

A Selection of Heritage & Conservation Projects
NICHOLS BROWN WEBBER LLP ARCHITECTS AND LANDSCAPE PLANNERS

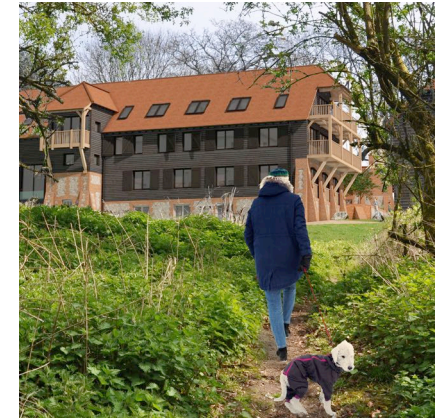
GARSINGTON OPERA ARTS HUB

NICHOLS | BROWN | WEBBER ARCHITECTS & LANDSCAPE PLANNERS

We worked closely with the Garsington team on the design of their new facility which will sit on a beautiful site overlooking the Wormsley Estate. It will provide rehearsal facilities for the Opera as well as allowing them to extend their successful community outreach programme that has brought opera to many local schools. The buildings will also provide the necessary coaching, administration, catering, workshop and storage accommodation needed to support the complex process of putting on a show.

The buildings will replace some existing modern farm buildings and are designed with reference to the farmhouse and cottage which will be retained on site. The new buildings are designed in the Chilterns vernacular using brick and flint walls and clad in dark stained weatherboarding.

The social spaces are designed around a sheltered south facing courtyard which opens to distant views of the Wormsley Valley.



ALTON TOWERS THE GARDENS

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The gardens at Alton Towers were the eccentric creation of the 15th and 16th Earls of Shrewsbury from 1787 to 1852 (1).

Loudon, with a degree of professional pique, described them as "the product of a morbid imagination joined to the command of vast resources".

We have been involved with their restoration since 1990. Sculpture, fountains, garden buildings and water bodies have all been addressed during this time. To date the expenditure in the gardens exceeds £2,000,000 (2).

The central bay of Robert Abraham's conservatory with the pool created to house the Amazon Lily (3).

The Yew Walk (4).

The Coadestone fountain outside Le Refuge was restored along with the Colonnade behind. A new Apollo was sculpted by Cliveden Conservation to replace the original one which had been lost from the adjacent Collonade (6).

Replacing one of the pieces of sculpture in front of the conservatory (5).

Dredging of the water bodies is an ongoing task (7).



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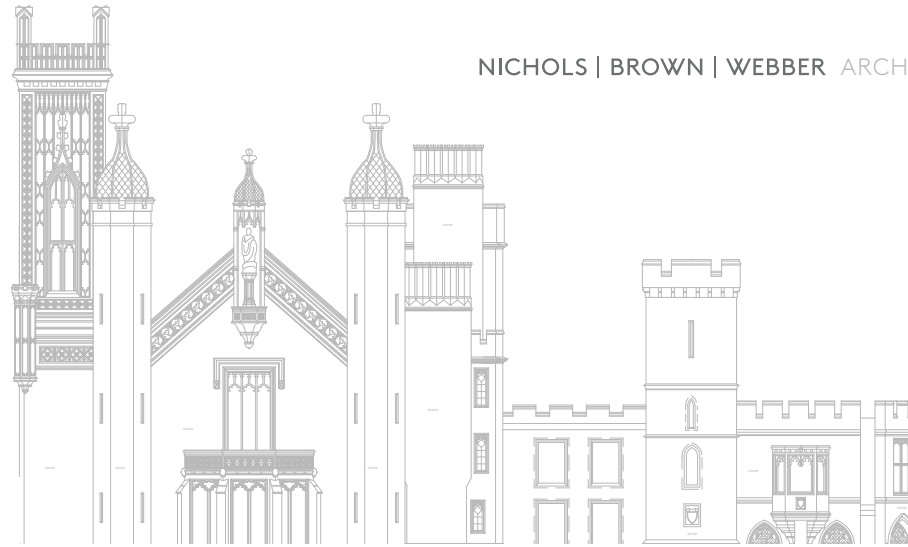
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As well as the Towers themselves (listed grade II*) there are over forty listed structures on the Estate. NBW have been involved in the restoration of the Octagon, Talbot Gallery, Conservatories, Birdcage, Chapel and of the garden artefacts. The total spend on restoration of buildings will be over £2,500,000 by the time the programme is complete.

