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RATES 2026



MAGAZINE

The Society's official publication is a 72-86 page full colour quarterly magazine. With a print run of 7,000 and at least 60% of members whom live in old or historic houses. The readership includes architects, surveyors, town planners, local authority conservation officers, engineers, builders, craftsmen, interior designers and homeowners.

The magazine offers heritage news, casework, technical advice, special features, a comprehensive book review section and has 30-90 regular advertisers.

In addition to regular main features on traditional materials and repair techniques, **SPAB** campaigns on a wide range of conservation issues. Extensive coverage of controversial topics like architectural theft and airport expansion has attracted onwide media publicity.



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CASEWORK
CAMPAIGNING

Left: Owners Beth and Barney Jones celebrate the completion of repair – and their birthdays. Below: The beautifully repaired interior of Brook Hall.

LODGING RANGE
BROOK HALL, HEYWOOD, WILTS
Matthew Scoble

Measuring the success of SPAB casework often comes headless, but perhaps the answer is simple: was there a celebration at the end of the work, and was the Society invited to the party?

In the case of the Lodging Range at Brook Hall, there was: our party would rather have attended than the one to mark the end of the project's first phase. As a case, the Lodging Range had been very early in the time of the SPAB, back in 1992. Over the years it was among the most remarkable of the restored buildings. The building was always inspiring, but as a case it was sometimes deeply inspiring. This made the 'high' of the party in 2019 especially rewarding, not least because it allowed a generation of the most people who'd thought not to attend the building over the years.

The building is about as good as you can get from a SPAB perspective: an exceptional and complete medieval structure of the kind that inspired Morris and Webb. Brook Hall is the remains of a high status 15th-century house. It is reached by a narrow lane that comes a foot. Though not far from the main road, it is a landmark, but the most remarkable part – and the best surviving medieval structure – is a long, impressive 15th-century lodging block. This would originally have provided accommodation for visitors. When the Hall ceased to be fashionable and dropped down a social scale, the lodging range was reduced from high class home to cheap ones. Within it still remains a 16th-century three storey house.

Over 25 years as a case the building offered many trials and tribulations: absence of evidence, legal difficulty over repair work notices, and misinterpreted work to surrounding structures. All this resulted in a long-term position on the national 'at risk' register. As a result, it was at first attention in the air and ended in a renewed priority for local government and heritage organisations. English Heritage / Historic England has been particularly

important in helping a focus on the building's condition and structural repair work, and has also provided grant aid for emergency work.

The party, held in May 2019, was to celebrate completion of the main phase of repair work to the Lodging Range. This has been carried out in exemplary fashion by Andrew Townsend and Oliver Wilson. Andrew's own involvement with the site has spanned the last quarter century. His first visit was as an expert casework volunteer for the SPAB, providing advice on the building's condition. He was subsequently commissioned to oversee emergency work and has used the opportunity to take groups of SPAB Scholars to the site. The repair work beautifully illustrates the SPAB approach: grafting existing and meeting the structure without loss of its special qualities. It has included some old repairs to decayed masonry, metal cladding to detached timber joints and lineworking of the interior. The linework has highlighted much of the building's wealth of superlative masonry.

Crucial to the first phase of the building has been the involvement of new owners who appreciate the structure.



They are Beth and Barney Jones who combined the party marking the work's completion with a celebration of their 40th birthday in 2019. Now the building is secure and in good shape, their plan for the longer term is the modern equivalent of its historic one – as a lodging range. They intend to make it a holiday accommodation for paying guests. If pressed with the complexity of the initial phase of work it will be a very special holiday. By staying there people can have the party as a living connection to decades of SPAB campaigning for the building.

