



FROM KENNEL TO SPORTING PALACE

MARCUS BINNEY visits the brilliant transformation of the historic kennels at Goodwood in Sussex into an outstanding sports clubhouse

WITH prodigious flair, the dual kennels at Goodwood have been transformed into a new clubhouse for all the sports the estate is famous for: horse and motor racing, flying and golf. The conversion is so suave and subtle that it is difficult to see what has been done. 'People think it has always been like this,' says the architect, Brian Beardsmore, with genial satisfaction.

The Kennels were built in 1787, to the designs of James Wyatt for the 3rd Duke of Richmond, as an eyecatcher for the west front of Goodwood House. Lord March, who took over the running of Goodwood from his father, the 10th Duke, in 1994, explains: 'I always loved the building. As a teenager, I even dreamed of living in it.'

The 6th Duke had started a golf course here in 1901. For some years,

a private golf club ran a course on the estate (using the Kennels as a clubhouse). In 2002, Lord March decided to take it back in hand with a view to bringing golf up to the same super-smart standards as the other sports at Goodwood, and made the Kennels a sporting member's club, supporting all the sporting pursuits at Goodwood.

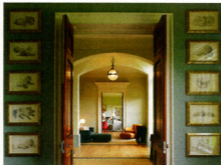
The Kennels stand at an angle to the road. 'Until recently, it was just municipal planting, parked cars and bits of grass,' continues Mr Beardsmore. Now the front courtyard is paved like an Oxford college quadrangle with a flourish of green provided by boxed lime trees. There is a drop-off point, but cars are sent off firmly to park in a walled court on the far side of the road.

To deter any attempt at sneak parking, four cast-iron bollards stand guard, brought out from the Goodwood sculpture park, and by Anthony Gormley, the

sculptor of the Angel of the North. Great care has been taken over wheelchair access with shallow Portland stone ramps leading up to a plinth.

Lord March explains: 'My interest is mixing the old with the new'. His team was headed by Mr Beardsmore, who had worked on two London houses for him. Here, Mr Beardsmore worked with the architects Stuart Mercer and Rodney Tan of Mercer Tan. For the interiors, Lord March brought in Cindy Leveson, his stylist when he was a highly successful London photographer.

The aim from the beginning was that the clubhouse should look as if it could be Lord March's house, with pictures illustrating numerous intriguing facets of Goodwood and its Dukes. Mr Beardsmore explains: 'The interior had been substantially stripped out. We have given it country-house proportions with grand doorcases'. On the park front, an *enfilade*



(Left) The Kennels, which have been recently refurbished but were originally designed in 1787 by James Wyatt, is now a sporting member's club
(Above) Looking down the enfilade of elegant rooms transformed by Brian Beardsmore



The staircase hall is hung with modern art. The stair leads up to the library and changing rooms

has been created with a new central vaulted hall opening into the drawing room and bar beyond on one side and the two dining rooms on the other.

Mr Beardsmore continues: 'The key to interior spaces is light. It doesn't matter whether the detail is Classical or modern'. French windows have been introduced in place of sashes. 'With good light, you need do nothing more than use good materials, oak floors, natural stone,' he adds.

The original brief had been to create a dining room which could seat 72, but Mr Beardsmore realised this would require too large a space and two rooms have been created in place of one. The tablecloths are best Scottish linen with a flourish added to each table by colourfully striped water glasses from Marie Brandolini in Murano—a Cambridge blue, a deep red and an ochre yellow.

The attention to detail is evident in the Richmond and Gordon cipher on the back of the chairs, taken from a tiny cipher engraved on a set of candlestick shades in the house. The Roman blinds used in windows are also in ivory linen—these are of the type which folds down in flaps.

The front door opens into a smart country-house style hall with stone-coloured walls and a blemishless Portland stone floor. The new Portland stone fireplace is worthy of Lutyns, with a well-rounded bolection moulding embedded

in quoins, which are themselves on the curve. Over it hangs a John Wootton painting of Tapster, one of the 2nd Duke's hounds. The gilt frame is the same as those of the famous Woottons of the ducal hunt in the house. 'It was in the house, but I brought it to the Kennels. I remember it hanging over the bar here when I was a child,' says Lord March.

All feeling of a club reception area is studiously avoided. The black Athos desk is Minimalist-modern set off by an upholstered gilt armchair with a back embroidered with a splendid family coat of arms. My one criticism is of the solid handrail to the staircase leading up to the library and changing rooms, a modern detail that looks clunky.

The drawing room pays tribute to the 9th Duke, his cars and airplanes. He established the March Model Company in Hay's Mews in London, although the ones displayed in glass cabinets are his

own. In the drawing room are framed pages from family photograph albums illustrating house parties in the many houses the Richmonds went to stay in, with each page signed by guests. On another wall is a set of photographs by the South African photographer Jon Franklin of a year's sport at Goodwood.

Another interesting grouping is of drawings of animals believed to have been at Goodwood, bought back recently by Goodwood's dynamic curator Rosemary Baird. These portray lions, tigers and bears that were kept in a wood, but which, alas, did not survive as they were fed on a diet of vegetables. The bar is given a strong character by black American walnut panelling.

The 3rd Duke was a Master of the Ordnance and the ha-ha on the park side takes the unusual form of a flint wall on a fortification plan with pretty Burlingtonian twin arches at either end. On this side, the Kennels had been disfigured by

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additions. The architects' solution has been to build flanking screen walls to hide the new kitchens and the all-important pro shop now run by Ralph Lauren. The new flintwork was done in the best traditional manner with two men in white aprons from E. A. Chiverton, the builders, settling for three months to knap the flints. All the air-conditioning plant has been put below ground so nothing disfigures the roof.

Combinations of old and new are, of course, in vogue everywhere. Yet, often, the modern strikes a jarring note. Lord March and his team succeed by choosing modern furnishings with elegant proportions and clean lines, often adding bold accents of colour. The attention to detail is unflinching, whether in the grouping of judiciously framed pictures, the choice of contrasting cushions or the placing of flowers, which were seen as part of the architecture from the start.

For information about golf at Goodwood, telephone 01243 7551444.