

## SPLASHING OUT

**THE TRADITIONALIST** seam in British architecture continues to produce interesting new buildings. This, described in the Roman manner as a 'Bath House' is in the grounds of Williamstrip Park near the village of Coln St Aldwyns in the Cotswolds. Along with an extension to the house itself, it is the winner of this year's Giles Worsley award for a new building in a Georgian context, given by the Georgian Group. It has much to live up to: Williamstrip is a 17th century country house which was remodelled in the late 18th century by Sir John Soane.

Powys-based Craig Hamilton Architects, who designed it, is in the

'progressive classicist' mould, so the building looks not so much to Soane as to the European neo-classicists of the 19th and 20th centuries who developed something of Soane's pared-back manner. Hamilton conceived the Bath House – which in modern day terms is a swimming-pool and spa building – as the equivalent of a temple in the park. The relatively austere exterior is naturally built from local Bath stone, although whiter Portland stone is used for details, such as the pair of columns with their exaggerated Ionic capitals flanking the main entrance (colonnades to the long side elevations are Doric). The entrance

elevation also sports a bas-relief frieze by sculptor Alexander Stoddart, shown here. On the north side, a sunken semi-circular courtyard brings light into a basement gymnasium.

Inside, the restraint gives way to opulence in stone, marble and use of rich colours in the tradition of classical polychromy, with a coffered ceiling over the pool and three niches carved in the wall of a toplit apsidal space for a spa pool. The Bath House is the latest in a series of wide-ranging improvements Hamilton has made to Williamstrip Park since it changed hands in 2008, including a new wing to the main house and complete refurbishment inside. **HP**