Looking down on the main building (1). Priorities have been established and a ten year programme of restoration and stabilisation is being followed.

The Octagon, which was raised in height by Pugin and had been without a roof since World War II, was covered again to serve as part of a new attraction (2).

One of the angels which Pugin designed for the chapel which was restored at an early stage (3).

One of the stonemasons hoists into place a section of the restored fountain in Her Ladyship's Garden (4).

The completed fountain with the Octagon and the first stage of the conservatory restoration behind (5).

Initially the sculpture was brought in for safe keeping until a security audit and restoration could be carried out. Most pieces are now back in their original positions (6).



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The winery building is the first phase of a group of buildings designed to serve the winemaking and marketing operations of this new vineyard (1, 2). In due course, further storage, a house for the owner and a hospitality barn will be added as the first wines reach maturity. The winery has been awarded the Chilterns Society Building of the Year.

The entrances to the building are covered by a generous sunny loggia (3) while the vernacular building forms shelter a state-of-the-art wine making facility (4).

Wines will be sampled in the tasting room (5, 6) before proceeding to the cellars below. A kitchen will provide guests with meals while they look out over the vineyard (7).



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The winery building (1) is the first phase of a group of buildings designed to serve the winemaking and marketing operations of this new vineyard. As the first wines reach maturity, more buildings will be added, so that it will begin to resemble a traditional Chilterns farmyard (2, 3).

The present winery building (4) will be joined with other buildings to form a series of courtyards (5 & 6) which will create sheltered spaces giving access to a new house, a hospitality barn and to storage buildings.

Finally the modern extension to the existing grade 2 Farmhouse, at the entrance to the farm, will be demolished and its facade restored (7).



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The extensions to this moated manor house included a riding ring, staff cottages and a courtyard including a conservatory, playroom, shooting room and a gazebo with oriel windows overlooking the moat.

The house is approached across the moat (1).

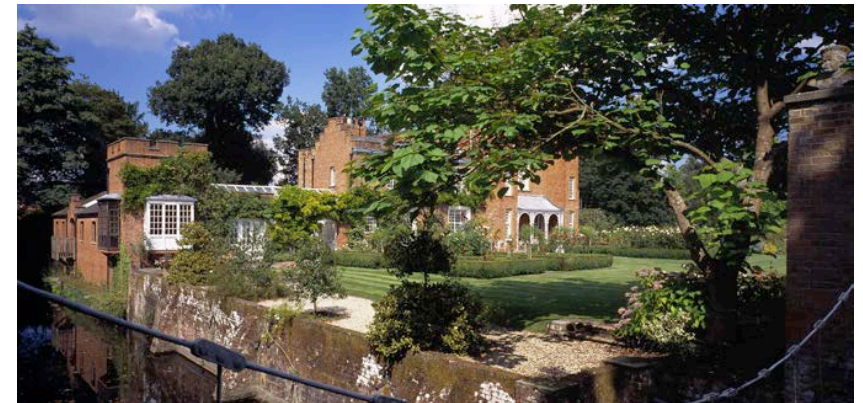
Access to the riding ring is through a new symmetrical facade with a real cottage to the left and a fake one on the right (2). The client's wife gamely agreed that only his initials should be bricked into the wall-just in case.

The new gazebo and conservatory overlook the moat and gardens (3).

The new rooms open onto a courtyard which gives access to the gardens and to a balcony overhanging the moat (4).



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BLENHEIM PALACE VISITOR CENTRE

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Following our work on the Blenheim masterplan, NBW was asked to design a new visitor centre for the Palace. The project involved the replanning of the cafe, shop and visitor reception areas and the creation of much improved facilities in the underused Butler's garden. We worked closely with the Palace, English Heritage and the local Conservation Officer to achieve a sensitive scheme for this World Heritage site and the building won an Oxford Preservation Trust award.

Aerial view of the Palace (1) with the East Courtyard in the left hand foreground.

The East Courtyard before work started (2). The lower roofless wing was once the Butler's garden and Laundry yard and has now been glazed over to provide the new visitor facilities.

The visitor centre was opened by David Cameron in 2012 in time for the London Olympics.(3).

Views of the new shop and visitor welcome area (4 & 5).

The Oxford Pantry cafe occupies the former Dairy and staff prepare for the opening (6).

