

Ironwork Designers

Authentic Restorations | Contextual Design | Technical Design & Specifications
Specialist Design Consultants for the Historic Environment



Award winning design @ Shrewsbury Cathedral Grade II* listed

theIronworkstudio

Creating ironwork that responds to and enriches its historical context

Fitting the New to the Old

Designing new ironwork for heritage settings

The heritage protection system is designed to manage change, not prevent it. It is acceptable to enhance the historic environment with new work, be it traditional or contemporary in style.

Our design approach is informed by a variety of considerations including:

- character, significance and value
- responding to a setting
- sympathetic design
- impact
- enhancement

These five key points are crucial to establishing the design brief and aesthetic direction, be it traditional or contemporary. As each project is unique, the best approach will vary depending on the context.

To learn more see our article published in The Building Conservation Directory: ['Fitting the new to the old'](#). This is a synopsis of our lecture presented at the inaugural conference of the National Heritage Ironwork Group held at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

TESTIMONIALS

"The Ironwork Studio's past project work resonated with the quality of architectural metalwork design that we were seeking. The brief included consolidating design elements from three existing gates which they achieved in such an elegant fashion that was beyond our expectation. The accompanying technical drawings were highly detailed, complied to our build specifications and were a workable document for the fabricators. The Ironwork Studio delivered an exceptional service at every stage of the project and have provided us with a timeless architectural design that will last for the ages. We would certainly engage The Ironwork Studio for future architectural metal design projects."

- Cameron Munro, Campus Manager at Pymble Ladies' College

"The Ironwork Studio produced a design which was both creative and appropriate, crucially it was also sensitive to the design rationale of the building itself. The fabrication drawings and specification was handled as sensitively as the design and the finished project has been greatly admired."

- Jonathan Carter, Main Board Director of Rolfe Judd Architecture

Design options

The following illustrates four different design approaches that fall into two main categories - Historical and Modern. Used in conjunction with our five key points this framework gives a starting point for prompting discussions so that the design brief and aesthetic direction can be established.

Historical

This approach is especially relevant where most of the original historic features are present with only specific elements missing.



Restore original design



Period style reproduction

Modern

Contemporary design is particularly appropriate where there is no clear historical evidence or reference for the new work, and where the desired objective of a historic setting is not only to maintain the existing character, but also to allow for its evolution. If done well, this approach creates a dialogue between ancient and modern that aims to lift the value and meaning of both.



