



THE ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE FUND

CASE STUDY

The Architectural Heritage Fund has helped Building Preservation Trusts and other charities regenerate historic buildings, create community and education facilities, workspace and homes for nearly 30 years. We have provided grants, loans and advice on more than 750 projects to date. This is one of many examples.

Community resource: Former Belmont Primary School, Belfast City

In 1889 Robert Ferguson commissioned the Belmont Presbyterian Church Committee 'to build and furnish a school and enclose the ground as a memorial to my late dear wife and to be named as such'. The Ferguson Memorial School was duly built to the designs of architect Vincent Craig, brother of Sir James Craig, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. The building is of two storeys in the Gothic Revival style with Scrabo sandstone rubble stone walling and Scottish sandstone strings and details. It was extended to the rear in 1910 and the most notable feature, and a prominent landmark for the area, is the square open-belfried tower, containing the main entrance at ground floor level. A Gothic style stained glass window is a prominent feature of the stairwell and the upper floor displays a fine series of roof trusses.

By 1994 the condition of the building had deteriorated to a point where Belfast Corporation did not consider refurbishment to be economically viable and the building was declared redundant in May 1999. Staff and pupils moved to a brand new school that was built next door. Nevertheless local residents, many of whom were also parents of children at the school, were concerned for the future of the School building and established the Old Belmont School Preservation Trust in May 2001, and subsequently purchased the building. Work to restore the fabric and introduce 21st century facilities, providing for various community uses such as a pre-school play group, after school club, coffee shop, function and meeting rooms was officially opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in September 2004. The Trust retains responsibility for the building through its part time manager. The project was featured as a conservation success story in the BBC's second series of Restoration, and the range of AHF assistance illustrates the differing ways in which we can support a project.



Organisation: Old Belmont School Preservation Trust
Listed Grade B+
Architectural Heritage Fund assistance: £4,941 Feasibility Study Grant in 2001
£4,000 Project Administration Grant in 2002
£23,500 Refundable Project Development Grant in 2002
£180,000 loan in 2003

Please contact us if you require further information.

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