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The City Trust's annual award, open to all buildings constructed or restored in Durham District during 1998, has been won by **Burn Hall**. Trustees considered both the restoration of the main house and the redevelopment to the rear.

Although Burn Hall is not open to the public, it is a matter of rejoicing that part of the region's architectural heritage has been saved, and, indeed, that it has reverted substantially to a family home. There were fears when the Mill Hill Missionaries left that Bonomi's fine structure would suffer – one insensitive conversion was mooted – but, fortunately, it was purchased by Mrs Audrey Alliston (of Troveworth Properties), a person with evident pride in her local roots and in her new home. The upper floor of the Hall is divided between Mrs Alliston and her son and his wife. In both halves no effort has been spared to preserve or match the original in furniture, furnishings or wall coverings. The stained glass and tiles are especially notable.

On the ground floor an office suite has been created on either side of the grand entry hall, which itself has been restored to a glory last glimpsed at the beginning of the century. The magnificent imperial staircase is seen to maximum effect amid a general colour scheme recommended by English Heritage.

To the rear of the building are 18 dwellings, created by conversion of former brewhouse, washhouse and stables, and rebuilding after removing a 1950s dormitory block, all being enfolded and confirmed as a unit by a curving residential structure. The last named is breached in the centre by a high archway suggestive of the monumental scale of the front of the Hall.

The architects responsible for the restoration and redevelopment were Jane Darbyshire Associates of Newcastle, with assistance in conservation from Simpson-Brown of Edinburgh. The certificate will be handed over before the lecture on 27th February.

When considering this year's nominations, one other was rated highly by Trustees – the conversion of Durham Markets by the Markets Company. Here, extended trading and building use have been achieved without loss of its distinctive character and vitality. In the world of retailing, it is one of the few remaining parts of our City that still retains its quality of Durhamness.