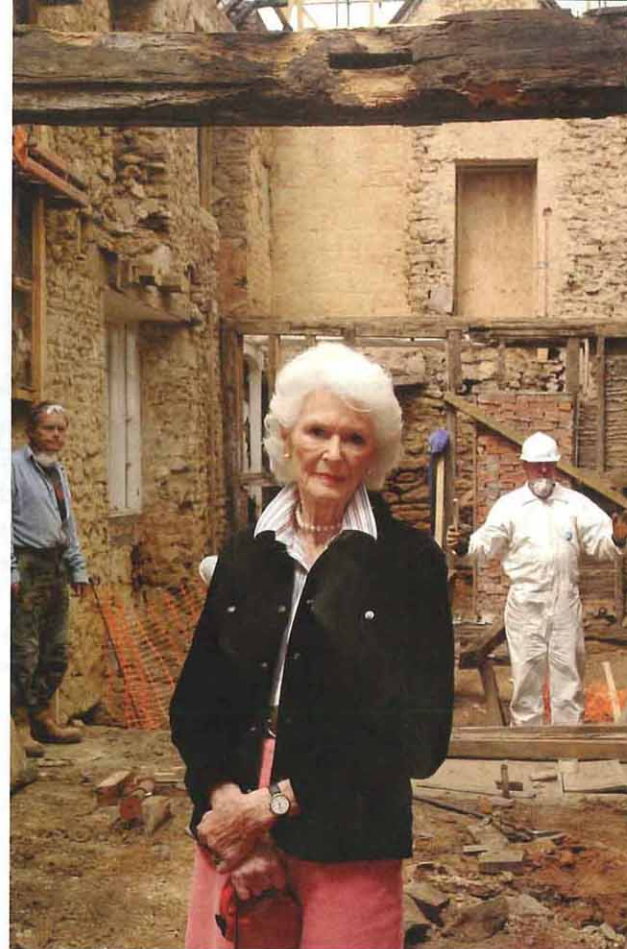


Wardington rebirth

GRADE II* listed Wardington Manor in Oxfordshire suffered extensive damage in a fire in April 2004, writes *Andrew Brookes of Rodney Melville & Partners*. Clearance and salvage works were a success, and after consolidation of the partly ruined building, a sensitive, pragmatic strategy for repairs was devised that draws upon the history of alterations to the house.

Only a little of the original 15th-century structure of Wardington Manor survived extensive repair and remodelling in the 1660s. The next period of work on the building came in the early 20th century with internal alterations by Clough Williams-Ellis and GH Kitchen, preceding the construction of a large new Library wing to the north-west by Randall Wells during the 1920s. This period of building – principally by Wells, one of the earliest SPAB architects – is described by Pevsner as “one of the most imaginative restorations of an older house in the county”. Though Wells’s new wing is designed with an Arts and Crafts sensibility, the construction makes use of contemporary materials for hidden structure. Walls are of fletton brick faced with stone and Bison reinforced concrete hollow floors provided acoustic and fire separation at first and attic floor level. Amongst the somewhat confusing chronology of additions and alterations to the house, Wells’s work is unmistakably of its time and reflects a practical approach to working in a historic setting that provides a useful precedent for the current phase of repairs.

The fire insurer funded archaeological recording and building fabric analysis as an

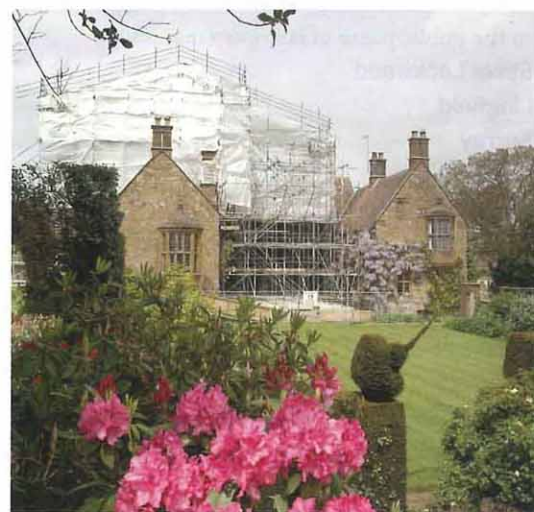


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agreed condition of Listed Building Consent. This research provided a wealth of information about the extent of the fire and subsequent water damage, as well as “pre-existing” decay of the building. The current phase of repairs includes not only the reconstruction of the areas damaged by fire, but also repair of fabric already in urgent need of attention.

The on-site and off-site repairs to Wardington Manor are nearing completion, with perhaps the most interesting phases ahead involving the reinstatement of repaired historic fabric, when the house will again come to life.

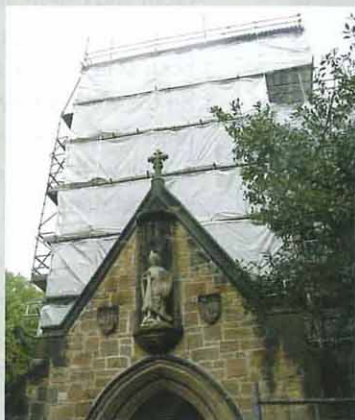
Andrew Brookes continues his report on the ongoing repair works at Wardington Manor in the next edition of Cornerstone.



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Top (main picture), Lady Wardington in the ruins of her home last summer. Top left, repairs continue. Above, the protective cloak installed over the main area of damage

Grade I ‘battle church’ hit by blaze



FIRE swept through large portions of St Michael and All Angels, a grade I church at Newburn, Newcastle, in March. Much of the church’s roof was destroyed, and the belfry also sustained severe damage – two bells fell. The nave and interior stonework was also badly damaged, and stained glass windows suffered smoke damage. St Michael’s is a particularly interesting church, with an 11th-century tower, and a Norman nave and chancel. The church overlooks a crossing over the Tyne, and was in 1640 the focus of the battle of Newburn Ford when Scots Covenanters marching south clashed with the forces of Charles I.