

*For Arup.*

Setting and Context for Heritage Assets.

The approach to heritage assets seems to be best approached with regards to ‘values’. It is perhaps often perceived as tangential to the engineering sectors but the quality of development seems to be justified only with regards to its setting.

The setting is important both as the space in which people and their identities merge, abut and balance, but also as something existing in less anthropocentric ways.

Farming practice has responded to a similar value-based identity crisis, and is certainly still finding its way. Parallels can be drawn between the two fields and often overlap, and the success of contemporary farming practice is determined by an increasingly holistic set of values.





Involving the renovation of a pre 1940's traditional timber framed structure, this project sought to create a space in which transitory occupants to coexist in a mutually shared space. The use of sheet ply throughout the interior aids this use, for a cheap readily available material lacks an associated permanence, and the choice to focus on functional in built furniture enables this idea further.

It is interesting that a number of traditional materials have been left aside. The omission of rice straw, used in *tatami* and partitions, from a building of this period fails to reference the heritage setting, although the *washi* screens fulfils the same issue. The image showing the building with regards to the residential tower blocks perhaps explains why. Paper industries are still prevalent, whereas the cultivation of traditional crops and their by products is inevitably less so and it's use might appear kitsch. It is possible that heritage projects can enable a connection with a wider heritage narrative through their reimagined purpose, but this building now enables a contemporary use.

In a similar vein unsympathetic ply sheet has been used as a structural material in the conservation of the roof and ceiling structure, likely due to meeting basic living standards, yet the restorative works have been carried out with skill. Sections of the upright timber beams have been spliced and replaced with respect to the skill of the original craftspeople. It follows a principle that conservation works should be designed to be removed without detrimental effects on the elements of significance.

Kengo Kuma and Associates - Shared House in Oji





Kengo Kuma and Associates - Shared House in Oji

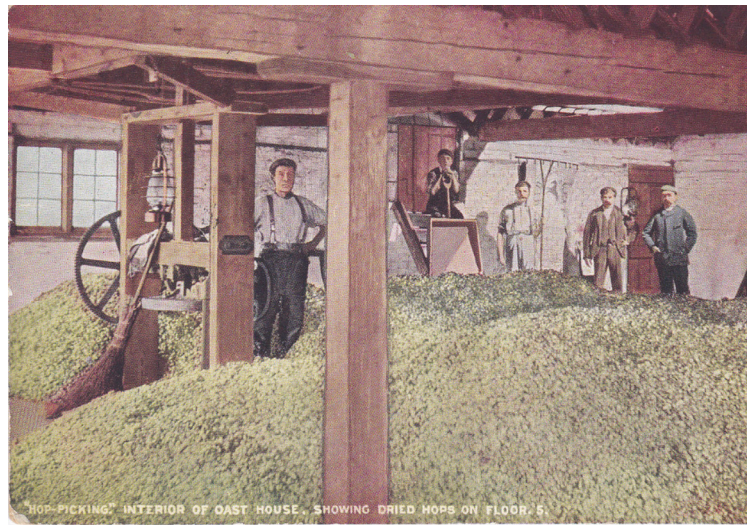




Used for hop storage and drying as part of the brewing process, Oast Houses can be seen widely across the South-East of England and are part of a rich social history involving the working class of industrially driven cities such as London and Portsmouth.

Seasonal work drew 400,000\* people to Hop farms, with workers housed in 'Hopper Huts', rudimentary buildings barely suitable for habitation. Tensions between countryside dwellers and those on 'holiday' grew, for identities merged, and Police numbers increased each season. Yet the idea of 'hopping' was noted at the time to bring solace and hope to those of city working life.

These identities are embodied in structures like Oast Houses and give a backdrop to their heritage significance. Beams silvered with age and walls marked with dirt carry valuable fabric, and so often lost at the cost of aesthetic preferences. The tensions between what was and is prominent are always there.



Successful exterior, woeful interior

## Oast Houses, Kent and the Weald





Dated at the earliest from the C16th, the complex development encompassing lock, two mills and bridge has been adapted to house a brasserie and function space. At the end of the twentieth century the north wing burnt down and the west façade of the complex collapsed. The bridge and mills had remained as a ruin on an inaccessible site in the town for more than 20 years, making their restoration and re-use a matter of urgency.

