



vision

Grafton New Hall Country House



Project Profile

In 2000 the Practice was presented with an exceptional challenge – to design a substantial country house on a previously undeveloped site lying at the heart of land known since the 13th century as the Manor of Grafton.

The design for the house, the ancillary accommodation and the landscaping emerged simultaneously from rigorous historical research and careful study of the ecology. The plan form favours a Palladian model with rooms set around a central stair. The formality of the house is reproduced in a more relaxed way in the courtyard. The siting exploits the landscape vistas and the natural features of the established South Cheshire countryside.

The Local Authority decided that the quality and thoroughness of approach merited support for the scheme and granted Outline Planning Permission in the summer of 2000. A condition of the approval was that detail design of the house should be the subject of an RIBA competition. This stage has been completed most successfully and was won by Ushida Findlay Architects.

In the original exercise, the development of the ideas for landscape and architecture arose alongside research and regular team meetings. The contribution from each discipline and from the client led to sometimes surprising but invariably rewarding influences on the emerging scheme. The whole setting is extraordinarily rich in historical connections and uncovering the background has at every stage led to decisions which include references to this texture; sometimes subtle, sometimes direct. Throughout the development each discipline consulted with their corresponding professional colleagues in the local authority and the local councillor has been consulted for his views on the principles of such development from a local political perspective.