



The Supreme Court Implementation Programme

Final Newsletter, issue seven, September 2009

Programme success

When the Supreme Court officially comes into being on 1 October 2009 it will be an historic constitutional moment in the United Kingdom's history. It also represents the successful culmination of our five year Programme to ensure the highest Court in the land is visibly separate from the Houses of Parliament and accessible to those it serves.

I am delighted to announce the success of the Supreme Court Implementation Programme – we delivered on time, within budget and to the highest quality.

As the final court of appeal for all UK civil cases, for criminal cases from England, Wales and Northern Ireland and now devolution matters, the Supreme Court plays an important role at the pinnacle of our legal system. We have enabled the visible separation between the judiciary and the other parts of government. And although the Law Lords have always been careful to make a clear distinction between their functions as judges and their functions as members of a body of the legislature, setting up the Supreme Court will finally make clear that the judicial system is separate and independent.

We have created a fitting home for the Court in the heart of Westminster. The Court is now more visible and accessible than it was as a Committee of the House of Lords. The renovation has attracted much praise from the Heritage, architectural and legal world as a modern working space that reflects the fine traditions of the Law Lords. In my opinion we have achieved a new national treasure in which we can all be proud.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the Supreme Court Implementation Programme and very much look forward to seeing the Court in action next month.

Programme Aims

- To remove the apex of the judicial system from of the Houses of Parliament to cement its separation from the legislature.
- To increase the visibility of our highest Court and improve public access.
- To provide facilities, services and a working environment suited to the highest court in the country while reviving an important historic building in the heart of London.

Lord Bach



Lord Bach
Parliamentary Under Secretary Of State



Creating the Supreme Court

On 1 October 2009 the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom officially opens for business. This historic moment is the culmination of an intensive renovation and business change programme led by the Ministry of Justice.

The highest court in the land was part of in the Houses of Parliament since mediaeval times. It was known as the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords and the 12 Law Lords could technically vote on legislation (although the Law Lords have always been careful to make a clear distinction between their functions as judges and their functions as members of a body of the legislature and have ceased to take any part in legislative proceedings).

The new Supreme Court makes a visible separation between the judiciary and the other parts of government. The court will be more accessible to the public than it has been in its former home and has modern facilities for the Supreme Court justices, court users and visitors.

The building is also home to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the court of final appeal for the UK overseas territories and Crown dependencies and some Commonwealth Countries.



Supreme Court Room One: the historic fabric of the room has been retained while making it fit to use for Supreme Court hearings.



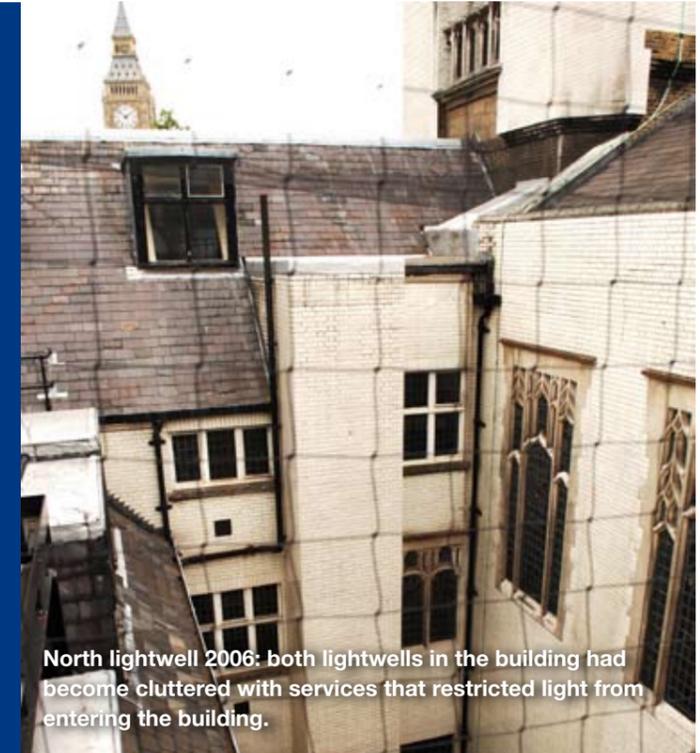
Supreme Court Room Two: created from two 1980s Crown Court rooms this space is modern and flooded with light. Like all three Courtrooms it is equipped for the 21st Century.



Middlesex Crown Court Room: constructed in the 1980s.