Perhaps it is this urgency that enabled a project that interacts with the interior and exterior setting in what seems a heavy-handed fashion. The materials and manufacturing processes used on the façade mark a definite split from the heritage assets, and the interior lacks a considered response to the value of intangible elements in heritage space. What is old remains so, yet what is new lacks sensitivity.



Noaarchitecten - 012 'S Hertogemolens





The response to the aged and old, like the previous project, is to intervene leaving a clear divide. Unlike the previous example the response is more aware of idiosyncrasies in the structure and form of the heritage elements. Walls are left with erosion un-catered for, and the timbers marking the boundaries of the heritage structure are met with new materials of a similar ilk. The palette remains similar and aids the readability of the pervious form. A slightly more successful response.



Ristrutturazione Casa 63 - Ruinelli Architetti





Bistro



Conference Room

He Wei Studio, Shangping Regeneration





top:  
Lotus Room

left:  
Bistro interior

right:  
Lotus Room Exterior



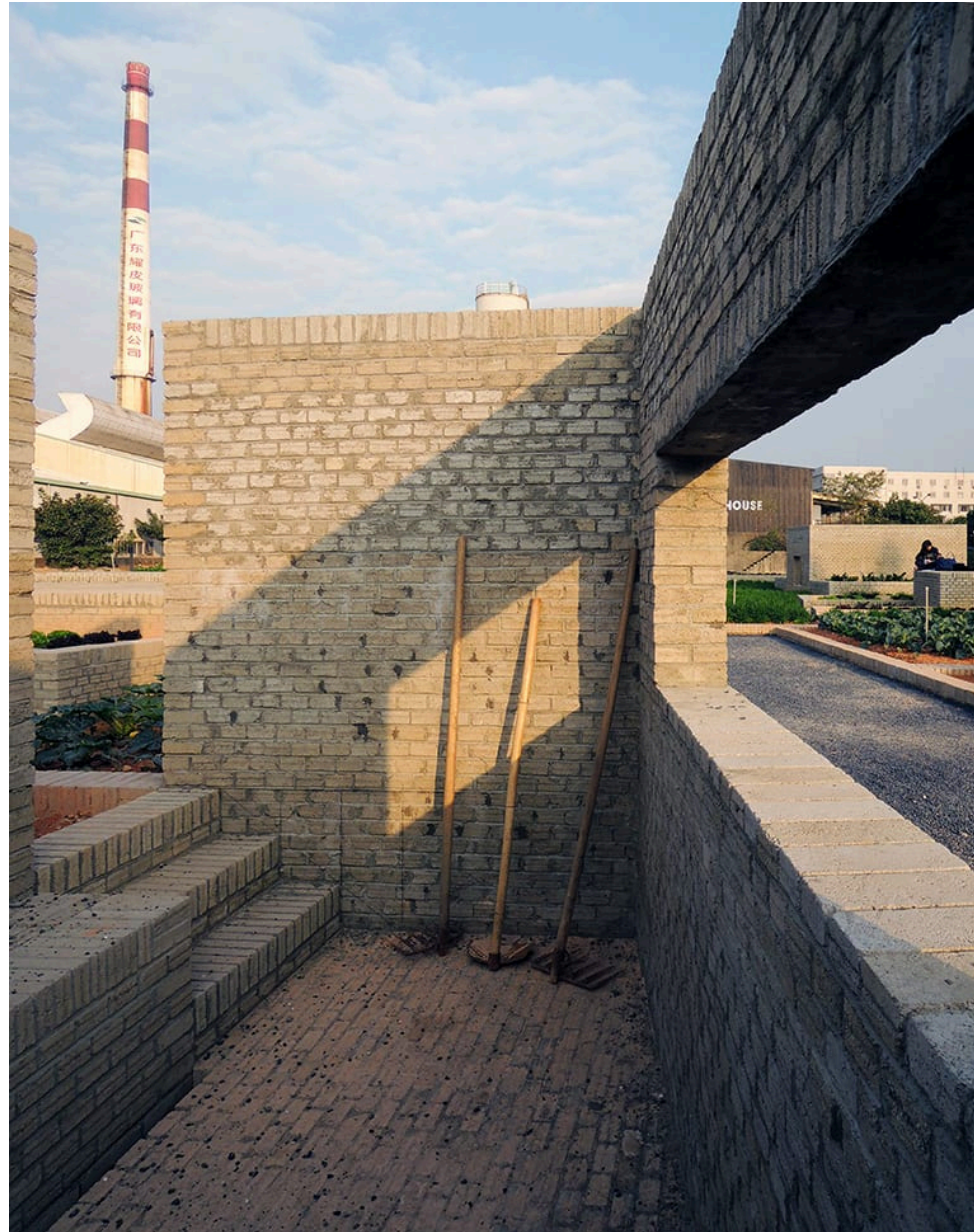
Responding to a heritage site in which the lives of the indigenous community are closely linked to the traditions of their social history and the landscape. Most villagers are decedents of a Han Dynasty Feudal master, and the village of Shangping previous housed several large heritage structures: the Tai Fu Tai Mansion, the Yang's Ancestral Temple, Shezumiao Shrine, and the Zhaogongmiao Temple. The village also has close links to figures in calligraphy and literature and is dubbed the "literary village surrounded by water".

