-bedroom residence in Cambridge suffered the effects of a burst bathroom pipe causing damage to all ground floor rooms, kitchen and three bedrooms. The water damage restoration programme involved removing all wall and ceiling plaster to facilitate drying, a crucial step in the overall restoration procedure. After the affected areas were thoroughly dried, the Pickford team proceeded with replastering and carrying out a full refurbishment. This involved decorating, tiling and installing a new kitchen. Their primary goal is to restore a property as closely as possible to its original condition with efficiency and care, all the while coordinating seamlessly with the insurance company and the policyholder.



Collins & Curtis continue to work on multiple projects using a variety of stones sourced from quarries in the UK and France. Work continues on a large new build property in Norfolk, St Osyth Priory and many banks, churches and memorials throughout East Anglia and London. Here are some fantastic photos of some their work.



### New Starters...



#### Luke Stephens Contracts Manager Church Department

We are delighted to welcome Luke Stephens to the Bakers' team. Luke joins with a wealth of experience having worked

as the Estates Manager at a significant country estate where he managed and maintained the estate's properties. Prior to this, Luke had a successful building company. We look forward to Luke enhancing our team even further contributing to the high-quality service we offer our clients.

### Qualified...

A number of our employees successfully completed their CITB Site Manager Safety Training allowing us to demonstrate our commitment to provide a safe, professional and qualified workforce.

A special mention goes to our Commercial Director Mark Howlett who recently qualified to MCIOB (Member of the Chartered Institute of Building).