(Photograph 5 courtesy of Lightmaster)



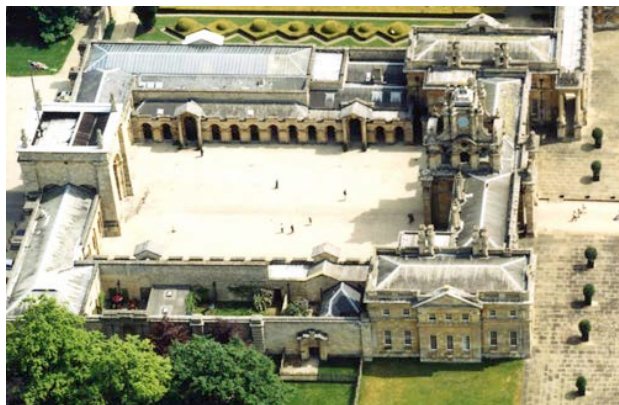
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We worked with the Palace's senior management team towards a vision for the future of Blenheim Palace. The study analysed the flows of visitors and their behaviour in order to suggest ways of serving them better and lessening their impact on this sensitive World Heritage Site.

Site access, parking, orientation, interpretation, catering and shopping all formed parts of the study and it identified a number of projects for the future, including the new visitor centre.

"The finest view in England" opens up from the Woodstock Gate (1).

Looking North to Vanbrugh's Grand Avenue. It would be desirable to make the Pleasure Ground, in the foreground, more accessible to visitors (2).

The North front with its somewhat severe courts which give access to the Palace and Gardens beyond (3).

Space plan of the main house showing projects for consideration in the masterplan (4).

The study observed visitor behaviour on a number of different Event days and on quieter more normal days (5,6,7) .



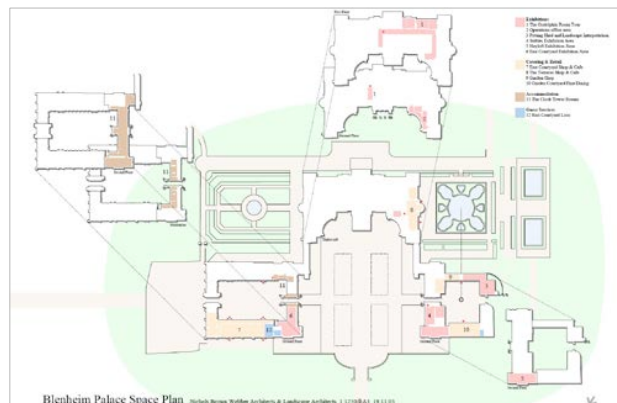
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This Elizabethan and Jacobean house with its famous associations with Jane Austen has been restored by NBW to its earlier condition which involved the demolition of later extensions. The programme of restoration has so far exceeded £3,500,000 with funds being supplied by Californian Austen enthusiast, Sandy Lerner.

The restoration was honoured with both national and local RIBA conservation awards.

1, 2 The NBW drawings for listed building consent showed demolition of the extensions which was supported by English Heritage even though they were from the Victorian period.

3 The approach to the west front was lowered to its historic level during the restoration.

4 Dendrochronology was used to date structural timbers during the restoration of the roof.

5 It is thought that Jane Austen wrote Northanger Abbey and Mansfield Park in the Oak Room which was restored by NBW.

6 The original Malmstone in the west front has an informal and rugged charm.



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Working closely with the conservation officer we carried out the £500,000 refurbishment of the library and brought it into the 21st century by integrating computer rooms and other facilities into the Victorian Gothic structure.

1 The Clifton campus includes a number of fine Victorian buildings.

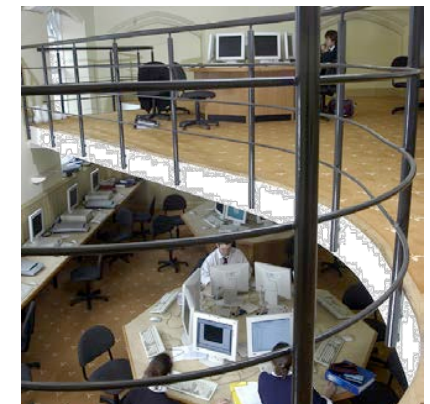
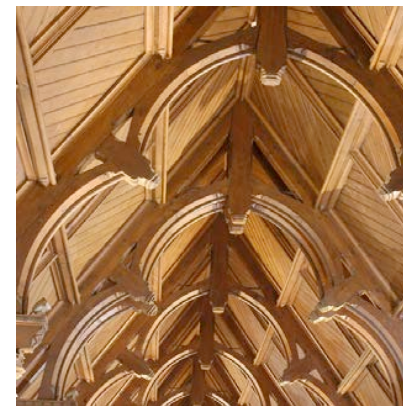
2 The bookcases were restored and French polished and were adapted to form low level archive space and glazed lockable display cabinets at high level. New heating, lighting, power, data and fire alarms were carefully introduced with minimal disruption to the original interior.