The community required a series of developed structures that better facilitated the archeological tourism they already received, and the Studio developed a series of buildings in tandem with the village needs. Although the structures are long gone, the traditions remain, and the buildings respond to joinery methods and material usage that has been practiced over ages. The bistro and bar facilitate the production of a bamboo based drink and the buildings reuse rubble-stones from previous structures to form the stone course.



He Wei Studio, Shangping Regeneration





Thomas Chung works to integrate productive landscape into sites in which community has been left with little choice but to leave it behind. As part of the Shenzhen/Hong Kong Architecture Biennale, the project references the development of rooftop urban farming in Hong Kong and the need to re-connect with the landscape.

Urban creation often takes place within the factory, and this test site is under the project title 'Value Farm'. By detaching the commonly association between farming and rural landscape, the necessary challenge it poses to the urban experience can dominate the opposing space. By doing so, abutting arguments are able to create something fluid and increasingly successful. The site for the project previously housed a set of industrial units for a glass manufacturer, the remnants of which has been left or repurposed as totems of the regenerative process. Interior sections are left standing, walls are left and low-levels to create the planted space, rocks and trees are left in situ and parts of the community remain to farm indigenous crops that maintain traditional Shenzhen foodstuffs, such as flaxseed and winter wheat, which have been displaced with industrialised mono-cultural growth.

Thomas Chung





A second project in Shenzhen called 'Floating Fields' has a similar intent and palette, although in this case the wider setting is more active. The project responds to another agricultural past, one of intensive yet biodynamic farming practice. The inhabitants of the low-lying flood plains managed dykes in which fish, mulberry and silkworm production was undertaken in a self sustaining aquatic economy.

The self-sustaining water cycle begins with nutrient-rich 'waste' water fed into the algae pavilion's ponds, then cleansed in the filtering ponds and purified in the water lily pond. The 'cleaned' water then flows through the koi carp pond, duck pond, into the big aquaponics ponds with floating plots surrounded by mulberry beds. The floating plots return oxygen to the water while partially absorbing nutrients in it, before it is fed back to start of the cycle to the algae pavilion.

Floating Fields generated events with great response and publicity from community and media . A Planting Festival gave over 100 city kids and their families the chance to sow their own floating plots, catch fish and learn about duck, silkworm and algae life-cycles firsthand. Referencing only the materiality of concrete brick ponds both projects falls flat, yet when considered in terms of the response to both the built and communal environment they're both certain successes.

Thomas Chung





St. Martins Organic Coffee House,  
Chichester





St Martin's Organic Coffee House is a pair of Grade II Listed C18th Georgian Townhouses restored in the late 1980's by Keith Nelson, the current owner. The ruined pair were sensitively restored both inside and out. Single glazed sashes and vernacular windows, timber frame and brick infill walls of an earlier structure, internal furnishings and fittings and C19th plasterwork remain. The kitchen is housed in a weatherboard extension on the rear elevation, an early C20th addition.

