

Creating the ideal kitchen garden

As the provenance of our food becomes more of an issue for everything from newspapers and magazines to crusading celebrity chefs, kitchen gardens have become an increasingly attractive proposition for country-house owners, according to building contractor R. W. Armstrong & Sons. The company specialises in renovating, extending and refurbishing period and country properties.

R. W. Armstrong was founded more than 50 years ago, and uses its considerable experience to help property owners achieve exactly what they want with their outdoor space. The company has a team made up of more than 170 experienced and qualified management staff and craftsmen, working in close liaison with



A terrace is a delight on summer evenings, as is this York-paved one by R. W. Armstrong & Sons

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Stuart Pearson, director, R. W. Armstrong & Sons

some of the best architects and interior designers in their field.

For instance, the company recently refurbished a Georgian manor house in Berkshire, paying particular attention to the detail outdoors. As well as installing a Marston and Langinger orangery, R. W. Armstrong completely relandscaped the gardens and created a formal walled garden

with York-stone terracing, bonded gravel paths, herbaceous planting and water features to the rear of the property. This area leads to a wonderful kitchen garden with vegetable beds, a traditional Alitex greenhouse, a brick potting shed with dovescotes and a bronze scarecrow, with splendid effect.

R. W. Armstrong often deals with clients in period properties



An Alitex greenhouse and a bronze scarecrow at a Georgian manor

keen on kitchen gardens. In the case of Victorian or Georgian houses, there are often kitchen gardens near the house already, even if they aren't in use. 'If so, it's easy to work with what's there,' says director Stuart Pearson. 'Most people want a traditional kitchen garden that lets us make the most of the original features, but we sometimes add specialist lighting for a better appreciation of the area.' Stuart says that a good-sized kitchen garden usually takes two to three months to complete, according to the site.

Apart from kitchen gardens, the company is adept at all forms of landscaping. Using the best materials and top-flight knowledge,

they produce work to impeccable standards on every project they take part in. They work with the best people in the business, and outdoor fixtures and fittings are only sourced from the highest-quality brands suitable for bringing a traditional country house into the 21st century.

Based near Basingstoke in Hampshire, the majority of the work that R. W. Armstrong takes on is in Surrey, West Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and south-west London. The company is on the list of approved contractors for English Heritage, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the National Trust, as well as local-authority conservation departments, and has won national awards for its work. For more information, telephone 01256 850177 or visit www.rwarmstrong.co.uk

Far top left A new oak pergola. Far bottom left A secluded walled garden. Left Gazebos lead the eye through a garden

