



ARTISAN
STRUCTURES



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Guided by the shapes and aesthetics of natural materials, Artisan Structures uses traditional techniques to craft unique structures that are in harmony with their surroundings.

Our carpenters & sculptors are masters of their craft, skilfully working together to create stunning one-of-a-kind structures and sculptures using sustainable materials.

Our commitment to sustainability drives everything we do, and creating structures that stand the test of time is an essential part of this.

We use locally sourced, sustainable wood. Oak, sweet chestnut, douglas fir, larch, willow and hazel are our preferred species.

With a longevity that spans generations and only grows more stunning with age, these materials are the perfect embodiment of our values.

All of our milled wood is supplied by Rougham Estate, Suffolk. They manage their woodland sensitively and are protective of the biodiversity of the estate. Fully regenerative and extremely carbon friendly, we also love this wood for its level of character and beauty that most of the building industry dismiss as inconvenient. It fits our ethos & style of carpentry perfectly.

The sweet chestnut that we use for our structural carpentry, is felled in woodland near Halstead, Essex, in a small, well-run coppice, managed by Westover Woodlands.

Coppicing sequesters more carbon from the atmosphere than any other method, because it repeats the tree's most vigorous first 10 years of growth. It is a magical way to grow wood.

Education is a huge part of who we are and we often talk in assemblies at schools. We love to tell the story of the coppice (1 tree magically becoming 10!) and excite the next generation as they take over stewardship of the world.

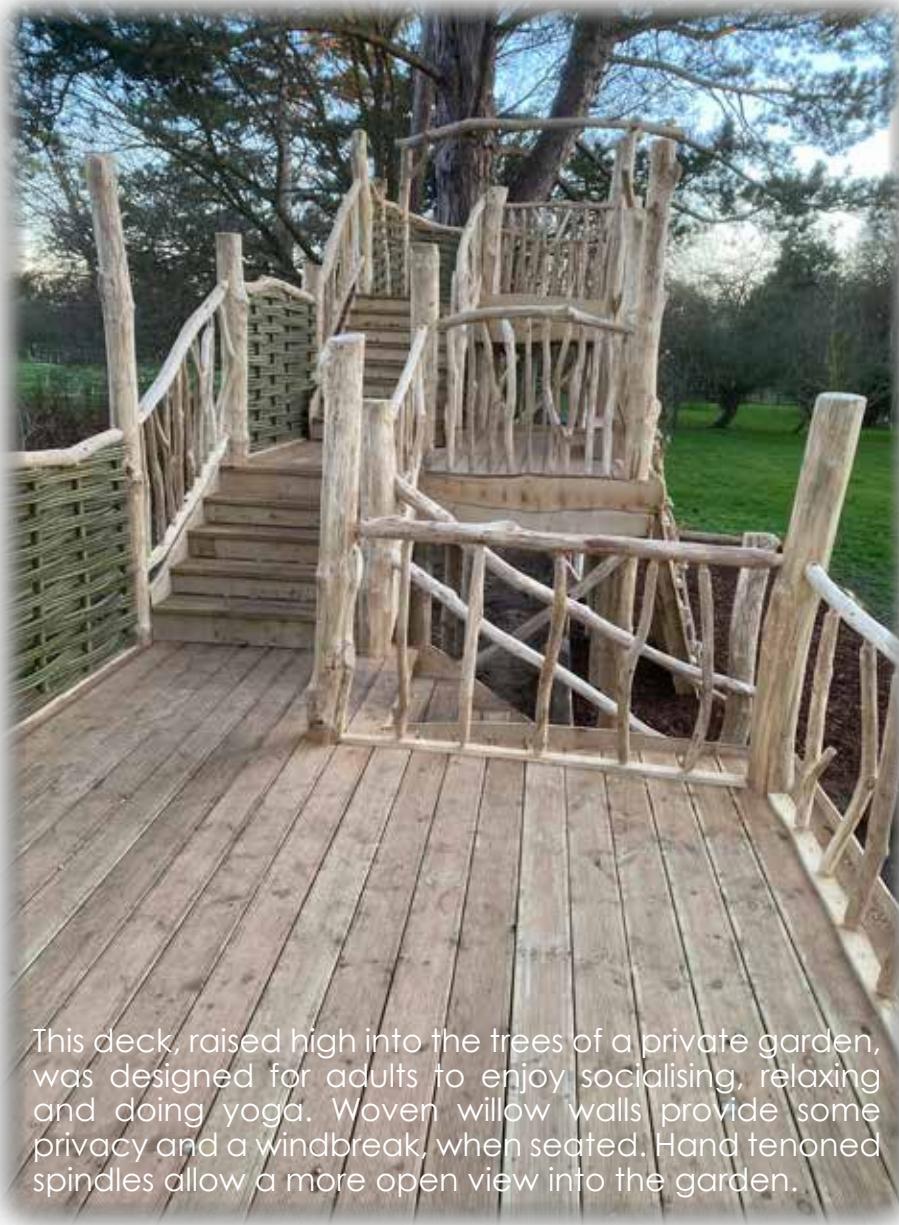


New growth on coppiced sweet chestnut



Living and Learning Spaces

We make beautiful, life-enhancing outdoor outdoor living spaces for private gardens and public spaces, and classrooms for schools and nature reserves. Each one is unique, designed for your needs and dictated by the character of the natural materials we use.