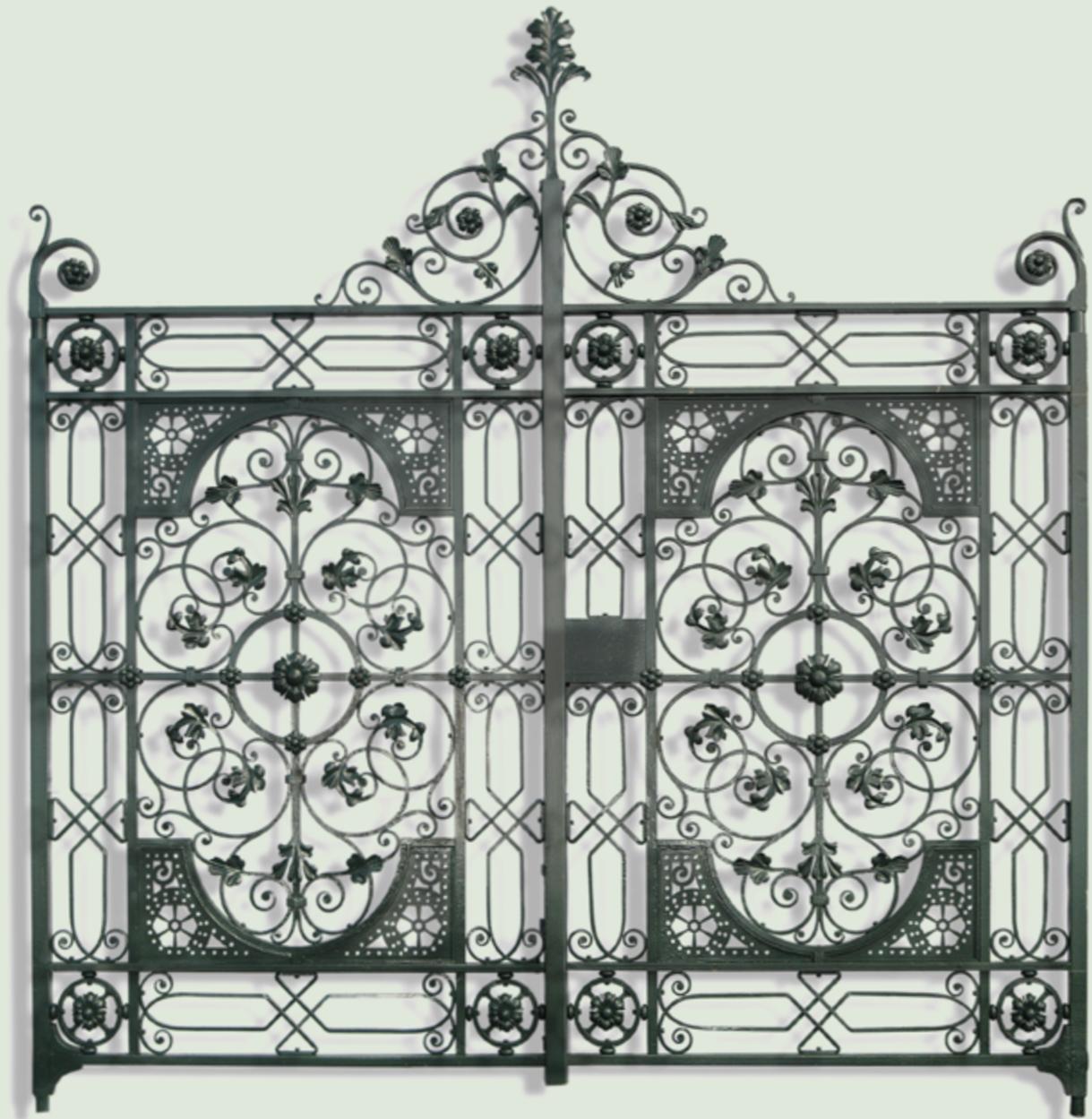
Heritage inspired



Contemporary

These examples are explored further in the following pages

Restore original design

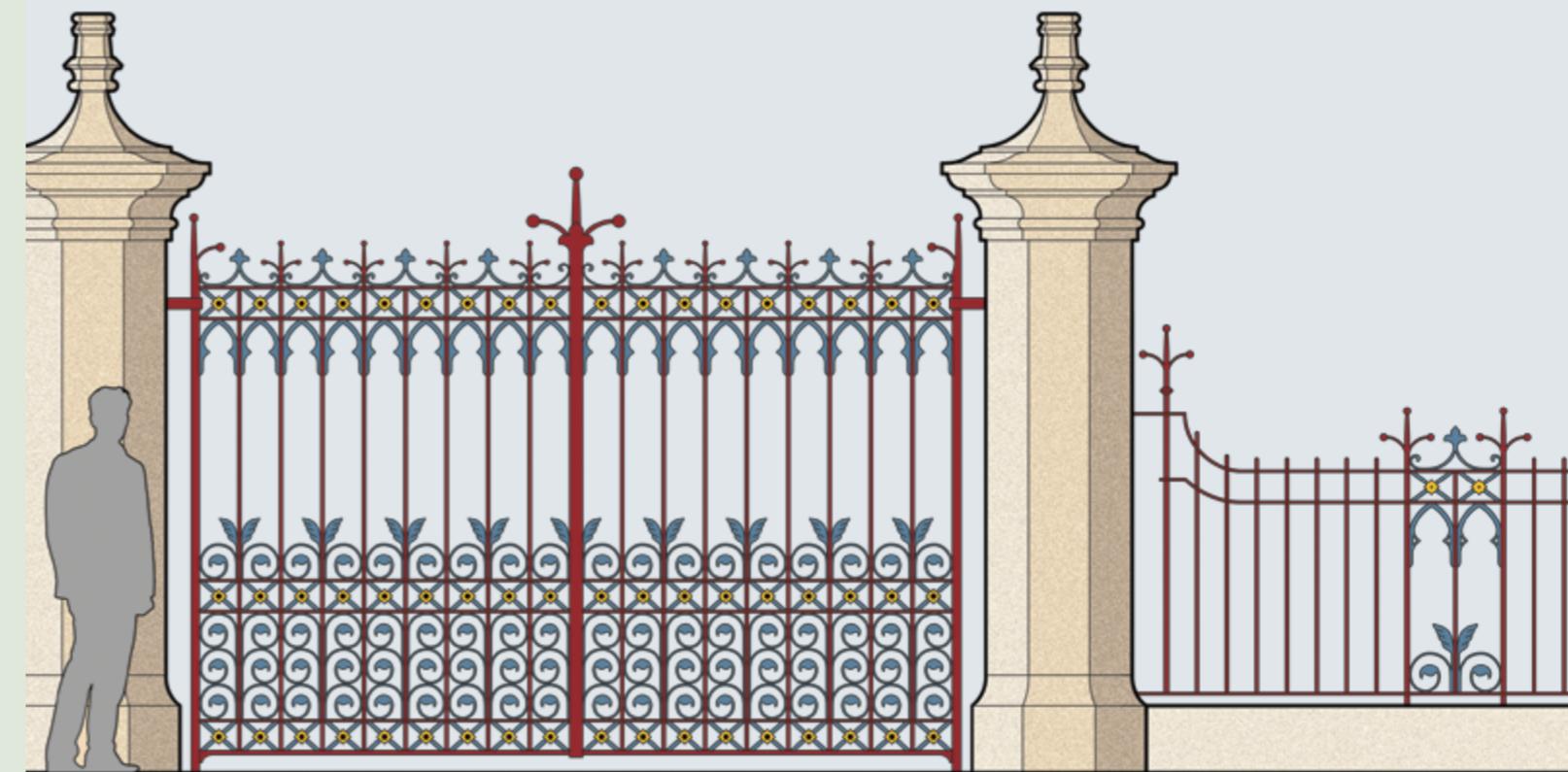


Replacement gates at Grade II listed Weston Park South East entrance, Sheffield

Informed by historical photographs, we designed these new gates to replace the originals which had been stolen. The quality of the archival evidence was high enough to enable the overall design to be accurately replicated, but authentically re-creating the detailing relied on our knowledge of period characteristics and techniques. Following the restoration, the entrance is now configured as it was in 1875 when Weston Park was opened to the public.

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Period style replication



New gates to complement the c1900 south entrance at Grade II listed Barnes Park, Sunderland

With no direct historical references to replicate, our replacement gate design is a modern interpretation of a period style, as opposed to an accurate historical design. The new design incorporates decorative elements from the original railings that we reconfigured for their new purpose. Our understanding of period style and traditional techniques enabled us to create a design with an authentic feel. Although not an original feature, the new gates establish a better impression of how the entrance was originally intended to be perceived.

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Heritage inspired



Balustrading & Gates for the new front entrance to Grade II* listed Shrewsbury Cathedral

