



Stanley Spencer Gallery

Project Title: Stanley Spencer Gallery Improvement Project

Project Outline: The Gallery Improvement Project involved the complete refurbishment of this 19th Century building which sits in Cookham Village Conservation Area. The project improved both conservation and access.

Project Manager: Julian Bullen

Design Team: Architect – Pringle Richards and Sharratt, Structural Engineer – Rodrigues Associates, M & E Consultant – Andrew Reid and Partners, CDM – The Clarkson Alliance

Project Summary:

The renowned 20th Century artist Sir Stanley Spencer RA (1891 – 1959) was born in Cookham, Berkshire and worshipped in the village chapel. Just three years after his death this was converted into a gallery which housed much of his works but upon reaching the 21st century the Trustees of the collection had concerns about conservation of the collection and providing access to a wider audience.

In partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund nearly £1 million was secured to restore the gallery and provide a building which could deliver the required environmental standards, security arrangements and accessibility. The Clarkson Alliance worked alongside the entirely voluntary Stanley Spencer Gallery team to deliver a transformed building housing beautiful paintings, drawings, artefacts, a collections management system and a retail area. One innovation was the introduction of an elegant mezzanine area which provides increased display space, an education area and also a specialist storage system which can accommodate the entire collection.

Scope

Works to the building included replacement of the roof, introduction of a mezzanine floor and feature staircase and environmental systems. The fit-out included the following elements:

- Disabled facilities
- Specialist remote controlled lighting with a winch system for lamp replacement
- Picture hanging system (1st time installed in a public space in the UK)
- Bespoke collection storage system
- Display cases
- Retail and reception area
- Furniture
- Security systems to comply with MLA requirements

In addition a collection management system (CMS), a new web site, a new brand identity and a retail management system (EPOS) were procured.

Aims

The two key aims were to provide good conservation of the collection and to improve access to Sir Stanley Spencers' works

Challenges

The main challenges were:

- Working within a limited space to provide access to an extensive collection of works and associated material
- Working with a client for which this was a first time experience and who gave their time to the project on a voluntary basis
- Obtaining support and endorsement of the project solution from the Trustees, Friends of the Gallery, volunteers and the immediate neighbours.

Solution / business benefits

The procurement of an architect with extensive museum and gallery experience prepared to bring innovation to the project enabled maximum use of the available space.

Clearly mapping out the process and meeting regularly to ensure decisions were made in order to achieve the programme assisted in the delivery process.

Presentations providing opportunities for dialogue were made at key stages to the Trustees, some 80 Friends of the Gallery and the team of volunteer custodians.

Visitor numbers have increased, more schools now visit the gallery, and the Trustees can now feel confident that a facility has been provided which secures the benefit of the Stanley Spencer collection for many years to come. More volunteers have joined the team of custodians who manage the gallery on a daily basis. To find out more visit the web site www.stanleyspencer.org.uk and why not visit the galley to see all this for yourself?

TCA's project management style

We were able to provide a Project Manager who lived close to the gallery and created a strong relationship with the Chairman of the Trustees and the Chairman of the Management Committee. The project was closely monitored by the Heritage Lottery Fund and our experience of working in this context added value. The use of an early warning system enabled identified risks to be addressed at an early stage.

Value of overall project: £980,000

Duration: Completed July 2007