This deck, raised high into the trees of a private garden, was designed for adults to enjoy socialising, relaxing and doing yoga. Woven willow walls provide some privacy and a windbreak, when seated. Hand tenoned spindles allow a more open view into the garden.



Outdoor Classroom at Gretton School: autism specialist and part of the Cavendish Group.

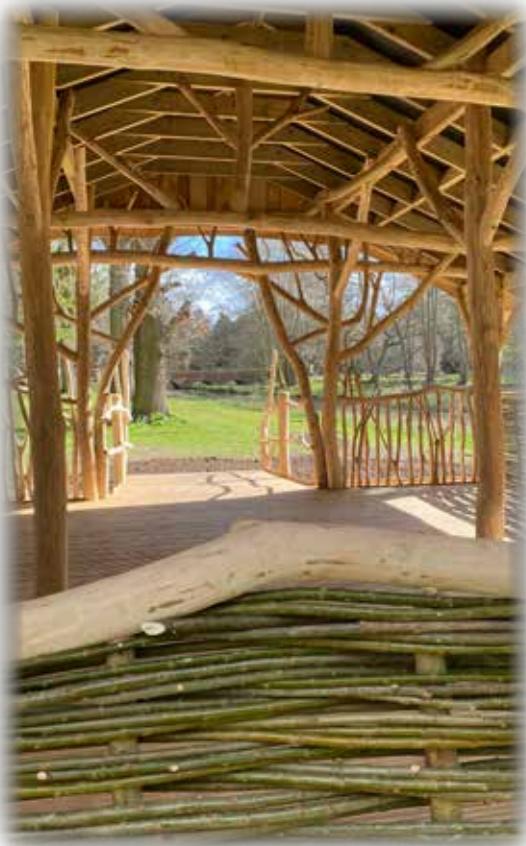


Outdoor Classroom at the Wildlife Trust's Great Fen nature reserve.

Our outdoor classrooms and learning spaces have character and attention to detail like no others. We use traditional skills to build in a way that proudly displays the natural beauty of our selected materials.



This structure has removable front panels, allowing it to be used as a performance stage.



Whether you are running a forest school or just looking for a change in environment to run maths lessons, our traditional craftsmanship and beautiful materials make for a stunning setting for spending more time outdoors.





The Octagon at Kings School Ely.

Built around the stump of a much loved 250 year old oak tree, with much of its timber milled from the trunk.





Outdoor classrooms at Exning Primary School in Cambridgeshire and Denver VC Primary School in Norfolk.



Internal Spaces

These enclosed living and learning spaces show the versatility of our carpentry methods. They can be insulated structures and have stable, sliding or bifold doors, an opportunity to create a bespoke space that fits your needs, with a creative touch.

We enjoy having fun with the style of flooring and cladding, seeing every part of the build as an opportunity to be creative and practical.





A fully powered, fully plumbed, fully glazed garden building with our signature sweet chestnut in-the-round structural posts, and waney edged boards.



We can design and build an office space at the bottom of the garden, a space for entertaining, or a quiet summerhouse. However you plan to use your outdoor structure, you'll love being surrounded by beautiful natural materials, built with an attention to detail which makes the finished place a joy to spend time in.



The brief for this office was to take inspiration from Japanese tea houses, which the client loved from his frequent travels. Views from inside and outside the work space. Larch roof shingles from Rougham Estate, Suffolk.



The Boat House

This was possibly our most challenging project so far. Designing and building a boathouse for Newnham College, Cambridge.

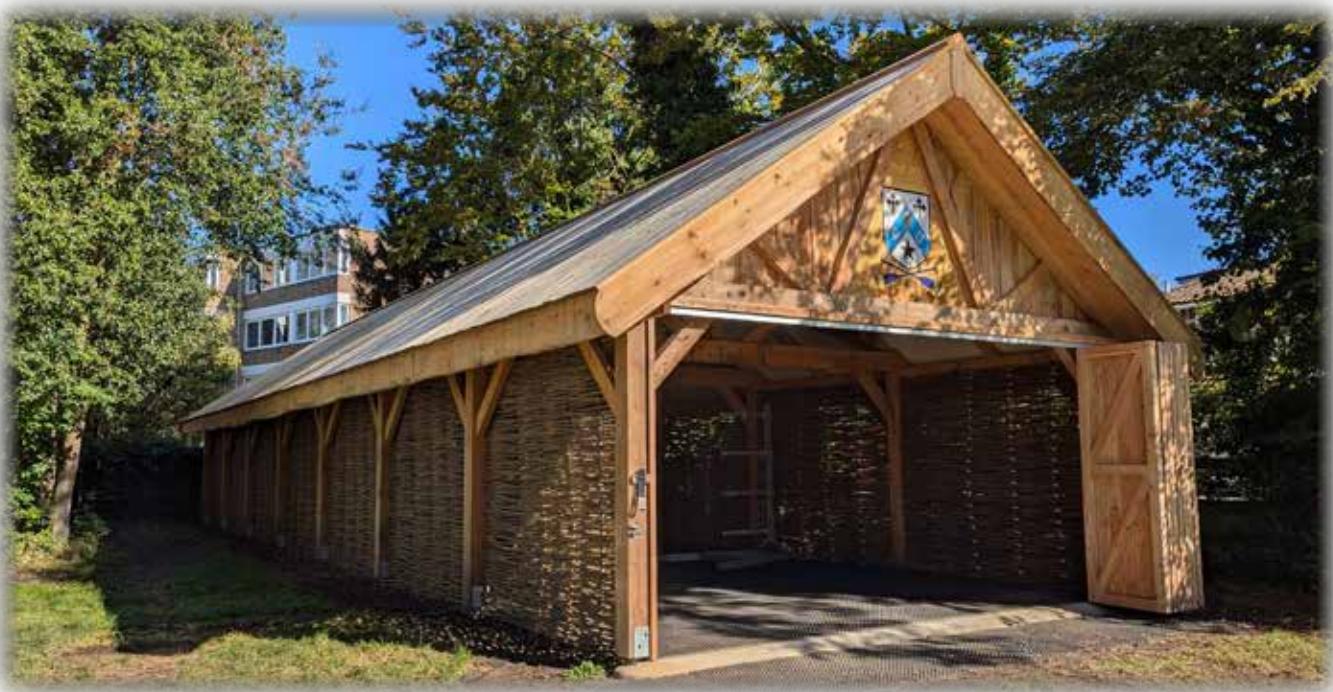
It was a very strong and specific brief, but we were given the license to be creative with the use of locally sourced and sustainable materials being at the very heart of the project.