CRUCIAL TO THE successful outcome at Brook Hall was the fact that most of its repair volunteers are able to carry out a lot of work at a steady pace in the winter. With what has been a good response to our call for new volunteers, there are still a number of areas of the country where we are struggling to find enough people to do the work. If you are in England, or the north-west, or Yorkshire, or even in the south, please let us know if you are able to help. We can provide training and support. Email: casework@spab.org.uk or casework@spab.org.uk

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CASEWORK
CAMPAIGNING

Left: Front elevation with 17th- and 18th-century windows. Below: First floor room with partition incorporating medieval raised cruck roof truss.

TALBOT FARM
CHALBURY, OXFORDSHIRE
Rachel Scoullard

This beautiful and ancient Grade II listed house is a rare survivor tucked away in Chalbury, Oxfordshire. The house has been empty for several years but has recently been purchased and the new owner contacted the SPAB through our advice line to ask for guidance on proposed repairs. It turned out that there was already a listed building application for works currently lodged with the local authority, which we would be commenting on in our capacity as a statutory consultee. Our conversations with the new owner led to us asking if he would allow us to visit independently and bring this year's Scholars with us. They rarely get to look at and make comments on a live planning application, so this was a perfect opportunity for them. Having studied the proposals, they visited in June with architect and Georgian Architect Townsend to see the property for themselves, and to provide comments and photographs which could then be used to help complete our response to the planning application.

The owner proposed the building with a view of the recently completed Oxfordshire Building Record for the house. This revealed that, based on the surviving physical evidence, the earliest phase of the property was dark back to the 13th century. It appears that Talbot Farm is a substantial survival of a large farm but raised cruck medieval hall house, the two main rooms are the hall and the kitchen, and the two sections have other forming a two bay medieval parlour or a west wing with a floor spanning a ground floor parlour and an upper chamber. Within the roof space, a small blackening chimney is seen on most of the roof timbers extending over two bays from where the hall was open to the roof, but for there are no signs of chimneys. If the Oxfordshire Building Record is correct, then the main Talbot Farm is a substantial building. There is only one other known for its cruck house in the Midlands and the last one known for its cruck house in the north is a property of some status.

It is this the original house, then the medieval scheme planned and the service rooms behind were to the south and were either lost when the adjacent Assheton Gate was built (c.1500) (discovered), or they have been incorporated into the 19th-century house. Since a 17th-century house, and there is a substantial floor with very thick stone walls and a small chimney. This is a very rare survival of a medieval house and an opening at ground level on the rear elevation. Above this is a 16th-century medieval window with a view of other black brick openings and the ghost of a chimney stack. It is known that the building was built in the 17th century and recorded as such in the 18th century. Various features from the period in the house remain, such as a 17th-century and a 16th-century partition to divide rooms. It appears to have been built by a wealthy farmer and a 17th-century house, and since there very little work has been undertaken. It was



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The SPAB's status as a leading authority on conservation, and as a useful reference source, prolongs the life of advertisements.

Although the SPAB will not endorse products and services, readers are aware that advertisers are vetted for relevance and understanding of SPAB principles.

SPAB focuses on all periods of the UK's architectural history.

Members include the majority of the UK's leading conservation specialists. Their education may have commenced on one of the SPAB's training schemes such as the annual scholarship training programme for young architects, building surveyors and structural engineers.

The Society

Founded by William Morris in 1877, SPAB is the largest, oldest and most technically expert conservation body campaigning to preserve old buildings.

SPAB is a charity (no. 231307) funded mainly by subscriptions, donations and legacies. It plays a formal part in the planning system and under the Town and Country Planning Act must be notified of all applications to demolish or partly demolish listed buildings in England and Wales. SPAB is asked to comment each year on hundreds of cases of every conceivable type of structure from farmhouses to mansions or from little churches to cathedrals. SPAB still works to the principles in William Morris's 1877 Manifesto, based on conservative repair, respect for the past and regular maintenance. There is free telephone technical advice to members.

Membership offers access to programmes of lectures and visits. People who have trained through the Society's Scholarships and William Morris Craft Fellowship Programmes care for many important buildings in the UK.

SPAB lobbies the government on issues affecting old buildings and publishes low cost technical leaflets.

Advertisement rates



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