The accumulation of these preserved details allow for the building to sit inconspicuously within the surrounding Georgian houses of St Martins Square, and the influence of the Cathedral on the wider setting of Chichester. Regarding community involvement, cantankerous projects like this often fail to responds to the wishes of anyone but the proprietor, yet the Coffee House is embraced as a loveable oddity. It is hard to measure the value of a project so rigid, yet this setting provides a home to various artists and academics in a way that a scheme might fail to do so.

I am personally familiar with Keith and I'm sure he would be more than happy to help with the filming you intend to carry out.

St. Martins Organic Coffee House,  
Chichester





Knepp Castle, Sussex





The Castle Estate is central to a re-wilding project that embraces farmland and those within it. Since 2001 the estate has managed its previously intensively farmed land in aid of endangered species and plants. The vision of the 'Knepp Wildland Project' is radically different to conventional nature conservation in that it is not driven by specific goals or target species. Instead, its driving principle is to establish a functioning ecosystem where nature is given as much freedom as possible. The work of Dr. Franz Vera has influenced the estate owners, Isabella Tree and Charles Burrell, and is crucial in understanding the value in the natural disturbance and contributions made by varied species interacting with one another. Livestock graze with different preferences for natural foodstuffs, and provide different nutrients to aid the dispersal and growth of crucial plant species.

The work is made possible by the funding created through the restoration of Knepp Castle after a fire in the early C20th, open to visitors, and the use of various outbuildings such as the Cow-Barn (previous) for guest tenancy. Restored in a similar fashion to *Parkamoor*, original features are left untouched and conservation works use traditional infill and cladding methods to insulate the building, such as Lathe and Plaster wall infill and square edge weatherboarding. Salvaged features are used for doors, windows and interior features.

Heritage buildings have influence that stretches further than the significance of the structure, and integrating buildings that are often easily recognisable into wider projects can assist in the validation of other social and communal causes. Of course this project is most relevant to the rural issues an estate reflects, but the same can be achieved in urban settings. Art Galleries such as the Pallant Gallery in Chichester often act as hubs for community led action.

Knepp Castle, Sussex





Although an unlisted structure, the approach to this log built cabin in Sharon, Con. responds to the material incredibly sympathetically. The weathered corrugated roof, fixtures and cladding (coated in Swedish pine tar) all remain in situ and the only structural adaptation of note is the addition of double glazed windows to fit the original apertures. The exterior conservation works involved very little other than the restoration of the log infill; known as chinking, a lime cement and sand mix. The interior is heated by the wood-burning stove in line with the weather conditions, although electric heating has been installed below the floorboards for use in extreme cold

The interior is reworked with light partition walls clad in mixed materials and light fixings often appropriate reused materials. The restoration was previously used as a holiday residence before an application to make a permanent dwelling was approved



John-Paul Philippe - Cabin, Connecticut





Dodgson Wood, Cumbria





Parkamoor, Dodgson Wood is a Grade II Listed building in the Cumbrian Fells. Built with volcanic rubblestone, rendered in clay lime, with borrowdale roofing slates cladding a timber beam roofing structure. The building lacks most modern facilities. There are no mains services; the house is served by a traditional composting toilet and there are two wood burning stoves, any cooking is on a gas hob.

Although passable for use as an experience destination, with few references to anything made after the 1970's, a restoration model that is as true to its' heritage value is hard to replicate in a setting with a high turnover of visitors. What this building does rely on for its charm is an honest use of local and original decorative features. The structural materials are all available from geological belts found in Cumbria and the form of cottage, built down the slope, is one found often in farming landscape with a likely previous purpose of housing both livestock and people. The interior walls are left with swells in the render, and details such as doors, doorframes, floorboards, fixtures and fittings are left without adaptation for the sake of trend.