The structure sits on screw piles and can be dismantled, if needed. The willow panels can be rewoven with fresh willow in the future, without it disturbing the structure.

The willow was coppiced in Grantchester by our collaborators on the project, Wonderwood Willow and the larch for the build was felled and milled at Rougham Estate, Bury St. Edmunds. The materials could not have been more locally sourced.

This project was incredibly enjoyable, with so many collaborators helping to make it happen, it was a fantastic team effort from start to finish.







Tree Houses

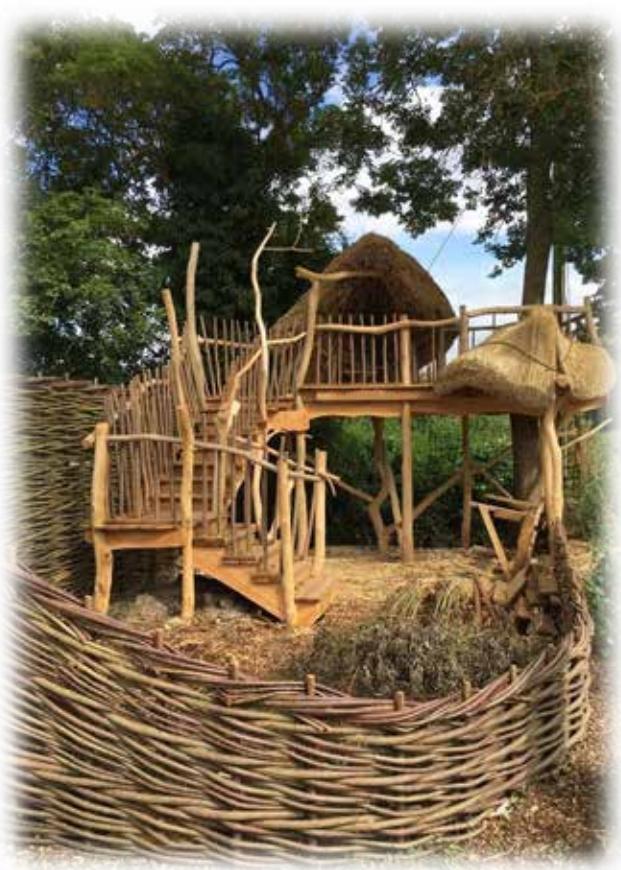
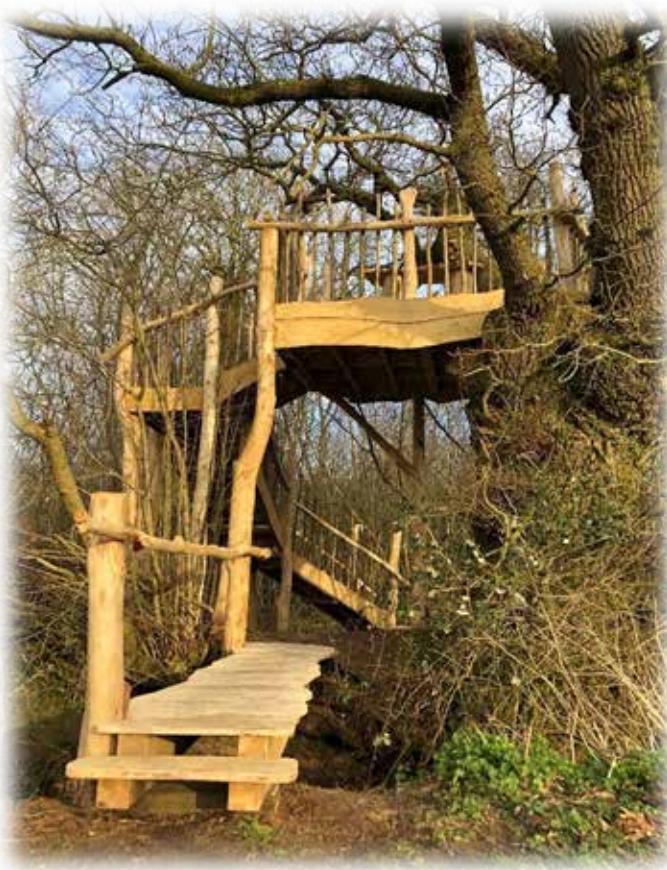
Many of our tree houses don't actually require a living tree. The way we build enables us to work trees into the design, creating truly unique spaces for our clients.

