

# THE READER, LIVERPOOL



**LOCATION:** CALDERSTONES PARK, LIVERPOOL

**CLIENT:** THE READER ORGANISATION

**COMPLETION:** 2019

**VALUE:** £3.46M

**SIZE:** 2006M<sup>2</sup>

**SERVICE:** ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, INTERIORS,  
CONSERVATION

**SECTOR:** ARTS & CULTURE

**CONTRACTOR:** JOHN TURNER CONSTRUCTION GROUP LTD

**LANDSCAPE:** AUSTIN-SMITH:LORD

**STRUCTURES:** CURTINS

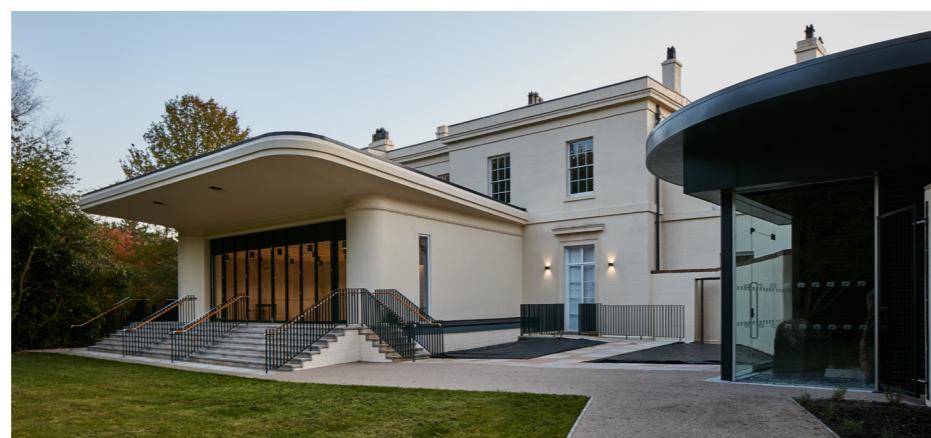
**SERVICES:** CHARLES ANDREWS LTD

**COST CONSULTANT:** TODD & LEDSON

**LISTING:** GRADE II

Austin-Smith:Lord was appointed to execute the refurbishment of the Mansion House within Calderstones Park to create The Reader's International Centre for Shared Reading. Alongside its International profile, The Reader is primarily a community based organisation but has an international profile and this project sought to build on that relationship, improve facilities and The Reader's offer.

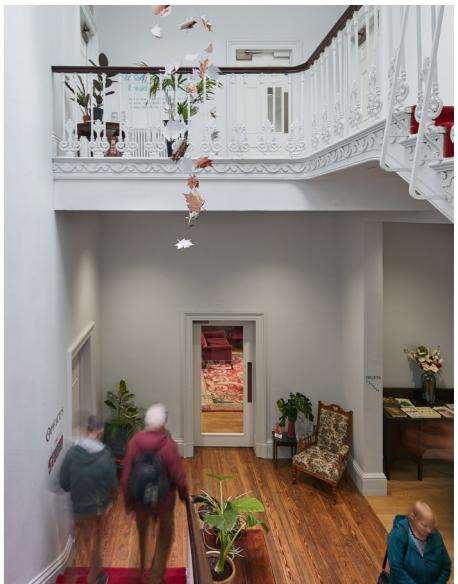
The Mansion House was constructed in 1828 and is grade II listed. It includes an art deco outdoor theatre in the 'secret garden' to the rear of the house, added in 1945.



Austin-Smith:Lord

The Reader, Liverpool

Austin-Smith:Lord



The Reader is an inclusive organisation engaging with wide ranging groups from the local community whilst also reaching out into regional, national and international communities. Visitors include a wide range of ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds. It was important that all of these visitors felt comfortable and welcome within the refurbished building.

The Calder Stones, from which the park takes its name, are six pre-historic stones thought to be from a chambered burial mound on a nearby site. Repositioning the Calder Stones to a more accessible location in the courtyard of the Mansion was a significant objective, which aimed to symbolically reconnect the park with its history.

The project was HLF funded and followed earlier phases of a masterplan for the site which began with The Reader Ice Cream Parlour (2015), The Storybarn (2016) in the stable block courtyard. Future phases are planned that will include the conversion of the stable block into residential accommodation.

The brief was a complex mix of uses underpinned by the daily life of the Reader organisation, which includes group reading rooms, library and office spaces. The Mansion House also has a cafe, bar and function suite.

To the rear of the house is an Art Deco theatre extension (1947), which has been reinstated and is now used for performances and cinema events in the 'secret garden'. The landscape scheme extends alongside the shop to give audience access to the garden.

The design accommodates a visitor centre comprising of a shop, exhibition, period room and the display of the original Calder Stones. The Mansion House now contains various office and studio-style tenanted spaces including literature rooms and art studios.

A new rear entrance at the north west corner was introduced to welcome visitors from the park's main pedestrian spine, inviting them into the exhibition space and shop with views of the 'secret garden'.

The porticoed entrance to the original mansion creates a more formal arrival point for events such as weddings and festivals.

New ramps give level access on approach and from the outdoor seating area of the cafe. Similarly a new ramp gives level access from the bar to the 'secret garden'.

By introducing a strategically positioned lift and minor adjustments to levels we have achieved unimpeded access to all visitor areas, and the majority of staff zones, where previously this was not possible.