The renovation:

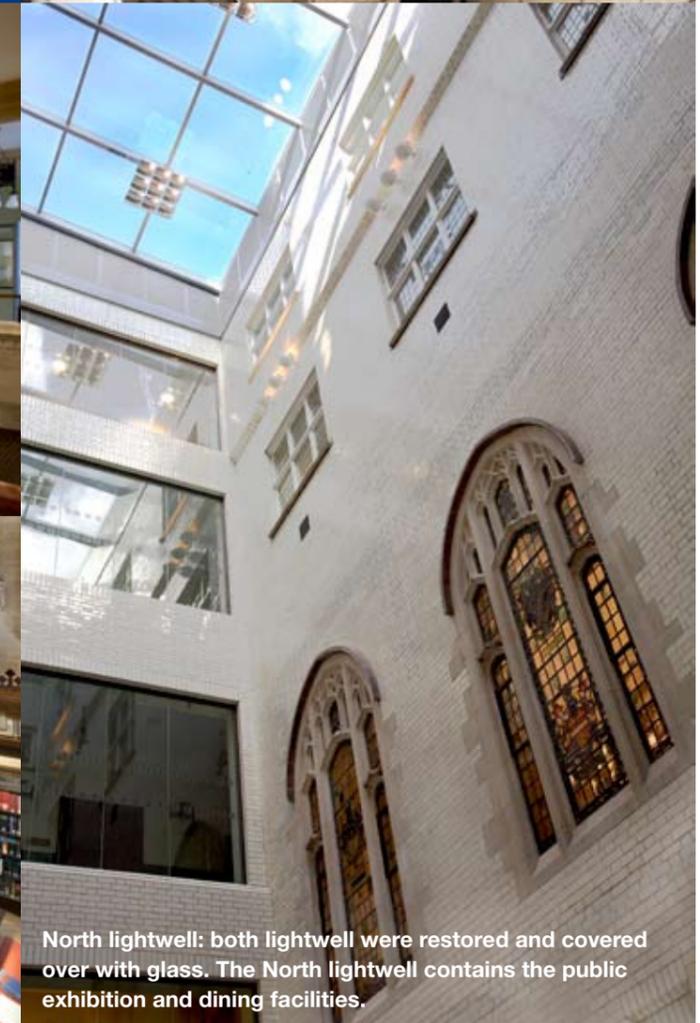
- Transformed the building by reversing recent interventions that left it feeling cluttered such as removing 1980's courtrooms and clearing services, cells and lift shafts from both light wells;
- Improved equal and public access (such as the addition of wheelchair access into the building and in several areas within the building, alteration of internal circulation routes).
- Created an appropriate environment for the work of the Supreme Court such as levelling the floors in the courtrooms (as opposed to the work of a Crown Court),
- Established a modern library at the heart of the building.



North lightwell 2006: both lightwells in the building had become cluttered with services that restricted light from entering the building.



Supreme Court Entrance Hall: The renovation has allowed light back into the building and improved circulation routes.



North lightwell: both lightwell were restored and covered over with glass. The North lightwell contains the public exhibition and dining facilities.

Supreme Court Implementation Programme Key Milestones



June 2003 The Prime Minister announces the Government's intention to remove the jurisdiction of the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords and transfer it to a new Supreme Court for the United Kingdom.

July 2003 A public consultation exercise is undertaken to gather views on the form and responsibilities of the proposed UK Supreme Court.

Dec 2004 The Middlesex Guildhall is selected after an extensive evaluation exercise.

March 2005 Constitutional Reform Act receives Royal Assent

Feb 2006 In accordance with the Act, the Lord Chancellor approved the renovation plans in, following sign-off from the Law Lords.

Nov 2006 Westminster City Council City and Planning Committee and unanimously approved the plans in full, with full support of English Heritage.

Mar 2007 7 Crown Courts that used to sit in Middlesex Guildhall vacate the building and cases distributed to other London Crown Courts following changes to Committal Routes in Autumn 2006.

Jun 2007 The renovation of Middlesex Guildhall as the UK Supreme Court begins after final contracts signed on 12 June with the developer, Kier Group.

Oct 2007 Law Lords and Ministers approve interior finishes.

Mar 2008 Requirements for Information Technology, broadcasting, website and internal procedures complete.

July 2008 Scope of Programme widened to include external security (following an increase in Whitehall security requirements) and new external landscaping

Dec 2008 Information systems design complete.

Mar 2009 Renovation complete.

Aug 2009 Installation of furniture and fittings complete

Aug 2009 Justices and staff move into building.

Sep 2009 Business systems (Information technology, website, case management system etc) complete, Memorandum of Understanding between UKSC and Ministry of Justice agreed.