

Heritage Happenings at Edgars

A refresher on the growing Heritage Team...

As a complement to its Planning services, Heritage work has long been a key component of Edgars, and it has increasingly become a core pillar of the offering, both as a full-service undertaking, blending Edgars' Planning and Heritage expertise; and as a bespoke approach.

A sense of 'being big enough to influence, but small enough to mind' holds equally true for our Heritage and Planning work, and the team takes pride in being solution-orientated for our clients, whilst also respectful of the responsibility - and privilege - of helping to steer sensitive and positive change in buildings and landscapes which form part of our national heritage.

'Breathing new life into old buildings' is how conservation is often described - or 'the management of change'. But these soundbites belie the complexity of ensuring just how that change is managed; it often is a strategic blend of investigation and understanding of the assets as well as diplomacy, design-intuition and determination... although ultimately it will be an understanding of policy which wins the battle. This is where the close collusion between our Heritage and Planning teams is such a defining asset.

2024 has seen the Heritage team grow from one to three, and projects have spanned sensitive residential schemes, private estates and commercial projects, to seminal conservation challenges like tackling RAAC removal at Grade I listed St Catherine's College, Oxford (pictured below); the first project of such complexity anywhere in the UK to be consented.



Hello, Katie...

Although it pains her to admit it, Katie has just reached her 20th year working in conservation; she spent her first decade as a London-based Local Authority Conservation Officer, before moving to the private sector. This move was when Katie first began working alongside Edgars until Jayne persuaded her to come in-house two years ago. Katie doesn't really have a favourite architectural style or period; rather she sees her heritage role as being a 'professional appreciator'. Regardless of style, age, function or form, Katie sees it as her role to appreciate the significant qualities of the building and its setting help others involved in the project appreciate that. Katie has been lucky to work on a wide range of projects in her career but relishes the complex projects as greater heritage constraints require in depth understanding and therefore a collaborative and highly creative approach across the entire design team.

Left: Edgars achieved landmark consent for action against RAAC while conserving historic fabric

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...hello, Catherine...

Catherine Armstrong joined Edgars as a Heritage Associate earlier this year, such had the demand for Edgars' heritage services ramped up. From a heritage consultancy background in the Bath area, coupled with hands-on project management, and (prior to her MSc) a corporate communications career, Catherine loves nothing more than articulating a heritage argument; (other, that is, than gleaning niche information from the conservation craftspeople which this sector is so lucky to boast). Her commute to the office up the Fosse Way takes in such exquisite vernacular, ecclesiastical and polite architecture that it certainly sets one up for the day better than a couple of Weetabix.

...and welcome, Alexandra!

Completing the small, but perfectly formed, heritage team, Alexandra Green is the most recent addition; who, like Katie, is no stranger to Edgars, having been talent-spotted by Jayne and Jon when she first started as a graduate intern whilst completing her undergraduate degree in Urban Design. Now Edgars' fully-fledged Graduate Heritage Planner, the company is supporting her through a master's degree in Historic Conservation. Besides this, Alexandra maintains her keen interest in urban design, and her unbridled, youthful passion saw her as the only team member who, on a recent, offsite CPD day - when the rain came down in straight lines - continued to ponder, undeterred, the merits of the public realm, parking and streetscape. Kudos to Alexandra!

Jayne Norris, Edgars Founder and MD, commented:

"I never take it for granted that we are based in one of the most beautiful parts of the UK - if not the world - and its glorious, unparalleled historic backdrop is an ingrained and innate element of who we are, by the very virtue of where we operate and what it is that makes our people tick. I have one ambition for Edgars: for it to continue to grow doing just what it has always done: to be personal, and to be proud; in how we work, and in what we do. Therefore, I am proud of the recent growth of the Heritage team, which is a consequence of Edgars' fantastic track record in an area with a uniquely rich historic environment. It is a really exciting chapter for all at Edgars."



If you have a heritage project you would like to discuss please don't hesitate to get in touch with any of the team to see how we might be able to help.