



Shenstone House and its adjoining barn were extensively and sensitively refurbished



different time, the new inhabitants wanted the house to provide them with natural daylight, fresh air and enjoyment of the landscape.

When working on historic buildings we try to imagine people living in them both now and during their varied and rich past. We ask what is different about those times and what is the same. What should remain, what is vital to the character of the house? We also assess what is redundant or even damaging. The occupants of historic buildings often experience difficulties with the their

***'Architects enjoy working with historic and listed buildings. we try to imagine people living in them both now and during their varied and rich past'***

layout and with susceptibility to issues such as damp, condensation, and cold.

In the case of Hollin Root, an inadequate bathroom housed in a flat roof first floor extension was making daily living in the house unpleasant. In addition, the kitchen and dining room were dark and cramped for a young family. The house suffered from poor ventilation as well as being difficult and expensive to heat. It needed to breathe and be freed from the imposed modern requirements that it had not been

able to easily accommodate.

The bathroom and kitchen were relocated to a new, two-storey side extension, allowing for the removal of the flat roof extension. The original shape of the roof could now be reinstated and in so doing the form of the farmhouse as it was first built could be easily understood. The new day room located on the ground floor of the extension opens up to the rear of the house. Now the house benefits for the first time from the southerly sun and it is able to enjoy the spectacular views down the

valley on which its back has been turned for the past 300 years.

For the refurbishment of the original house the clients worked closely with skilled contractors Niensens Ltd of Greystoke, Penrith, to bring about a detailed and sensitive restoration.

**T**he restoration of Shenstone House in Over Kellet - a few miles south of the Cumbrian border in Lancashire - by Mason Gillibrand Architects is an

excellent example of the refurbishment of a 19th-century house. The house is a large, stone built late Georgian manor house. There is a barn to the rear adjoined to the house. The house had been left to dilapidate and for many years had been largely unoccupied save for two rooms on the ground floor. The barn remained in good condition but had lost its roof. The property was spot-listed in 2011 after works to restore it were already well under way. (Spot listing is the process of listing individual buildings,

particularly those under threat. Anyone can apply to have a building spot-listed.)

It now stands as a good example of its type and has been developed such that it has a newer 21st-century relevance. There has been extensive and sensitive refurbishment of the house and uncovering of significant historic features. A large portion of the adjoining barn is now an open, modern space sitting comfortably in the garden and housed within the existing stone walls. (Shenstone House is for sale with R&B Estate Agents [www.rbestates.co.uk](http://www.rbestates.co.uk))

When the refurbishment and extension of a listed building is successful, the presence of history is strongly felt and it is possible to imagine the lives of those who have lived there. While the hope is that these previous occupants would enjoy seeing what has been saved and restored, it is tempting to imagine also what they would think of the new work that has been carried out. We hope that they would love them just as much.

**CONTACTS**

- Miller Clear Architects [www.millerclear.co.uk](http://www.millerclear.co.uk)
- Mason Gillibrand Architects, of Caton, Lancaster [www.masongillibrand.com](http://www.masongillibrand.com)



*'Understanding the importance of historic buildings and having a knowledge of traditional architecture is essential not only to carry out appropriate restoration work but also to be able to design any new elements in a way that is modern but harmonious and respectful of the heritage asset.'*  
**Darren Ward at Red Raven Design, Cockermouth**

- Niensens Ltd [www.niensens.co.uk](http://www.niensens.co.uk)
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- Lancaster and Westmorland Society of Architects [lancasterarchitects.wordpress.com](http://lancasterarchitects.wordpress.com)
- Carrock Design & Build [www.carrock.co.uk](http://www.carrock.co.uk)
- Red Raven Design [redraven.net](http://redraven.net)



*'Designs should accommodate the needs of 21st-century living while maintaining and respecting the character and heritage of the listed building, ensuring its visual and historic integrity.'*  
**Malcolm Iredale, architect and managing director of Carrock Design & Build, Hutton Roof, Penrith**