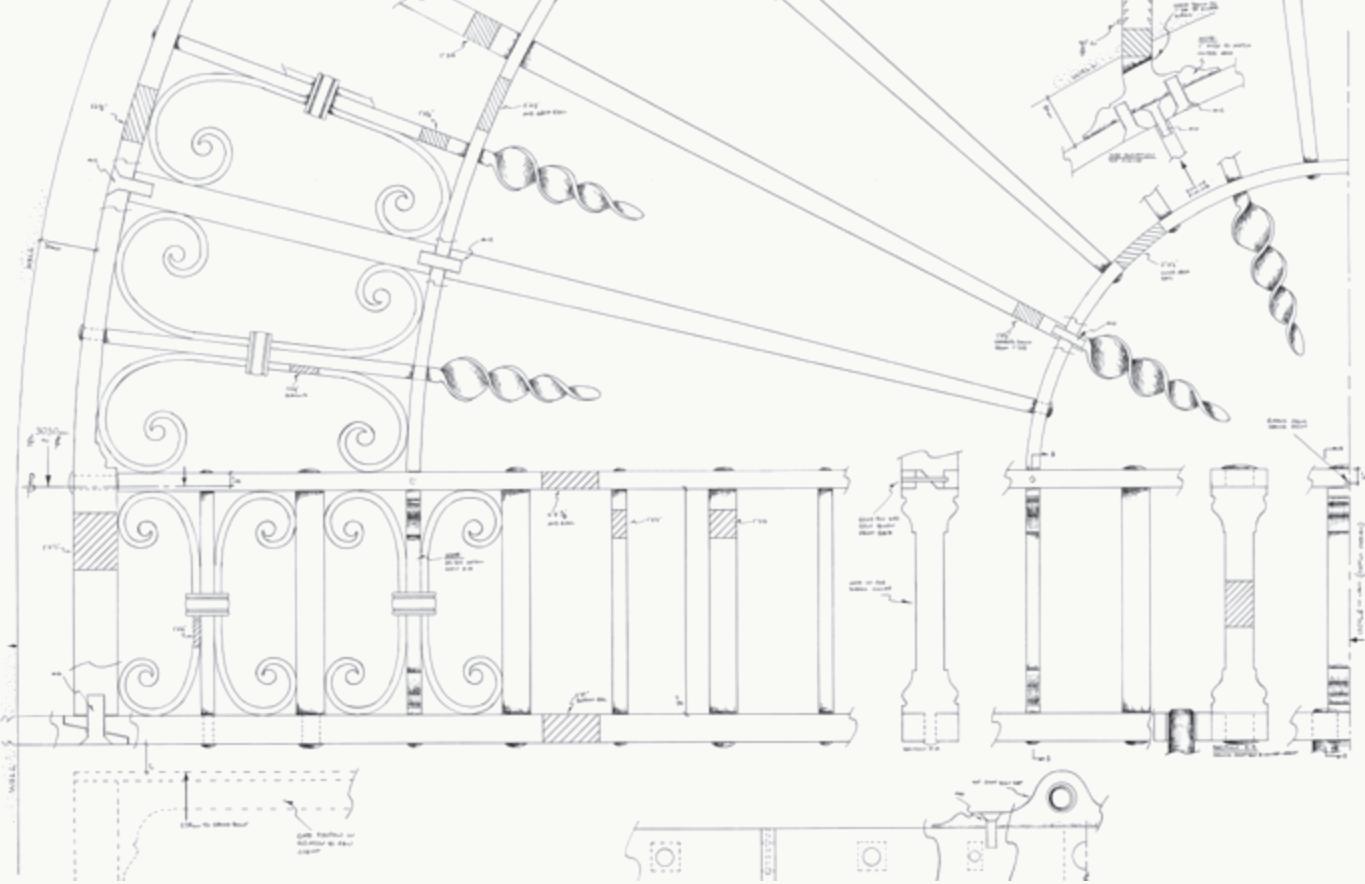
An award-winning design inspired by traditional style references, this modern interpretation of the pointed quatrefoil, with its prominent yet refined form, sympathetically adds to the Cathedral's evolutionary story. It's symbolic of both Catholic faith and the cathedral's Gothic architect, EW Pugin, who used it in abundance within the interior. Made from cast iron and painted cobalt blue in representation of the Virgin Mary, to whom the cathedral is dedicated.

Contemporary



Gate for Carnaby Street within the Soho conservation area of Westminster, London

This gate uses our modern-day approach to design and is a freeform response to its context. Although first built in 1682, Carnaby Street's iconic heritage was established in the 1960s when it became an icon of Swinging London. Referencing this, our design is inspired by the bold geometric patterns of this era. The busy open framework, with random infills, also helps realise the gate's dual purpose of security at night and screening the property's air control vents during the day. Constructed using highly skilled fabrication techniques, it has a clean sophisticated finish without any unsightly welding. Its colouring comes from the use of polished stainless steel with glass inserts, complementing the colour scheme of the rest of the building.



About Us

We are architectural metalwork design consultants specialising within the historic environment. Providing creative, technical and historical knowledge, our work enhances your project through every stage from concepts and consents to procurement. Our expertise assists custodians, building conservation professionals and workshops seeking the utmost in design and craftsmanship.

It is our combined skill set, from authentic heritage detailing and conservation philosophy to design and technical knowhow, that distinguishes our projects.

Architectural Metalwork Design Services

Our services are tailored to your requirements, spanning initial planning, assessment and creative design to technical drawings and procurement. Working nationally, we frequently contribute as part of a wider team, including managers, architects and conservation officers, where our specialist expertise helps inform the project and planning consent applications.

- **Preparation and Brief** – clarifying the project objectives, aspirations, contextual information and any potential constraints.
- **Authentic Restorations** – the reinstatement of missing metalwork within historic environments informed by archival & physical evidence, with our expertise in period styles and techniques ensuring accuracy.
- **Contextual Design** – traditional and contemporary designs that respond and positively contribute to their context.
- **Technical Design and Specification** – development of design concepts, refining detailing and compiling technical and construction information for tender and procurement.
- **Visualisations** – communicating design intentions for the detailing of specific elements and the overall design in context.

As **Independent Ironwork Consultants** our work facilitates the design and procurement process for your project. We provide impartial advice and design services unhindered by the restraints of any one workshop. Calling on a network of suppliers and master craftspeople we are able to find the best people for the project due to our understanding of their individual strengths. Inclusion of our concepts, detailed workshop drawings and specifications within tender packages removes ambiguity and sets the standards for design, quality and craftsmanship.

Contact us to find out more

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