3 The roof structure was enhanced with new lighting.

4 New desks in the alcoves were designed with new lighting and data links.

5 A bay overlooking the main quadrangle provides a relaxing space for reading newspapers and periodicals.

6 In the ICT classroom, a mezzanine floor was introduced to create additional computer workstations.



CLIFTON COLLEGE



1

Big School is the name given to one of the first buildings to be built at the College in the 1860's incorporating classrooms on the ground floor with a triple height refectory on the upper floor. In the 1950's a second floor was added creating 2 dining halls. The upper dining hall is still an impressive space with feature roof trusses with staff common rooms now occupying the ground floor. It is grade 2 listed and sits in the Clifton Conservation area.

1 Big School (on the left) is part of an impressive array of fine Victorian buildings.

2 The main Upper Dining Room was refurbished incorporating new services, lighting, furniture & finishes and extensive repairs. Kitchens were completely renewed and a new lift was installed.

3 A total of 15,000 welsh slates were used in the project including alternating bands of hexagonal shaped Penhryn Heather Blue slates and rectangular Cwt y Bugail slates. Chimney repairs were also undertaken. Welsh slate was selected as a requirement of the listed building consent. Feature dormers were overhauled for ventilation.

4 The imposing refectory building facing the College's playing fields, now has a beautiful and dramatic roof once again. The roof had not been replaced since it was built over 150 years ago.

5 The contract value was £2.7m and undertaken as a Design build contract with local contractor Kitto construction.

6 Sound absorbing panels were carefully inserted between roof trusses to greatly improve the acoustics of the upper dining hall.



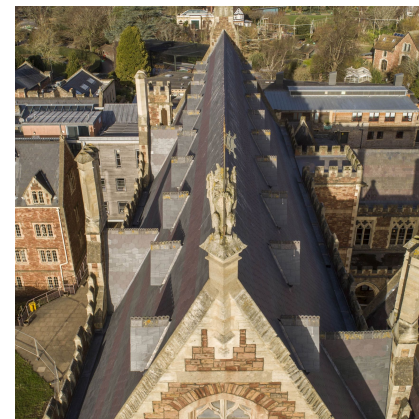
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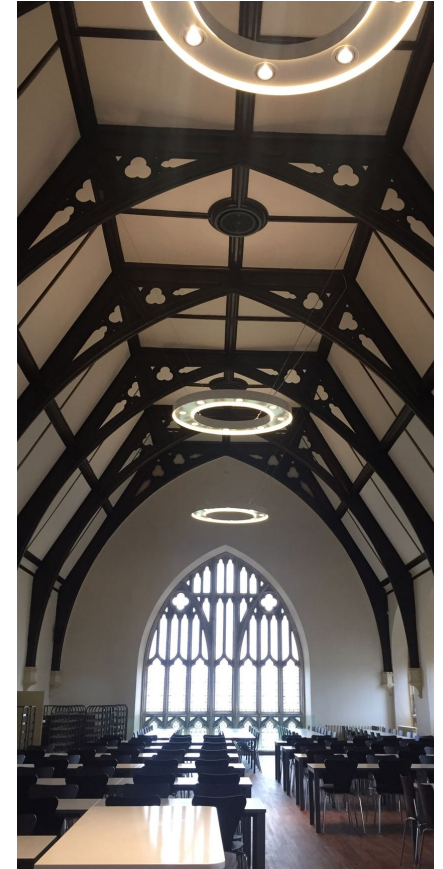
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We converted the two large barns at Cork's Farm into houses for Lord Phillimore. Where possible we sought to maintain the external appearance and the internal volumes. Before starting work the barns were beginning to deteriorate with roofs in particular beginning to fail (1).

The barns were unloaded of all their cladding and the structure was test loaded to prove its integrity. Foundations were put in under the timber wallplates (2).

The South Barn kitchen showing its new ash floor (3).

All structure and informal timbers used green oak, with kiln dried oak only used for joinery items where shrinkage would pose a problem (4).

Entrance & bathroom details (5, 6).