For children, tree houses offer fantastic opportunities for physical and mental development. Our designs can integrate ropes, climbing walls, clambering nets, fireman's poles, rope bridges, ramps and slides.

For adults, tree houses provide a space to socialise or relax with a drink, while enjoying a different view of the garden or the wider landscape.

When building around trees, we always take great care to allow plenty of space for the future growth of the tree.





We prioritise nature in our play structures. Our sustainable materials are harvested with habitats in mind, resulting in beautiful and characterful finishes.

Guided by the shapes and aesthetics of natural materials, we use traditional techniques to craft play structures that are both unique and in harmony with their surroundings.

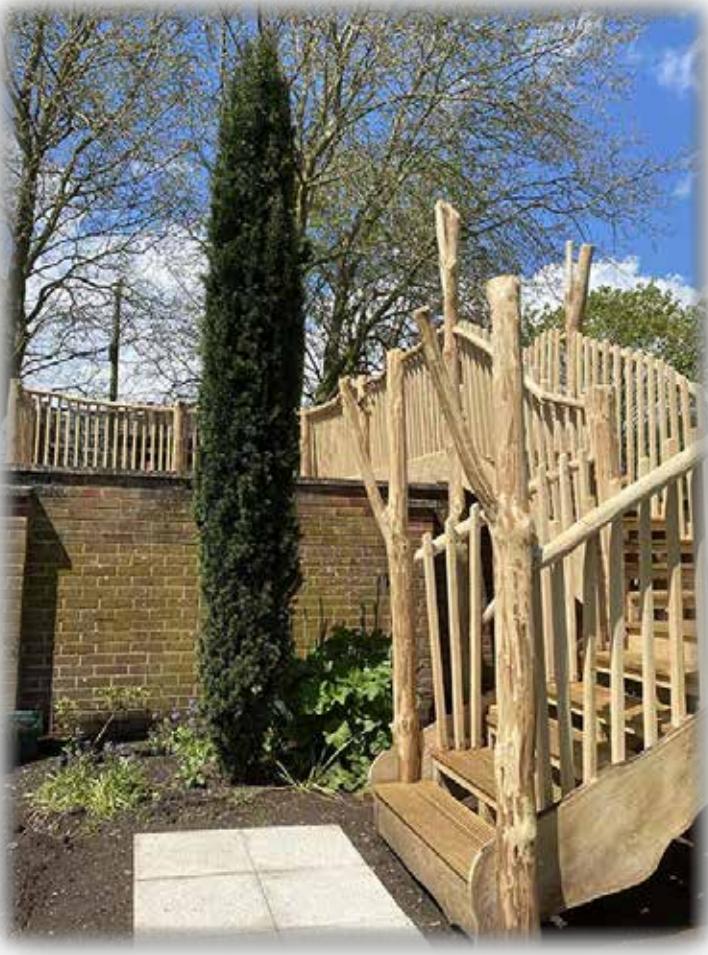




Privately owned play/living spaces designed to fit perfectly in their surroundings without touching any living trees.

Each setting is unique, and we take inspiration from nature to craft a space that's both practical and magical. Our projects can include plantings that provide shelter or promote biodiversity, all coming together to form a colourful, living, breathing space that sparks creativity and wonder.





This structure is packed with play features, ropework and our woodland style traditional carpentry, to make a magical destination deep amongst the sweet chestnut trees.

Combining Uses: The lower socialising platform is easily accessible by stairs. There's space to spread a picnic rug, or even seat 6-8 people around a table. It's raised off the floor, and is built around a tree which comes up through the deck, so you feel like you're immersed in the woods.

From the socialising platform, you can choose between a balance beam up to The Den, or a cargo net up even higher to The Lookout. There's a slide and a fireman's pole for quick descent, and a beautifully tactile climbing wall, for a more challenging way up or down.



Climbing and abseiling, great for building strength and confidence.... and fun for adults too!!

Play Areas

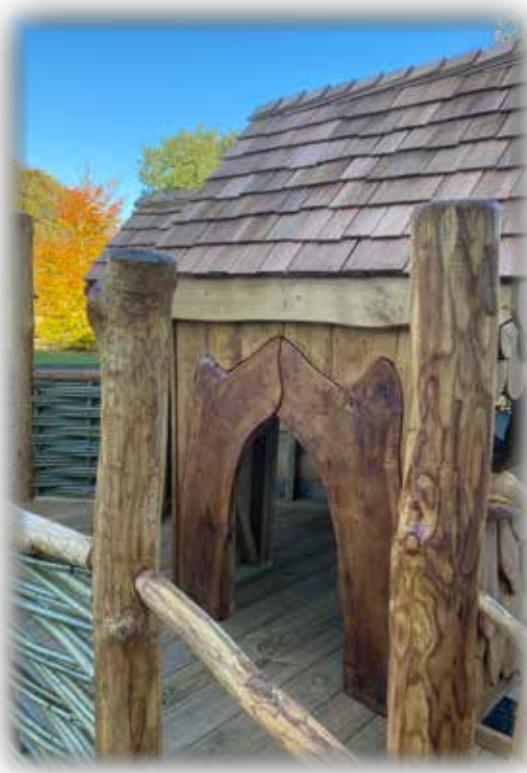
Sensory and imaginative play is at the heart of what we do. Our play areas bring the excitement and beauty of the woods into schools and gardens, giving children the physical challenges they need to help them grow in strength and confidence. Taking our cues from nature, we are inspired by each setting. Projects can include plantings to provide shelter or increase biodiversity - all combining to form a colourful, living, breathing space. These magical worlds inspire amazing things: bold deeds and beautiful thoughts.



