

Project Details

Project Name	St Vincent, The Millfields, Stonehouse, Plymouth.
Category:	Best conversion to create dwellings

Please provide a summary of your nomination statement describing the key points (up to 50 words):

The St Vincent development in the Millfields has produced excellent, well detailed and spacious residential accommodation that have been finished to a very high standard. The on site management team and close communication with the design team has ensured this project sympathetically enhances the existing listed building but also creates living space that will perform well for the occupants.

Your Details

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Supporting statement (please expand as necessary)

ST VINCENT, THE MILLFIELDS, STONEHOUSE, PLYMOUTH

Original Concept & Vision

The refurbishment of St Vincent represents the first phase of an ongoing programme to refurbish the four surviving blocks of the eastern range for residential use within the Millfields former Royal Naval Hospital.

The aim of the conversion strategy has been to create light, airy, contemporary residential spaces that will ensure the repair, survival and continued use of the Grade II* Listed building. Entry to the building is via the existing lobby space shared with Nile Court adjacent. This large entrance is enlivened by the insertion of a freestanding timber screen with seating and concealed cycle storage. Timber cladding has similarly been used to face the projecting lift shaft to conceal scarring following demolitions and provide a clear, contemporary entrance sequence.

Internally, the apartments have been set out either side of a central spine wall. Originally used to sub-divide ward spaces, these massive walls have been retained to provide a legible reminder of the original building format. Each floor plate has essentially been quartered to provide four apartments at each level; at ground floor level, these apartments extend down into the basement to form duplexes. Each apartment has been planned to exploit the natural assets of the building, most notably the high ceilings, large window openings and sweeping

views from upper floor levels. Kitchen, bathroom and utility spaces have been located towards the centre of the building to free the perimeter for habitable spaces. This allows natural daylight to flood the primary living spaces while minimising physical abutments with the existing fabric.

Regeneration

The regeneration of this collection of Grade II* listed buildings within the historic setting of The Millfields (the former Royal Naval Hospital) has sustained the future of the buildings and contributes to the creation of a mixed development comprising residential accommodation, a school, offices and commercial development including a Development Trust which also provides start-up business units. The overall impression is the creation of a busy and vibrant 'village' close to the city centre.

Of key importance is the fact that The Millfields sits in the heart of Stonehouse, one of the most deprived wards in the city (and country) and this investment is a further key part to the contribution that the regeneration of the former Royal Naval Hospital is making to the overall improvement and well-being of this part of Plymouth.

Sustainability

Beyond the obvious sustainability success which has seen the development contribute to the creation of a balanced and sustainable community within The Millfields Estate; the project team were conscious to ensure sustainability was considered throughout all design, construction, operating and maintenance processes. Careful thought and consideration saw the incorporation of recycled products where possible including recycled car tyres forming the acoustic floor system, existing stone on site being reused where possible and crushing of waste masonry for use as aggregates. New sustainable products incorporated within the development include a bamboo floor finish throughout (a naturally fast growing renewable timber and carbon sink), A –rated boilers & white goods and conservation paving slabs manufactured using recycled concrete and stone. The majority of the project team were based within The Millfields which limited carbon emissions and throughout the construction process the contractor actively monitored the carbon footprint of each subcontractor attending site with efforts made to maximise the local employment pool wherever possible.

The challenges

The majority of the buildings contained within the Millfields are of architectural importance and a high percentage of these buildings are listed. There have been a number of proposals to bring the redundant buildings on the eastern range back into use in recent years and the St Vincent refurbishment is the first

one in a series of four buildings. Although constraints on the building were challenging given the architectural importance of the fabric and the further difficulties that are faced by changing the use to residential accommodation, the completed development is excellent.

The team that have been involved from an early stage have investigated various strategies to retain as much of the existing fabric and materials as possible and to sympathetically restore the aesthetic appearance of the building with considered choice of materials. The preliminary works to the external fabric to ensure the building was watertight involved the Bailey partnership, Plymouth Building Control and the planning conservation officer. This challenge weighed up the necessity of ventilating the roof space without impacting on the external appearance, retaining the existing unusual timber construction and mitigating the risk of condensation given the new use of the building. The design developed further and challenges were overcome particularly with regard to drainage, acoustic performance, fire strategy and energy conservation.

The on site relationship and open lines of communication between all parties involved have no doubt been a major factor to the success and quality of the finished building. The TEC Construction on site management team and Steve Demuth of Bailey Partnership have been outstanding throughout the development paying attention to detail, materials selection and problem solving. This has resulted in a very high standard of finishing, a building that performs well despite the constraints of the existing listed building fabric and spacious residential accommodation in this part of the Millfields.

Pre-application discussions are currently underway to develop other buildings in this area to residential use and the challenges faced with developing St Vincent's are being considered at an early stage to ensure future developments can hopefully perform even better.

PLEASE NOTE THESE IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE IN J PEG FORMAT ON REQUEST



Front/side elevation