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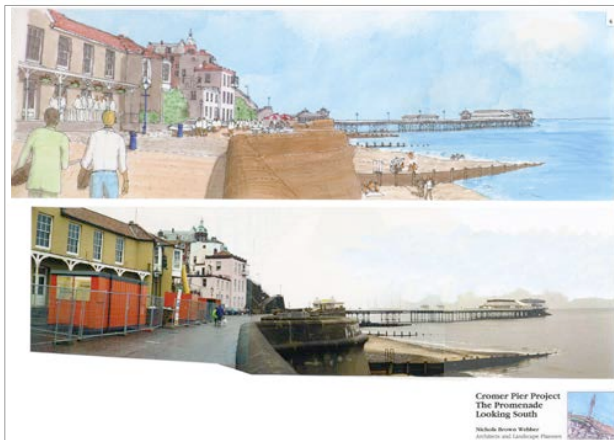
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North Norfolk District Council commissioned NBW to prepare preliminary plans for their successful bid for EEC funds to refurbish the pier and waterfront at Cromer. We worked closely with the pier theatre operators on plans for the enlargement and rationalisation of the theatre as part of the bid.

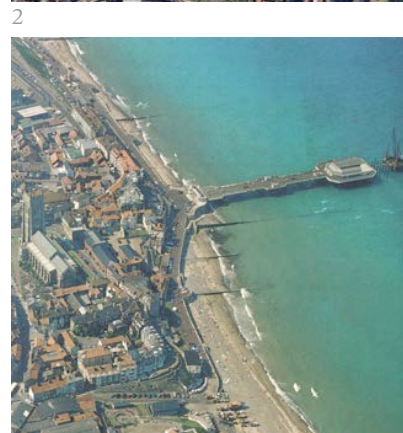
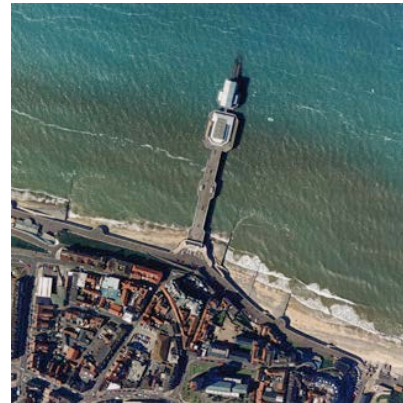
Several pages from the NBW document showed before and after pictures of what could be achieved (1).

Existing aerial views of the pier show its close relationship with the town and the important role it plays (2,3).

NBW's overview sketch brought the various projects together in one vision for the waterfront (4).



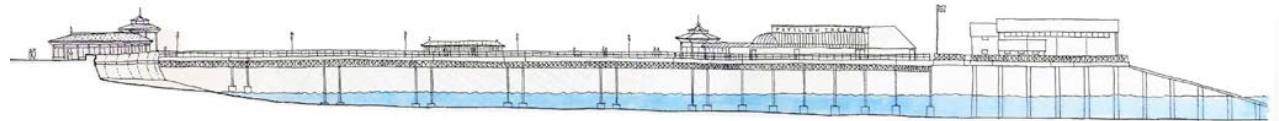
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In the early part of the 20th century Garsington (1) was home to Lady Ottoline Morrell who played host to such literary luminaries as Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell and D H Lawrence.

Garsington is still a private house but was also the home of the famous Summer Opera (2) before it moved to Wormsley Park. As architects to the estate we were involved in the repair of a number of listed buildings and structures and have advised on measures to enhance the estate's neighbourliness during the Opera season.



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3 NBW's sketch of sensitive restoration measures to be undertaken on the garden walls.

4 The main house dates from the 16th century and some of the outbuildings are even older.

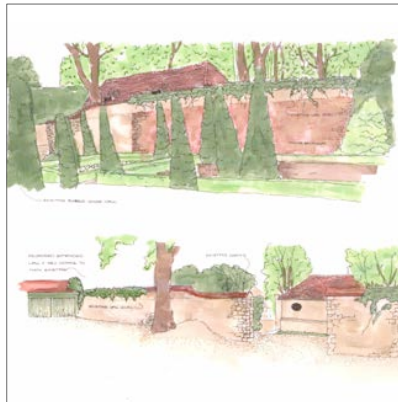


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5 The gardens come into bloom for the Opera season.

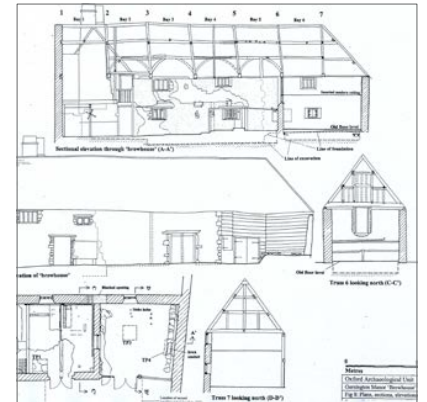


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6 The roof structure of the Brewhouse is revealed during restoration.