A sensory and imaginative play area at Sawtry Infant School, Cambridgeshire



Tuddenham St. Mary play area, designed and built for the local parish council. We really enjoyed the collaborative design journey we went on with the village, ensuring all ages were suitably challenged as well as being inclusive for children with varying abilities.



King's Acrement, some of the imaginative and physical play features available to the children on a daily basis.





All of our materials are chosen to last and to complement the beauty of the wood, from our soft-touch hempex ropework to our bespoke stainless steel monkey bars, fireman's poles and slides.





Adventurous play for the children at Gretton School, part of the Cavendish Group.



A playground for a Suffolk village parish council.
A second phase with this parish council is now underway.

Some examples of inclusive play, for all ages.
Easy access is important for many children.



Our carefully designed log tangle with stepping stumps and balance beams encourages children to test their limits.



This play area at Wilds Lodge, Stamford was designed and built with adventurous play in mind.... Great fun!!



Sensory play

This play area at Quorn Hall is for Key Stage 1.
With our very own version of Connect 4!



Carvings

All of our chainsaw carvings are created by Tim Atkins, who is one of our co-founders. They look wonderful on their own, or next to one of our structures. Some can be clambered on, or even created within a section of log that is part of a structure.





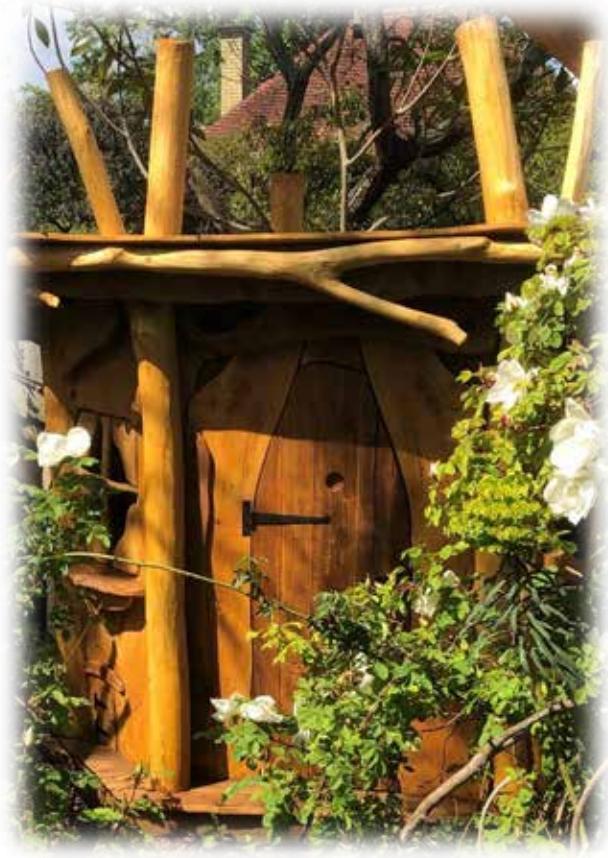
Tim's carvings can be found in public parks, schools and every Go Ape in the country



Hobbit Houses

These magical little spaces give children the opportunity to really disappear into their own imaginary worlds. Once inside, they offer a cosy, secret environment for children to feel at peace and have some quiet time. A lot of fun is had decorating the insides - quickly being transformed into an extension of their bedrooms!

Hobbit houses can stand alone or be built around an existing tree; they can also form part of a larger play structure.





Living roofs are a fantastic addition to these imaginative and sensory play areas.





Re-visiting the cob hobbit house at King's, the sedum roof in full flower.... so beautiful.

Fairy Houses

We get so much joy from creating fairy houses. To find such a magical use for all of our small off cuts is incredibly satisfying.

From sketching the ideas, through to sorting out piles of off cuts, looking for inspiration in the quirky pieces of wood, it is a wonderful process.

You can see many of the fairy houses we have created at Audley End Miniature Railway in their wonderful Fairy Walk. We also design and build them to order, giving you an opportunity to collaborate with us to create your own magical little world.