Dodgson Wood, Cumbria





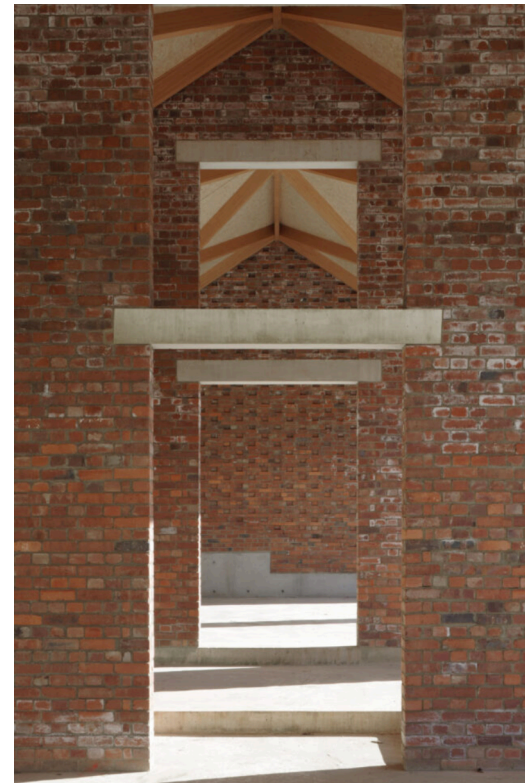
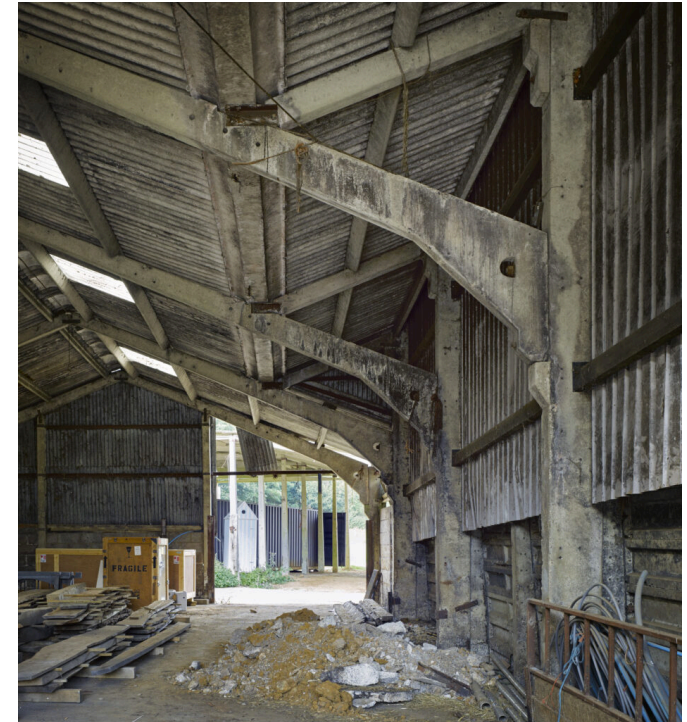
*‘My basic position is that all of the south of England is part of the wider London conurbation. Everybody here is in denial – they want to believe they live in the country,’*

Owned by Niall Hobhouse, architectural patron and director of Drawing Matter, the site address sets out to address the above premise. A cluster of farm buildings; some converted some left behind, challenge the premise that gentrification can only strip things bare. Albeit rather utopian, requiring an understanding of the irony in a previous estate owner playing with the aesthetic of the country, the building conversions leave room for the working farm around it.

The Cowshed is the largest building, developed to house 50 dairy cow through the winter, revitalising an old barn structure with an extension formed of a hybrid concrete formed from a mix of crushed limestone from the nearby Hadspen quarry and clay from Hobhouse’s fields. The central structure is that of a farm building pre-fab, clad in treated pine weatherboards spaces for ventilation, with the extension to the north-east. Several other buildings have been developed; the Hay-Barn with decorative brickwork structural columns and altered English-Bond brickwork walls, the Silos converted into library buildings, the Dairy House converted into Hobhouse’s home and the barn used to house the Drawing Matter archive and architectural office.

Shatwell Farm, Somerset





Shatwell Farm, Somerset





*Drawing Matter and Hugh Strange Architects at Shatwell Farm.*



The Drawing Matter archive building is perhaps the most complete conversion. The original long-barn was formed of single skin brick and flint walls with a prefab steel roof structure. The building was subject to a change of use planning application, allowed as the building was included in the curtilage of a previously developed farmhouse nearby. Part of the agreement with the LPA was that the original structure had to be rebuilt in places and made structurally sound in others without the removal of any material for further development. The response, designed by Stephen Taylor Architects, was to construct a pair of buildings within the previous structure that exist separately to the previous building. Made of durable, unfussy, 8x4 sheet ply, the external face shows materials often found in working environments.

