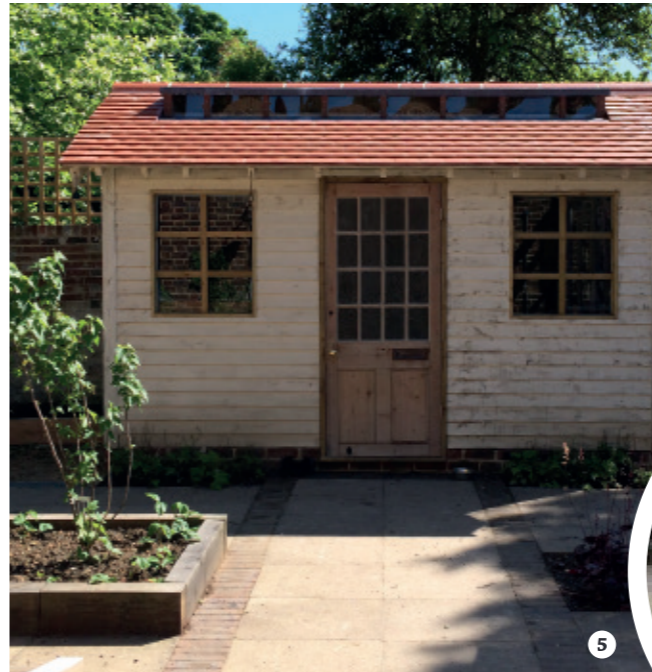


KEEPING WITH TRADITION

BESPOKE LANDSCAPES (HAMPSHIRE) LIMITED



PROJECT DETAILS

Project cost
£168k

Building cost
£27k

Build time
**February 2014-
May 2015**

Size of Project
800m²

A Georgian house was the canvas for an 11 year restoration project. In 2013 attention turned to the walled garden, which had been converted to a swimming pool in the 1960s

In 2013 Bespoke Landscapes was invited by the owners of Fir Hill, a Georgian home and gardens in Hampshire, to help fulfil their vision of restoring the walled garden to its original glory. Having been turned into a swimming pool in the 1960s, the new owners were keen to return the garden to its original purpose as a walled vegetable garden and recreational living space. The clients enlisted landscape architect Maryon Simpson of Arcadia Garden Designs and landscape contractors Bespoke Landscapes to

help bring their vision to life.

Fir Hill is a Grade II listed building in the small village of Droxford in Hampshire, dating from 1765. The clients bought the property in 2004, with the intention of restoring it to how it would have been in Georgian times. Following an 11 year labour of love it recently reached completion.

Design and build

The walled garden project was huge in itself, with the hefty task of removing the



swimming pool, old outbuildings and associated groundworks before the new elements could be constructed. The original boundary walls needed substantial renovation and the clients wanted to keep the garden as authentic as possible, using reclaimed materials where possible and sourcing similar ones where necessary.

The groundworks were completed first, removing the existing pool and levelling the site. This created a two-tiered garden with connected upper and lower levels to allow for a raised herb garden and a large lower potager. The south wall, which had subsided due to the construction of the

swimming pool, was dismantled, giving access to the garden during the initial phases. A steel reinforced structure was then built to underpin the west wall, which had no footings on the original construction. The south wall was rebuilt according to the original footprint, allowing works to the internal areas of the walled garden to commence.

The raised herb garden was built at the narrow end of the plot, with twin sets of Yorkstone and reclaimed brick steps leading down to a water feature, the main potager area and summerhouse. The internal walls and steps were constructed using bricks reclaimed from the original south wall. The numerous raised beds were fabricated of green oak and surrounded by a network of Breedon Golden Amber gravel pathways.

The work area had a series of dilapidated sheds and glasshouses, which were levelled with provisions made for the new features. The area now houses the potting shed and glasshouse, as well as areas for cold frames, composting and additional raised green oak beds. The concept for the three bespoke outbuildings was put forward by the client and the landscape architect while Bespoke Landscapes were asked to finalise the designs and hand craft them on site. They comprised a summer house in the walled garden and a potting shed and glasshouse, designed using traditional Georgian style glazing, in the work area.