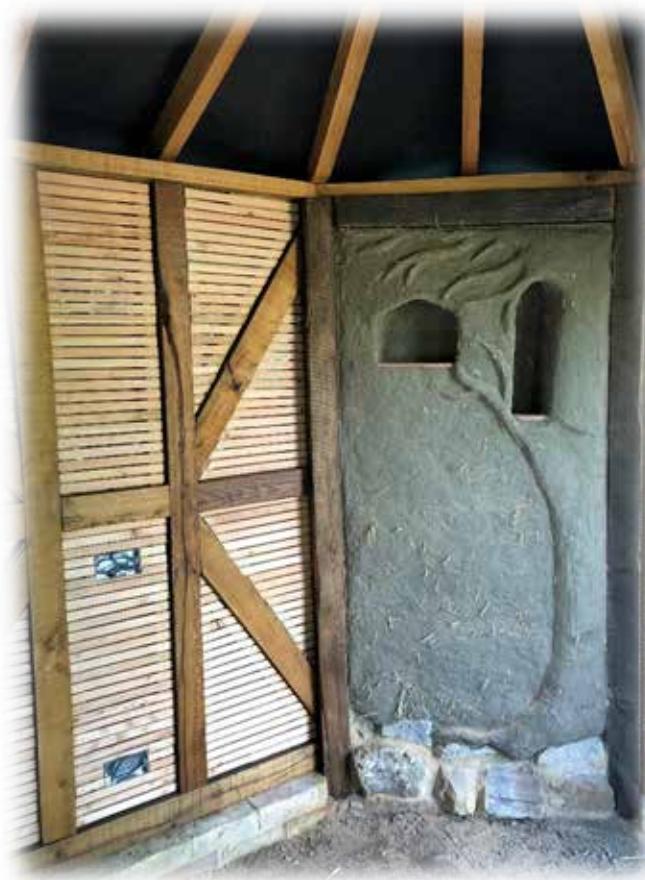
Many of our clients add personal touches to these tiny spaces, working features in to the design that mean something to them, or the person receiving them.

Building with Cob

We have used cob in many of our structures and have found the combination of woodwork and earth building to be astounding.

Colourful glass bottles can be built into the cob, allowing light to pour through into the interior, and wall sculptures can be added to create a truly unique addition to the finished project.

Using cob is also a great way to get our clients involved; whether that be selecting the glass bottles and choosing where they'll go, helping us make the cob mixture or letting the children get stuck in by building the cob wall with us.





An example of how cob can be used to create stunning feature walls. We finished this piece with clay render and lime paint.

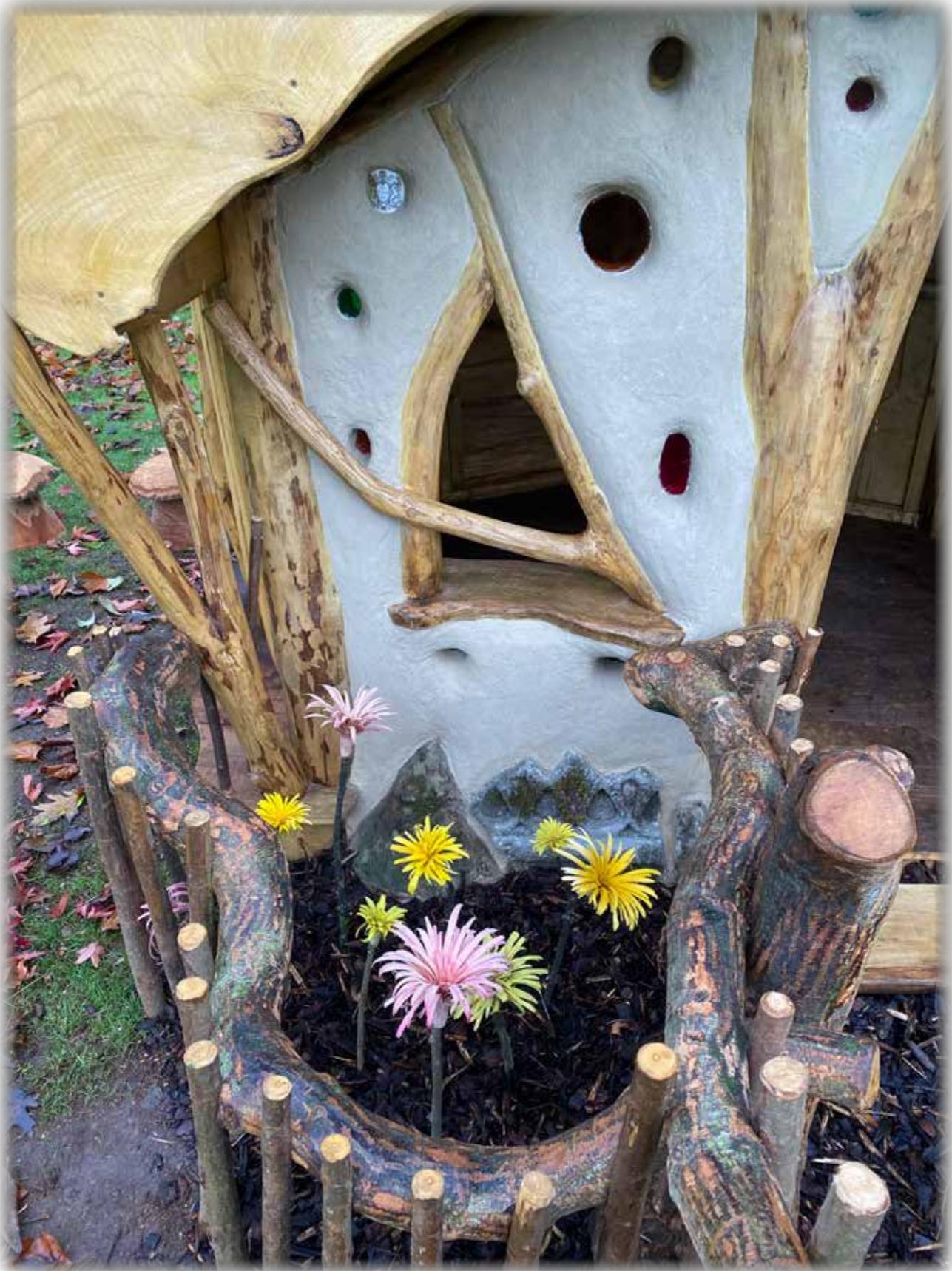


Here is Kate Dodds, our cob sculptor, teaching the values of building with cob, at The Wonder Of Wood Fair of which we are co founders.