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7 We worked with the Oxford Archaeological unit to establish the history of the building before restoration measures were carried out.



Our clients own a large and rambling farmhouse which had been extended in the sixties with a flat roofed addition. This was beginning to leak and they took this opportunity to re-build in a more appropriate Chilterns vernacular.

1, 2 Before and after views of the extension.

3 One facade of the extension gives shelter to the terrace.

4 Craftsmen, skilled in flintwork, were used to achieve the all important details.

5 The extension sits discretely behind the main facade of the house. The finished scheme was given a Design Award by the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Chiltern Society.



1 Before



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2 After



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We carried out the masterplan for the Havre des Pas Marina in Jersey which incorporated a 1200 berth locked marina, 1000 housing units, a five star hotel, a swimming pool and Yachting facilities.

An artificial mound was designed for the western edge of the site to give cover from the adjoining industrial area and blast protection from a tank farm. Within the mound, car parking and leisure facilities were concealed .

As well as communicating the project in plans, words and sketches, NBW carried out presentations to the Island Parliament, business leaders and to local residents.





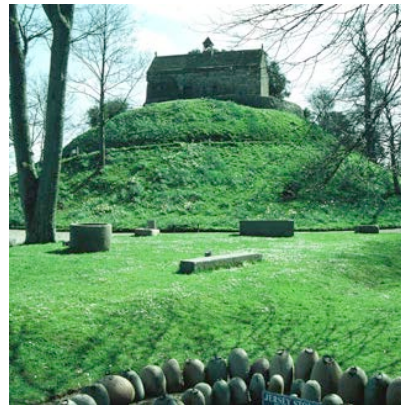
We were part of the team that restored La Hougue Bie for the Jersey Museums Service. Working with archaeologists and geo-technical engineers, we helped reveal the original cairn facade of this neolithic passage grave, constructed in 3800BC. In the 12th century a church was built on top of the mound.

Without knowledge of each other both structures were orientated to the east (1).
The mound with its path ascending in a spiral (2).

In the restoration, NBW sought a compromise between the church, the cairn facade and the grass covered mound over the tomb (3).

Archaeologists gradually reveal the facade while a concrete tunnel dating from 1926 is demolished (4).

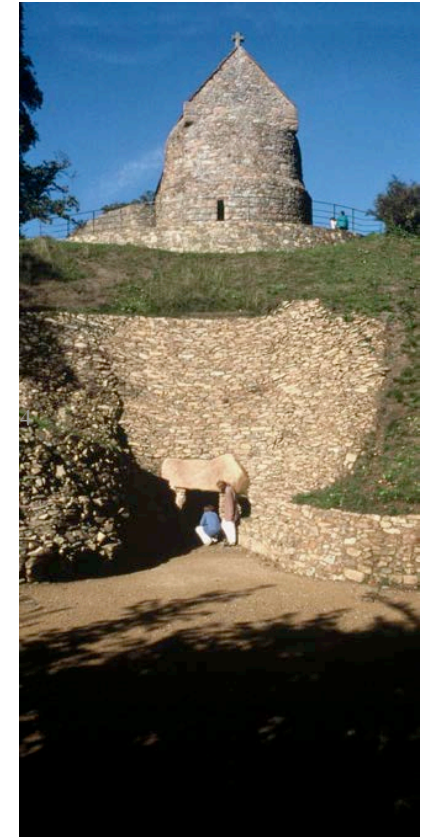
The finished result (5) confirmed the accuracy of the concept sketch.



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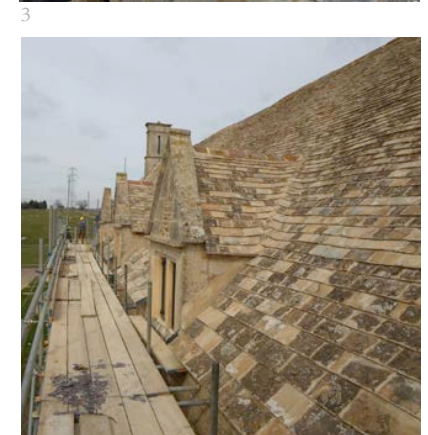
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MEDIEVAL FARMHOUSE RUTLAND

NICHOLS | BROWN | WEBBER ARCHITECTS & LANDSCAPE PLANNERS

Working with Historians and Archaeologists we negotiated a difficult planning permission for conversion of this derelict house to a 'Landmark Trust' style holiday let. This former stable block is an isolated listed late C16th building surrounded by a scheduled ancient monument, a medieval village deserted in 1589. It had not been lived in for over 50 years and was at risk due to repeated theft and vandalism.

