



HUGHBROUGHTONARCHITECTS

**PRESS ENQUIRIES**

Claire Curtice Publicists  
claire@clairecurtice.co.uk  
+ 44 (0) 20 7613 1442  
[Download press kit here](#)

## PRESS RELEASE

## SHEERNESS DOCKYARD CHURCH GETS GREEN LIGHT

**30 MAY 2019**

The future of Sheerness Dockyard Church has been secured following the award of £4.2m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the achievement of planning approval and Listed Building Consent from Swale Borough Council for an architectural scheme to restore and transform the derelict building and to deliver the £8.1m project.

The scheme has been designed by Hugh Broughton Architects working with conservation specialists Martin Ashley Architects. The two practices collaborated on the award-winning Painted Hall in the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, which re-opened to the public in March 2019.

Dockyard Church is a Grade II\* listed building which dates from 1828, designed by George Ledwell Taylor, Surveyor of Buildings to the Navy. It stands at the entrance to the former Royal Dockyard on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent. The church, which has twice been badly damaged by fire in 1881 and again in 2001, is an architectural masterpiece and one of the most important buildings at risk in the south east of England.

The historical value of the church lies in its robust naval architecture, its relationship with the dockyard and the surrounding settlement that grew up around it, and its place at the heart of the community, where naval, military and civilians came together. The resurrected venue is expected to bring much-needed inward investment, business development and economic activity to an area that has suffered the effects of long-term deprivation.

The project for the repair and reuse of this landmark building has been commissioned by Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust. The renovation will safeguard the existing elements of the badly fire-damaged church and bring new purpose to the civic building by creating a business incubator hub for local young people, an exhibition area, a restaurant and an events space. The revitalised building will be operated by Kent Youth Support Trust, a charity working locally to help young people establish financial independence through entrepreneurship, by providing business incubation units and on-site advice and support.

The design philosophy has been developed in the last 12 months in consultation with trustees and the wider community in Sheerness. Externally the church will be restored to match the profiles of Taylor's design as completed in 1828, including reinstatement of the original roof, windows and doors.

Internally the existing fabric will be stabilised and conserved as found, preserving what is left of the 1881 interior and its structure of cast iron columns. New interventions include a café, meeting and seminar areas, co-working spaces, and business incubation units on the reinstated gallery floors, designed as 14 discrete flexible pavilions which can be removed without impacting on the original fabric of the building. The ground floor will include a



display of the remarkable scale model of Sheerness dockyard made in the 1820s. The model is currently in the care of English Heritage, but will be returned to Sheerness, providing a focal point for visitors and a means by which to tell the story of the dockyard and its place in Britain's naval history.

Material selection will be guided by the principle of honesty of design, to harmonise with the retained existing fabric. The ground floor will be finished in polished concrete with expressed borders and pew pit locations incorporating original intact tiling. The gallery level floor will be finished in sawn timber. The structure of the new roof will be exposed to view and the existing internal elevations will be carefully conserved as found.

Swale Borough Council awarded planning approval in August 2018 and The National Lottery Heritage Fund grant was awarded on 13 December 2018. The scheme is expected to reopen to the public at the end of 2021.

Will Palin, Chair of the Trustees, Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust, commented: "We are thrilled to have received the go-ahead to deliver this exciting and uniquely challenging project after a long period of development and fundraising. The Trust is looking forward to working with our world-class design team led by Hugh Broughton Architects to return this magnificent landmark building to use for the benefit of the local community and the wider region."

Hugh Broughton, architect, commented: "The green light from The National Lottery Heritage Fund means we can now push ahead with the delivery of this important project to restore George Ledwell Taylor's remarkable Dockyard Church to provide a focus for young entrepreneurs in Sheerness and an enjoyable place for the local community to learn about the history of the dockyard. We are now really looking forward to developing the scheme with the Trust in collaboration with Martin Ashley Architects."