Great fun is to be had stomping the clay, sand, straw and water together. Everybody plays their part in the process.





The finished product. It is such a satisfying way to work, using nothing but natural materials and craftsmanship.

Design, consultation & Artwork

When considering having one of our structures, the first step is for us to come and visit you in the garden or grounds that the structure will be living in.

This is a great opportunity for us to absorb your ideas, while imagining how we can bring it to life.



Kate Dodds, is our resident artist, sculptor and fairy house designer / builder. We are extremely lucky to have her playing such an important role within the company.

Everything we do, no matter how big or small, starts with a sketch. The direction these sketches take us is the fun bit, with open discussion being at the heart of what we do.

As is always the case, collaboration with the client is a key part of this process. Relationships between ourselves and the client can be long lasting, often with new ideas being sparked during a project, creating separate, exciting ideas for the future.



More often than not, it is the garden that guides us, as well as the timbers that have come out of the coppice and sawmill, allowing the natural shapes to steer the design. We are skilled at designing and building to a budget, along with the brief from the client. Especially when working with schools and organisations.

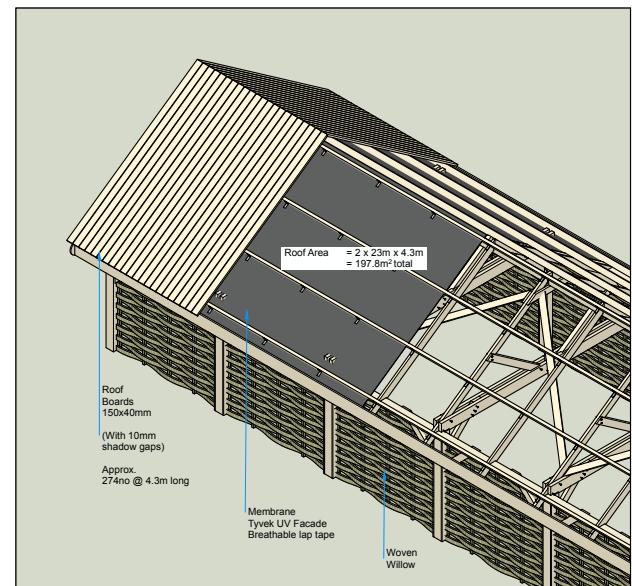


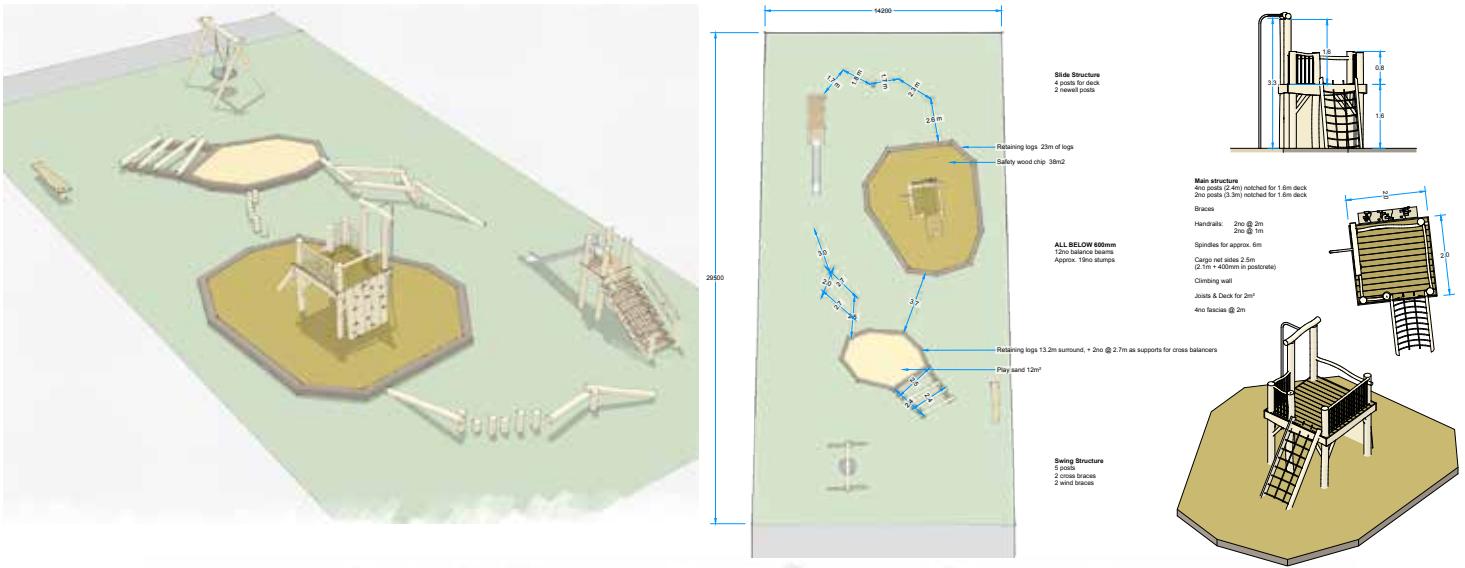
Pencil sketches and CAD drawings help us on the collaborative journey with the client, creating mood boards where needed, to give everyone involved a chance to be absorbed in the project with us. We love the design stage, it is where all of the magic begins.



