

Buildings of distinction



THE glorious condition of England's vast stock of period country houses is a source of immense national pride, and a magnet that draws thousands of overseas visitors every year. All the more fascinating are the houses that have been expanded and adapted to accommodate the changing needs and lifestyles of their owners. Rather than being staid museum pieces

detail has resulted in R. W. Armstrong being recommended by key heritage groups, including the National Trust, English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

'Over the past few years, there has been an increasing demand for extensive luxury landscaping services, together with the renovation of old outbuildings or the construction of new facilities,



Above left A 'natural' pool. *Above* An elegant neo-Victorian pavilion

**'We're incredibly versatile:
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for their artisan skills'**

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

frozen in time, these country houses tell the rich story of this country's social history.

R. W. Armstrong & Sons has more than 50 years of experience helping the custodians of England's country houses improve their properties. Work ranges from major projects such as building

such as leisure complexes, to complement the classic home,' says Simon Lewis, managing director of R. W. Armstrong & Sons.

The team recently worked on a project in the grounds of a manor house in Surrey, where an impressive two-storey leisure complex was built that included



Left A new wildflower meadow. *Right* Bricks add style to steps



Turned-oak columns and cedar shingles create an impressive pavilion

new country houses from scratch and complete refurbishments of listed properties to smaller jobs, such as creating intimate structures in the garden.

The company's fine craftsmanship and meticulous attention to

a gym and treatment room. 'Our speciality is working on period buildings—often, they're Georgian, but we cover all different types,' explains Stuart Pearson, a director at the firm. 'We're incredibly versatile: our team

members are handpicked for their artisan skills, which is imperative as you never know what you're going to uncover when you start renovating an old building.'

There are more than 170 experienced and qualified management staff and craftsmen at R. W. Armstrong, who work in close liaison with some of the best country-house architects in their field. Such work includes the multi-million pound, two-year refurbishment of a country estate in conjunction with Winchester-based Robert Adam Architects. The project started out as the simple conversion of a Victorian stable into a three-berth garage, then extended to encompass the main house, the conversion of an outbuilding into a shooting lodge, and landscaping.

Over the years, the company

has established a reputation not only for its fine work, but also for discretion when it comes to its prestigious client list. Many people return again and again to call upon its services for further improvements to their homes. R. W. Armstrong recently completed a major pavilion for one such client. Large, turned-oak columns were used to support the structure, which was topped by curved sapele rafters and a cedar shingle roof. These were complemented by copper-ogee guttering and finials to create an impressive new outdoor room.

R. W. Armstrong & Sons is based near Basingstoke, but the company's work covers most of south-east England.

For further information, telephone 01256 850177 or visit www.rwarmstrong.co.uk