



When a major fire raged through the Grade One-listed Cupola House in Bury St Edmunds in 2012, the fire service called upon local specialist builders Seamans Building to make the building safe. After bringing in long-reach demolition plant to help secure the structure, Seamans embarked upon clearing the debris, preparing the site for surveys and erecting a temporary scaffolded structure to preserve the integrity of what remained.

Architects Purcell then began work, in partnership with English Heritage, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and a team of specialist consultants, to stabilise the surviving built fabric and reconstruct the lost historic features. Using all the available information about the building, which was built in 1693, the architectural team recreated the principal spaces and reintroduced many of the building's architectural details, including panelling, cornices, architraves and the staircase.



Following the tender process, Seamans Building were appointed as main contractor for the reconstruction work. Many of the company's directly-employed skilled craftsmen were involved on the project and it was an excellent opportunity for their six apprentices to experience working on an historic structure.

The company had already received local awards for work on two Grade One-listed buildings – Woodbridge Tidemill and the Wolsey Art Gallery next to Ipswich's Christchurch Mansion – however, the challenges and scale of working on the confined site in the centre of Bury St Edmunds tested the resolve and skills of all involved.



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