With such technical, bespoke designs, we need to constantly focus on detail with every side of the project. Our CAD designer and consultant, Mark Herbert, is skilled in taking the clients on this journey. Working from concept sketches to detailed, scaled technical drawings means we are able to match whimsical detail with precise planning.

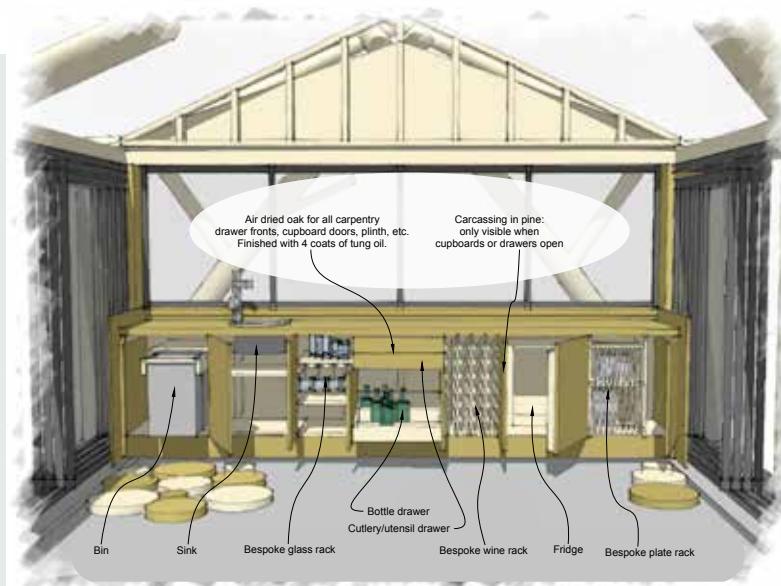
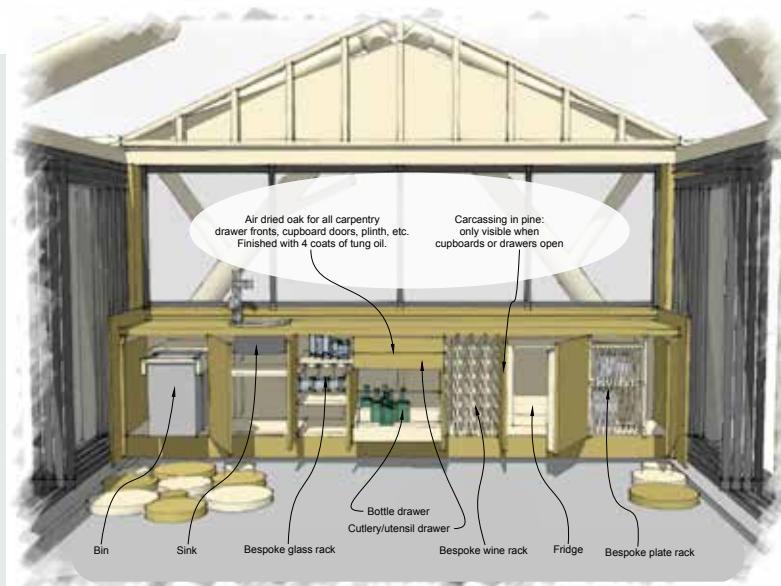
This also gives us an opportunity to break each part of the project down for costing and scheduling purposes. This is an incredibly important part of how we like to work.





When designing play spaces, these drawings are extremely useful, to share with the school and to be discussed in meetings. We also share them with Rospa Playsafety when needed, the feedback we receive is used to tweak the designs until everybody is happy.

With living and learning spaces, these technical drawings help us to ensure our structures are offering sufficient, usable space. They give us an opportunity to scrutinise every little detail, accurately highlighting how big a class or meeting could be held in the structure.





What our clients say:

“.....Artisan Structures provided an excellent service and the project from start to finish was a memorable experience enjoyed by pupils and staff”

Louise Edwards, Teacher, Westwood Primary School

“.....the building is beautifully crafted and all visitors feel compelled to touch the different woods and techniques used - from the cedar shingles down to the waxed oak seating”

James Clark, Headteacher, Exning Primary School

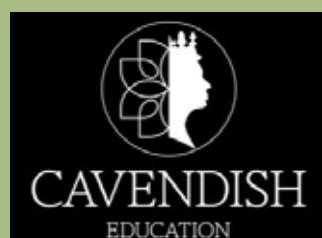
“.....they were attentive to our vision and had a real passion for achieving the best for the children. The Hideaway is beautiful and practical and the children and staff love it”

Mrs Lesley Farrow, Headteacher, Clements CP School

“.....working with Duncan and the team at Artisan has been a delight, from initial discussions, concept drawing stage, through to detailed design and finished project it has been seamless, delivering on time and to specified budgets. We now have four finished projects that we are absolutely delighted with and that our children love, thank you Duncan and team”

Mark Hart, Chief Operating Officer, King's Ely

Some of our collaborators...



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