

Project Information

Client:

LiveWest and Quantum Survey & Project Management

Description:

Major reinstatement works following fire damage to five flats in a grade 2 listed residential property

Value and Duration:

£2 million over 13 Months

Date Completed:

April 2021

Smith & Brenson Case Study

Garston Lodge

Brief Summary

Following an extensive fire that virtually destroyed this impressive former lodge building, we were awarded the tender to undertake major reinstatement works for established, existing clients Quantum Survey & Project Management and LiveWest.

The project commenced just before the Covid-19 pandemic struck and required the expertise of many specialist trades and the sourcing of bespoke materials to achieve a successful outcome, on time and within budget.

Description of Works

Internally, the building was a shell when we arrived on site. The floors required insulation and screeding along with the application of a specialist, structural full-height damp proofing system including the temporary removal of existing floor joists to enable this.

The reinstatement works extended internally to new gas, plumbing and water supplies and an electrical re-wire. Fire safety compartmentalisation was required along with the installation of bespoke ornate wooden doors and plaster cornice works in the communal areas of the building. The new kitchens and bathrooms benefited from a wireless, state-of-the-art extraction system. A new door entry system was installed and external areas turfed, landscaped and fenced.

Due to the complex nature and listed status of the building, we sourced and utilised the services and expertise of many specialist trade partners and suppliers in the areas of stone masonry, damp proofing and ornate plastering.

Description of Works - Continued

Only a small part of the original roof was in situ when our works commenced. Significant works were required to include replacement of traditional dowelled oak timbers and trusses, including strengthening and conservation of the timbers that remained. Specific Welsh slate was sourced for the roof along with stonemasonry repairs and specialist cleaning to the Bath stone work including ornate chimneys, castellations, finials, porticos and mullion windows. All undertaken by specialist contractors. Lime wash render was also applied to the outside of the building.

The Conservation Officer assigned to the project issued 12 conditions that we were required to satisfy in order for works to be signed off as we went, supported by an extensive 120-page document we prepared that contained method statements and other key information regarding how we set to achieve the requirements of the schedule of works and materials specifications.

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Challenges

The first challenge we encountered on the project related to the significantly high number, compared to similar projects we have undertaken, of conditions imposed by the assigned Conservation Officer.

The next challenge related to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic struck just as we commenced work.

Another challenge we experienced was the issue of a variation to install a bespoke door entry system by the client, when we approached project completion.

The final challenge we came across was that specialist materials required for the project, such as the Welsh states and the extensive oak trusses and timbers from Europe proved difficult to source with quarries being closed and European trade routes restricted respectively.

Solutions

The issue of the 12 conditions from the assigned Conservation Officer meant that we had to source and mobilise existing and new specialist service providers, contractors and materials suppliers in an informed and prompt manner in order to achieve a successful outcome for the client. We overcame this by utilising the expertise of existing trade partners and forging a strong working relationship with the Conservation Officer in order that communications flowed effectively and efficiently.

Solutions – Continued

Covid-19 caused issues relating to site safety for our staff, contractors and client, along with availability of contractors and materials. Solutions we applied included the creation and application of Covid-secure measures on site following a detailed risk assessment by our Compliance Manager, in respect of social distancing, hygiene and cleaning.

In order to keep the site running and limit disruption to the project, we obtained 'essential' working status. This meant that materials could still be sourced from those merchants that remained open. The nominated contractor selected to undertake the specialist damp proofing works furloughed all of their staff. As this work element represented a critical path in the programme and any delays would have adversely affected the finish date, we acted quickly and arranged for two of our own operatives to be trained as installers to combat this. During this time, we were also subjected to a random spot-check from the HSE. We were pleased, but not surprised, that they found our site operations and Covid-secure measures to be satisfactory with no cause for concern.

The addition of the requirement to install a bespoke door entry system could have presented an element of pressure in terms of scope creep, but was carefully averted via a process of risk mitigation by the submission of a prompt application for a variation to the client which did not go on to adversely affect the project finish date.

In relation to the welsh slate required, Smith and Brenson entered into significant dialogue with not only the roofing contractor but also the nominated quarry. This resulted in quarry staff being brought back from furlough specifically to source slate material required on this project.

Similarly, with the extremely large amount of oak required for the damaged roof trusses. Smith and Brenson engaged with multiple suppliers when sourcing the oak as this was being sourced from Europe and located the only open mill within France or Germany. A significant amount of time and effort was dedicated to ensure that the oak was delivered to the local joinery shop for manufacturing within a two week timescale to guarantee project timelines.

The site was surrounded by a high wall and temporary solid board hoarding, this together with the site alarm, CCTV cameras and local security patrols ensured that the security measures put in place by Smith and Brenson maintained the integrity of the site throughout. This was further enhanced with liaison and agreed police patrols when one of our security personal encountered individuals paying specific attention to our site and materials therein. There were no further incidents regarding the security of the site.

Given the nature of the site, there was no on-site parking which was solved by innovative working partnerships between Smith & Brenson and local retail outlets. Staff working on the sites would use the local retail provider, in turn they provided adequate parking for site personal. Excellent relationships were maintained throughout the project time.

Outcomes

A consistent site and project management team, supported by key tradespeople and surveyors, was applied to the project to ensure key knowledge was maintained and readily available and communication lines kept open throughout.