- 1 Extensive Archaeological investigations revealed footings of an extension which was subsequently recreated. Other excavations have unearthed evidence of graves, a former chapel, a hall which was demolished in 1775, and many other foundations of surrounding houses.
- 2 The interior of the building was heavily decayed and is being fully restored using conservation techniques including repairs to reed lath and lime plaster, extensive oak repairs and new stone floors on bare earth.
- 3 The roof has been totally repaired in Colley Weston Stone slates which are exceptionally rare. Swept valleys are carefully stitched in and all slates are fully pointed in lime mortar as a weathering.
- 4 Extensive stone repairs were undertaken to chimneys, Dormers and leaning external walls.
- 5 The site before work started with its many undulations hinting at buried earlier buildings.
- 6 North elevation. Windows have been reinstated using traditional bronze casements in stone surrounds.
- 7 Stone slate roof. The site offers incredible views over Rutland.
- 8 Roofworks nearing completion with the new extension shown on the left.



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Greenhill was one of four boarding houses which were extended and refurbished. All the houses which were in the historic core of Sherborne were constructed in Ham stone and were listed grade II or II*.

1 A large holm oak tree was preserved at the centre of a new open space created by stepping the new buildings back from the road.

2 A door at Greenhill set in a wall of Ham stone.

3 The new facades echo the materials of their setting.

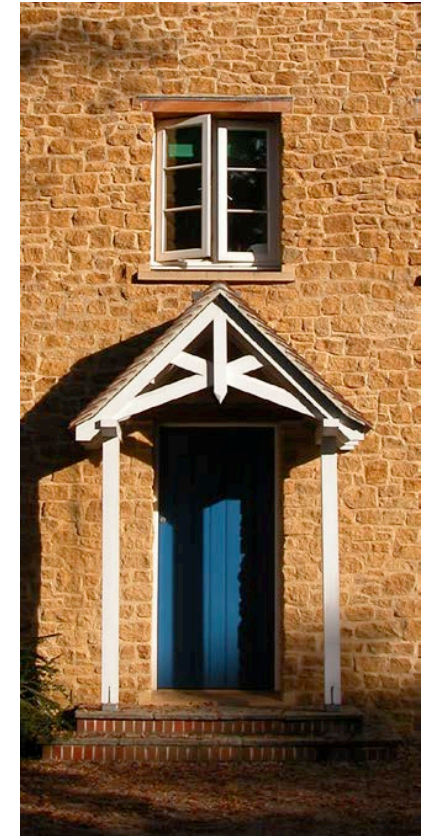
4,5 NBW drawings used for planning and listed building consents



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Burr House was once a farmhouse on the estate and it was extended in the sixties in a particularly sixties style (1). When the boarding house was refurbished it was decided to more than double it in size and the pictures (2, 3) show how it evolved.

The NBW design drawings (4, 5) show how the elevations were planned to compliment the old farmhouse with academic functions taking place behind brick and flint walls and changing rooms and lavatories etc being clad in weatherboarding more reminiscent of the original farmyard.

The North side of the building was swept down to minimise overshadowing and give a gentle presence on the main school drive (6) and below this roof, space was found for the House Tutor's flat with its own discreet front door (7).

The new front door had a foundation stone set above it (8) and this was where the house was opened by the then Minister of Education, Sir Keith Joseph.

We designed the fittings for the house with expert assistance from Mrs Lapping, the Headmaster's wife. Every cubic inch was used (9).



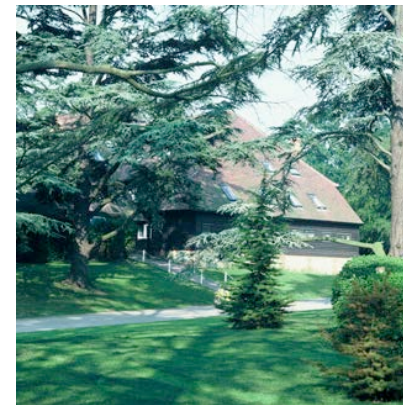
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Working with the Tussauds Group we won the Stonehenge PFI competition and developed the design with English Heritage for over a year until the Lottery funds which had been earmarked for the project were swallowed up by the Dome.

