



Press Release
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Architectural Oak Ltd finishes their masterpiece at Arundel Castle

Stunning, breathtaking and all made of British Oak...Viv Kenchington explains more...

Tucked away in the sleepy village of Castle Combe in Wiltshire, an extraordinary creation of carpentry excellence has been achieved. A project that has taken Architectural Oak Ltd. 3 years to bring to fruition finally made its mark in history in the county of West Sussex.

Robert Hibberd of Architectural Oak Ltd, was commissioned by the world renowned Garden Designers; Isobel and Julian Bannerman, to undertake a project of great importance for the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk at Arundel Castle.

The project was to create a Jacobean commemorative garden for the 14th Earl of Arundel, Thomas Howard (1585 – 1646).

The Earl was one of England's first art collectors, his collections now mostly reside in Oxford and at the Royal Society library, however; the Castle still holds some of the Earl's fine paintings such as Van Dyck and Mytens portraits.

Thomas Howard was also a personal friend of the famous Architect Inigo Jones. They travelled Italy together from 1613 - 15, during which the Earl collected some 600 drawings from Leonardo da Vinci. On their return Inigo was commissioned to design a garden at Arundel House; the Earl's town dwelling over-looking the Thames in London.



The Earl, also known as "The Collector" died in exile in Padua during the English Civil war and although his body was returned to England and buried in the Fitzlan Chapel at Arundel Castle, his wishes to be buried in the elaborate tomb specified in his will, never happened. I think you'll agree he now has an appropriate memorial built by a Wiltshire based craftsman and his team.

The commemorative garden at Arundel Castle named; "The Collector Earl's Garden" is a recreation of Inigo Jones' designs for Arundel House translated and crafted in green oak.

The whole site is over an acre and includes the doomed pergola and fountains inspired by the Mytens portrait of the Countess of Arundel which can still be seen today in the castles drawing room. Robust green oak pavilions and gateways mark the space and guide you through a most exciting feast for the eyes.

Walking through the impressive wrought iron gates the garden design leads you left to the Arun Fountain. Two colossal, 3.3 meter high muscular carved oak figures stand either side of an archway holding up a platform of oak boulders and roof topped with a perfect scallop shell. The piece is backed with individually shaped oak shingles (courtesy from our Conservation dept.) giving the impression that they are draped in ice.





Alongside the water are 7 pairs of turned 2m high Oak urns on plinths and marking the pieces perimeter is a series of rusticated solid oak columns 3m high each topped with a turned and carved oak acorn.



Leaving the fountain behind your eyes are drawn to a green oak Temple in a Romanesque style standing 5m high, 5m wide 4m deep decorated with deer antlers. A series of scrolled, rusticated solid oak benches are placed both inside and alongside.



To the right, creating a grand partition are two pairs of arched domed oak pergolas measure 3m wide by 4.5m high to base of dome and 15m long. The central domes, add another 2m in height each topped with a turned oak ball 500mm in diameter.

All timbers for these impressive structures were sourced from managed woodlands in the UK and the geometry is something to be marvelled at.



All joints of the arched timbers are scarfed to create the tight curve and pegged using the traditional framing pegs.



Walking through the pergola, down the stone steps to the lower section of the garden stands the ornate 5m tall "Italian Door". Framed between 2 segmented tapered columns which support an overhanging porch, a close interpretation of one of Inigo's sketches, and a symbolic doorway to the chapel behind where the Earl is buried.



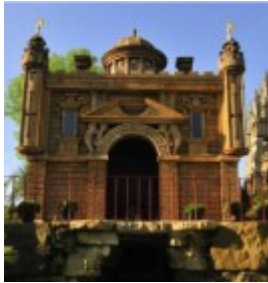
Opposite is a monolithic green oak 5m high archway leading to the vegetable gardens beyond.

The centrepiece is the magical "Oberon's Palace". Framed with two 5.5m high oak obelisks; it is an exact translation of Inigo Jones's drawings.

The English oak structure measures 7m wide, 5m deep and 9m high. The decorative arch over the doorway is one solid piece of oak hand selected and a one in a million find. The curved piece of timber has a radius of 1.8m diameter and is 500mm deep. The corner timbers of the Palace were 5.5m long and 0.75m square – weighing around 4 tonnes each. Sourcing, handling and working this timber was a massive undertaking.



The Palace has 4 hanging turrets and a higher dome clad in hand scalloped cedar shingles.



"Sourcing timbers of these large sections is no easy task" Robert said "I had to hand select each tree from Woburn Abbey. Each year they have to remove large trees as part of their timber management program, so this was a fantastic way to source large timbers in a sustainable way, we also source our shingles (oak / cedar tiles) from sustainable sources".

The garden was open by HRH Prince Charles and the media coverage has been amazing, the Telegraph, the Times and most garden magazines have written rave reviews, just type it in to Google and the list goes on! Some would say I'm biased, but I truly think that these structures are a groundbreaking show of carpentry craftsmanship. And our work has now been short listed for the prestigious Wood Awards, Commercial and Public access category.



All structures display a true testament to the beauty of wood, and the skill of the craftsmen and women at Architectural Oak Ltd. From the planning stage and initial hand sourcing of these large sectioned timbers, these Herculean green oak structures sit perfectly in the impressive landscape and will age as gracefully as its majestic stone neighbour.

For more information on the products and services we provide and further images please visit our website: www.architecturaloak.co.uk

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