

12 QUAYS PUMPING STATION, BIRKENHEAD for Mersey Docks & Harbour Company, & North West Development Agency

Ainsley Gomon carried out the reconstruction and refurbishment of the shell of the grade 2 listed former impounding station together with its landmark 40m high chimney for Mersey Docks & Harbour Company and North West Development Agency.

The building was designed to pump water from the Mersey up into the Birkenhead docks to maintain the required depth to allow ships alongside the wharves. It did this from 1890 until 1955 when a modern electric pumping station replaced the old fashioned and worn out steam pumps. The building was stripped of its machinery in the 1970's and gradually fell derelict until it was rescued by Mersey Docks & Harbour Company and North West Development Agency.

Some of the main issues which we considered included:

- The building was a roofless ruin, supported by a structural scaffold.
- The chimney had been reduced to approximately two thirds of its original height.
- The building is in the secure area of the port and access was difficult because of traffic loading and unloading from the Irish ferries.

Careful research was undertaken through watching video footage of the chimney to establish how it was to be rebuilt. The work has restored it to its former height. A new internal steel frame was installed to stabilise the pump house structure and enable the roof to be reinstated. Through these works this historical landmark has been preserved for future generations. The building is now a blank canvas ready for a new use should the opportunity arise.

Value: £1.47m
Completed: Spring 2003
Contract: Traditional

