

Transforming Palaces in London

Major public buildings are constantly in need of maintenance and upgrading to meet changing requirements, but from time to time major works are required to bring them into line with modern standards and equip them for contemporary use while preserving their essential heritage value. These are highly complex projects, spread over many years, requiring world-class programme management. Berkshire has been contributing programme management to works on two iconic London landmarks – the Palace of Westminster and Buckingham Palace.

The Palace of Westminster was rebuilt over a 30-year period from 1834, following a fire. As the practice of democracy in the UK has evolved, the Palace has been constantly adapted over the years. Since the post war era, only disparate internal restoration or renewal works have been undertaken. As a result, the existing mechanical and electrical plant within the Palace is no longer fit for purpose and maintenance costs are high. Current expenditure can only deliver temporary solutions, so business continuity risk has continued to rise and the risk of a catastrophic failure is increasing.

Berkshire Consultancy worked on two distinct elements of the Palace of Westminster Restoration and Refurbishment Programme:

1. Publication and the launch of the Independent Options Appraisal Report (IOA)

The consultant team (of which Andrew Garbutt was a director and Technical Lead) delivered to the Client an independently produced, costed, options appraisal of a number of Scenarios, in order to enable Parliament to reach a well-founded decision in principle on the means of restoring and renewing the Palace, whilst maintaining business continuity; and to pave the way for an outline business case (OBC) that conforms to public sector good practice as set out in the HM Treasury Green Book.

Berkshire then took one of the lead roles in presenting and explaining the concepts of the report to key members and committees of both houses as well as UK and international press.

2. Programme Management on a series of Feasibility Studies.

Berkshire project-managed the production and delivery of four separate but inter-linked Feasibility Studies produced by international Architects and Engineering consultants.

Rigorous monitoring and review took place throughout the programme, which resulted in acceptance of the IOA by both Houses. for further scrutiny and debate in a Joint Committee. The IOA was also positively reported on by the invited media.

The Feasibility Studies were welcomed by the key stakeholders as both value-adding and appropriate for the Programme of Restoration and Refurbishment. These were then accepted by the Client and formed the basis of evidence to the Joint Committee.