Shatwell Farm, Somerset





A Grade II Listed timber barn on a working farm has been converted into a pair of artists studios and a dwelling. Focusing on requirements given by the LPA and a desire to meet high EPC standards, the conversion used newly conceived ideas to enable the building to respond to the setting. Recycled and reclaimed materials have been used extensively through the building, most notably two concrete block grain silos that form a dividing wall and provide part of the structure for the staircase to a mezzanine above.

Bitumen coated feather-boarding is used as cladding, drawing from the vernacular use often seen in cow-sheds and dairy barns. To meet planning requirements, perforated stainless sheet is used on to cover clear multi-walled polycarbonate roofing material, which acts as insulation and fenestration, without being clearly visible from the exterior or noticeable from the interior. The freestanding silos acted as free standing internal dividing walls, which were not permitted as fixed structural works to the frame. More contemporary amenities are the polished concrete floor and the use of engineered double-glazing in the gable ends.

One external silo is used as a bedroom suite and simple restoration of the smaller brick and stone barns house an artists workshop.

Hudson Architects - Feeringbury Barn, Essex





Hudson Architects - Feeringbury Barn, Essex





There is very little confrontation between the contemporary use of the structure and the heritage significance of what has been adapted. Certainly, a barn structure aids this as a multi-use space gives greater flexibility, but what is being asked of it is well disposed. The type-forms seen on the original structure are given total respect and these forms are replicated, be it the use of industrialised materials or lack of intrusive interventions. The structure is made safe, but remains devoid of changes based on trend and it sits in the same topography and landscape as before; one that is simple and utilitarian. The sentiment of a working farmer towards a functional building is reflected in the sentiment of the inhabitants towards their home.

I would point to the success of this project being closely linked to the attitudes of the client. By focusing on guidance from varying fields, admissions and omissions can be easily negotiated and problematic areas in heritage, energy, planning and construction can be met with innovative solutions. The owner (also builder) understands the notion of custody, therefore treating the necessary and unnecessary as factors determined over longer timeframes into the past and future. These intangible values, often gained through tacit knowledge, are hard to quantify but often carry the greatest importance.

Hudson Architects - Feeringbury Barn, Essex

*Theoretical*

Values and Heritage Conservation: Research Report.  
*Avrami, Mason and de la Torre. The Getty Conservation Institute*

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.  
*Unesco, Paris 2003*

The Nara Document on Authenticity.  
*Unesco, 1994*

The Declaration of San Antonio.  
*Unesco, 1996*

Developing Professional Uncertainty.  
*Ashley-Smith, 2000*

Losing the Edge: the Risk of a Decline in Practical Conservation Skills.  
*Ashley-Smith, ICON, 2016*

Authenticity, Value and Community Involvement in Heritage Management under the World Heritage and Intangible Heritage Conventions  
*Deacon and Smeets, 2013*

Making Historic Preservation Sustainable  
*Avrami, JAPA, 2016*

Conservation Philosophy and its Development: Changing Understandings of Authenticity and Significance  
*Araoz, 2013*

*The Ethics of Doing Nothing*  
*Ashley-Smith, ICON, 2018*

*Technical*

Principles for the Preservation of Timber Structures.  
*ICOMOS, 1999*

ISCS Stone Glossary.  
*ICOMOS, 2010*

Bricks: A Guide to the Repair of Historic Brickwork  
*Environment, Heritage and Local Government Ireland*

Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings (series).  
*Historic England.*

Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment.  
*Historic England.*

Guidance for the built environment is comprehensive wen regarding structural building methods and details that link closely with work involving other sectors, likely in favour of clarity. Subjects less well covered such as value systems, traditions and tacit knowledge are often pushed aside, for their vagueness is a complicating factor. There are a number of useful documents that can be referenced when approaching heritage assets with this in mind.