Materials

Reclaimed materials sympathetic to the history and surroundings of the garden were used, such as the York flagstones, bricks and oak timbers, whilst other aspects were constructed using materials reclaimed from the house and →

- 1 View of the walled garden and Fir Hill house
- 2 Looking across the vegetable beds in the main garden
- 3 Raised feature area with reclaimed pots and sculpture
- 4 Copper arches with the bespoke summerhouse in the background
- 5 Bespoke potting shed created by Bespoke Landscapes
- 6 Planted vegetable beds in the walled garden
- 7 Steps down into the main walled garden

gardens, such as the decorative Victorian clay edgings, stone plinths and Portland stone.

Features such as the installation of copper and brass light fittings and two bespoke copper growing arches were sympathetic to the design of the property and will age to fit in with the antique feel of the garden. A seat in the herb garden was created by Bespoke Landscapes using reclaimed Purbeck sill stones.



finished design matched the original vision. Bespoke Landscapes maintained a continual dialogue with the client and designer regarding the practicality of the specifications and construction.

The restoration work was completed in the spring of 2015 and the house and gardens opened to the public in August. The finished walled garden provides a spectacular, practical working area that fits in beautifully with the rest of the historic building.

Planting

The garden was planted with a selection of seasonal vegetables, various espaliered fruit trees and herbs and a selection of climbers, roses, clematis and hardy perennials. A mains-fed irrigation system was installed throughout the planting areas and water supplies were installed to the work area and work area outbuildings.

Challenges

All specifications, outbuildings and features had to be sympathetic to the original property. Restoring the walls was a lengthy project in itself, with an estimated 250m² of pointing. Logistics were often tricky, with narrow entrances and gateways proving problematic for machinery and deliveries.

Regular meetings were held to ensure the

- 1 Reclaimed sculpture
- 2 The swimming pool before work started
- 3 Digging out of the pool area
- 4 Construction of the vegetable beds
- 5 Construction of the work area

ABOUT BESPOKE LANDSCAPES

Bespoke Landscapes is a family run landscaping company based near Southampton, Hampshire. Run by Ben Johns – an RHS Medal winning garden designer – since 2003, the company designs and builds gardens across the south of England. It carries out all aspects of garden design, restoration, and all hard and soft landscaping services with a particular passion for natural stone and creating bespoke timber buildings and features.

www.bespokelandscapes.com



REFERENCES

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Email benbespoke@aol.com
Web www.bespokelandscapes.com

Machinery hire
CW Plant
Tel 01582 716 413
Email cw@cwplant.co.uk
Web www.cwplant.co.uk

Timber supplies
Equestrian Fencing Services
Tel 01329 835 100
Email info@equestrianfencing.com
Web www.equestrianfencing.com

General building materials
Elliott Brothers Ltd
Millbank Wharf, Northam, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 5AG
Tel 023 8022 6852
Email info@elliott-brothers.co.uk
Web www.elliotts.uk.com

Yorkstone
Miles Stone
Quarry Yard, Woodside Avenue, Boyatt Wood Industrial Estate, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 9ES
Tel 023 8061 3178
Email sales@miles-stoneuk.com
Web www.miles-stone.co.uk

Glasshouse glazing
ARB Glass Services Ltd
2-4 Quob Lane, Southampton, Hampshire SO30 3GL
Tel 023 8047 1155
Web www.arbglass-southampton.co.uk

Irrigation system
Greener Ways Irrigation
Web www.greenerwaysirrigation.co.uk

Garden buildings
Designed and constructed by Bespoke Landscapes

Plants/shrubs
Tendercare
Southlands Road, Denham, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB9 4HD
Tel 01895 835 544
Web www.tendercare.co.uk

Wooden flower boxes
Woodpecker Joinery
Olympic House, Bramshall, Staffordshire ST14 8TD
Tel 01889 562 610
Email greenhouses@wpjuk.com
Web www.woodpecker-joinery.co.uk