Our standard de-brief following completion of the the project, undertaken by the Project Manager and attended by key members of the management and site team, ensured that relevant information was captured and any lessons learned for future projects. We also pre-empted challenges in respect of obtaining materials delayed as a result of Covid-19 or Brexit by holding key items on site. It was also decided that retrospectively Contractor JCT contracts should have been issued to ensure trade partners were held to account regarding agreed timescales, this will be taken forward to our next projects.

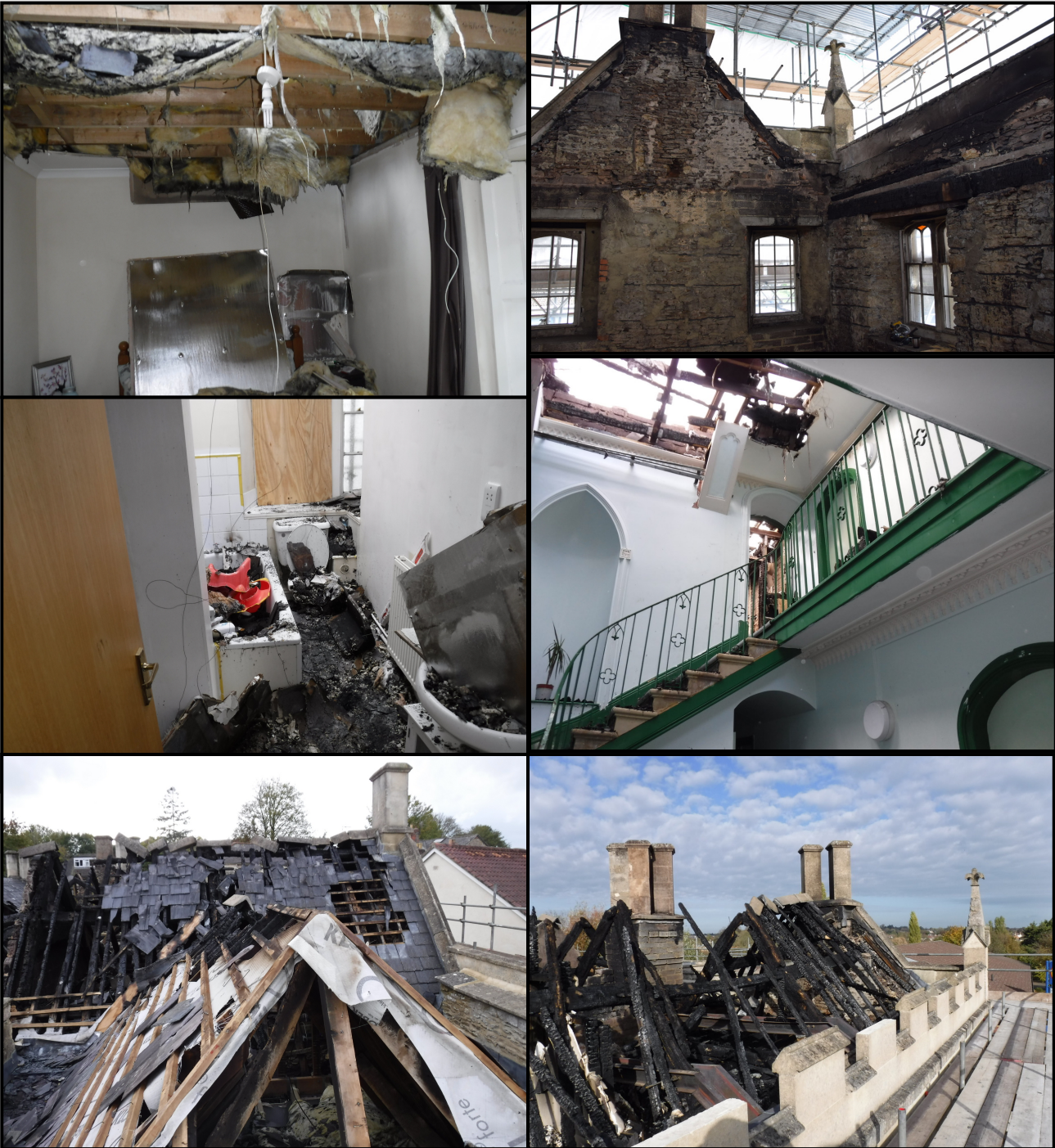
Extensive and comprehensive O&M manuals were issued within 5 working days of the completion date and provided to the client.

We were pleased that we navigated our way though the start and escalation of the Covid-19 pandemic by applying informed and prompt measures to alleviate site disruption in terms of mobilisation of operatives, contractors and materials. Garston Lodge is regarded as our 'showcase' site in regard to the setting up and successful management of a Covid-secure site, to this day.

On completion of the work, the building control officer, conservation officer, The LiveWest project manager and the Loss adjuster all commented on the high quality of the finish achieved by Smith and Brenson. We are proud of the fact that we continue to work with Quantum Survey & Project Management and LiveWest following completion of this prestigious project.

Smith & Brenson Case Study
Garston Lodge

Before Photos



Smith & Brenson Case Study
Garston Lodge

During Photos



Smith & Brenson Case Study
Garston Lodge

After Photos - Flats



Smith & Brenson Case Study
Garston Lodge

After Photos - Communal Areas



Garston Lodge

After Photos - External



Garston Lodge

After Photos - Roof