The original site for the visitor centre ran down to the River Avon and was two miles from the Stones themselves (1, 2).

The building was designed to appear as gently rolling Downland with sheep grazing on the roof and with light filtering down from above through hill-top cairns (3).

The entrance courtyard was to provide ticketing and guest services before the start of the tour (4).

Sketches captured the experience for visitors (5).

An exhibition was planned to introduce guests to the previous inhabitants of the area and a sound and light show within an enclosed Stonehenge replica sought to bring its history to life (6, 7).

The stones themselves were to be reached by land train with the final approach on foot (8).



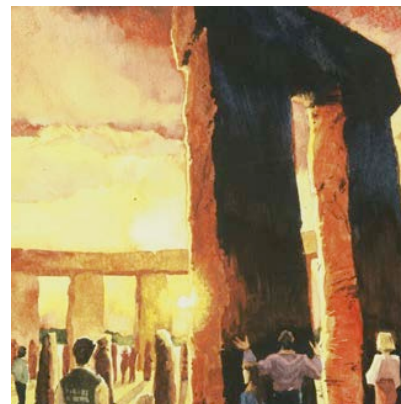
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The National Trust bought the early 18th century New Inn, which used to provide accommodation to the first visitors to Stowe, with the intention of turning it into a visitor centre. The NT then brought in NBW, initially to help them with ideas on how the building and its surrounding landscape might be developed to welcome visitors, and what their experience might be from their first glimpse of the park (1), through to their approach to the gardens and their return to the visitor centre.

The study was later extended to cover how visitors of different types might interpret the complex and extensive landscape and how they would be catered for and transported throughout their day.

The new approach is from the south by the Bell Gate, just as visitors used to approach in the distant past, and once through the gate they will be given a choice between Vice and Virtue (2) and their journey will begin. The study was presented to the Trust as an illustrated booklet. A sample page is shown below.

The Trust used the NBW study as a briefing document for the very successful visitor centre which is a skillful blend of old and new (3 & 4).



NBW were commissioned by Warwick Castle to carry out a feasibility study for a Trust to take over Castle Park with the assistance of lottery funds.

A historical analysis of the park was undertaken along with studies of the woodland, buildings and water bodies before a series of costed options was formulated.

Canaletto was painting Warwick Castle in 1748 at the same time as Capability Brown was starting work in the park and his workmen appear in the picture (1).

The Paul Sandby view of 1776 saw Brown's work complete. This was a view that we hoped to recapture in the new approach to the Castle (2).

We had the use of low level air photography to aid our analysis (3,4).

One of six of the development options generated in the study (5). The proposal would have brought Castle and Park together again (6).

Part of the visual analysis covered by the study (7).



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We have been Landscape Architects to the Castle since 1992 and were Architects and Project Managers for the award winning Kingmaker Exhibition.

The Castle looking out over Castle Park for which we prepared a feasibility study and application for Lottery funds (1).

Working with Archeologists and English Heritage, a strategy was evolved for the restoration of the 14th century vaulted undercroft so that it could be used to house an Exhibition depicting the story of Richard Neville 'The Kingmaker' and his call to arms in 1471 (2 to 5).

The scenes of the Kingmaker exhibition were designed into the undercroft which had largely become a forgotten space since Capability Brown raised levels in the courtyard and effectively buried it on one side.

The workshops, storage and kitchens were found other spaces within the Castle grounds.

The project was finished on time and on budget and won the English Tourist Board's Visitor attraction of the year.

6 A wall painting is added in the finale.

7 Projects within the grounds have included restoration of the mound and other areas of the park, glamping, lodges and new car parking and paths for the disabled.



Working for the Tussauds Group and Bedford Estates, we carried out a feasibility study for an attraction to replace the Safari Park. As part of this study a historical analysis of the park was carried out which traced its development from the 1661 plan to the present day. This allowed the evolution of a restoration strategy for the whole park and the satisfactory integration of the new development.

NBW's plans showing the development of the park over 350 years (1).

The west front of the house overlooking the Basin pond (2).

A detail from the 1661 plan showing the then house and its walled garden and a formal avenue leading off across the fish ponds (3).

The same area in the 1738 plan showing the new house with the pleasure grounds to the right and the circular "Bason" pond set axially in front of the house (4).

An extract from Humphry Repton's plan of 1805 showing how he wished to naturalise the water bodies and to do away with the axial approach (5). Both these things were carried out although the drive had reverted to the axis by the time of Queen Victoria's visit in the middle of the 19th century (6).



2



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1



1738



1805



1901



The Present



The Future?