Martin Ashley, conservation architect, commented: "The eleventh-hour rescue by Sheerness Historic Dockyard Trust of this outstanding historic Naval Chapel for such a beneficial use is a highly important project. The wonderful support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund has now made this project possible. We very much look forward to developing the scheme with SDPT and Hugh Broughton Architects."

#### Notes to editors:

**Address:** Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey, Kent (UK)  
**Anticipated completion:** 2021  
**Client:** Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust  
**Project Team:** Hugh Broughton Architects (architects)  
 Martin Ashley Architects (conservation architects)  
 Glevum Consulting (project managers)  
 Hockley & Dawson (structural engineers)  
 Harley Haddow (M&E engineers)  
 PT Projects (quantity surveyors)  
 Ramboll Acoustics (acoustics consultants)  
 Sutton Vane Associates (lighting designers)  
**Photos:** © James Brittain  
**Visualisations:** Hugh Broughton Architects

**Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust**

The Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust (SDPT) was formally constituted in September 2014 as a registered charitable company. The organisation's purpose is to ensure that the architectural heritage of the former Royal Naval Dockyard in Sheerness is saved for future generations, and for the benefit of the local community. The charity's objective: to preserve, protect and restore the historical, architectural, constructional and industrial heritage and character that may exist in and around the former Royal Naval Dockyard in Sheerness, in buildings including, but not limited to, the Sheerness Dockyard Church and any others (including any structure or erection, and any part of a building) of particular beauty, or historical, architectural or constructional merit or interest; to advance the public education and interest in the history and architectural heritage of the local area, for the advancement of the arts, culture and heritage; and to advance the community development of the area.

**About Hugh Broughton Architects**

Hugh Broughton Architects was founded in 1996 and has a reputation for producing carefully crafted contemporary architecture. The practice has designed projects for many high-profile clients including the British Council, Institution of Structural Engineers, National Galleries of Scotland, Royal Society of Chemistry, Henry Moore Foundation and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), and the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. The practice is best known for the design of Halley VI Antarctic Research Station designed for the British Antarctic Survey, which was officially launched in 2013 to great critical acclaim and has led to a series of projects in remote locations including Juan Carlos 1 Spanish Antarctic Base; Camogli Healthcare Centre on Tristan da Cunha, the world's most remote inhabited island; and the redevelopment of Scott Base for Antarctica New Zealand, which the practice won in partnership with Jasmax in 2018. Recent projects include a purpose-built gallery for the Portland Collection, on the Welbeck Estate, Nottinghamshire, which was awarded RIBA East Midlands Building of the Year Award 2016; and the redevelopment of Henry Moore Studios & Gardens in Perry Green, Hertfordshire. The practice led the conservation of Sir Christopher Wren's Painted Hall in the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, working in collaboration with Martin Ashley, Surveyor of the Fabric to the Old Royal Naval College. It reopened to the public in March 2019.

[www.hbarchitects.co.uk](http://www.hbarchitects.co.uk)

**About Martin Ashley Architects**

Martin Ashley Architects was founded in 1994 and practice as historic buildings conservation specialists. As architects and surveyors, the practice assists clients and occupiers in the conservation and management of their significant historic building estates, advising and enabling the repair, adaption, and development of historic properties to serve the ongoing needs of our client organisations in the 21st century. We are privileged to have worked over many years with The Royal Household, The Crown Estate, Royal Parks Agency, Historic Royal Palaces, English Heritage Trust, and City of London Corporation amongst other government and local government agencies and charitable trusts. Martin Ashley is Surveyor of the Fabric to St George's Chapel Windsor Castle, to the Old Royal Naval College Greenwich, and to St Bartholomew the Great in the City of London. We are committed to the benefits of collaborative working, and in this respect have successful project relationships with Hugh Broughton Architects at the Old Royal Naval College Greenwich, at Clifford's Tower York, and at Sheerness Dockyard Church.

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