



Featured Project: Charters, Ascot



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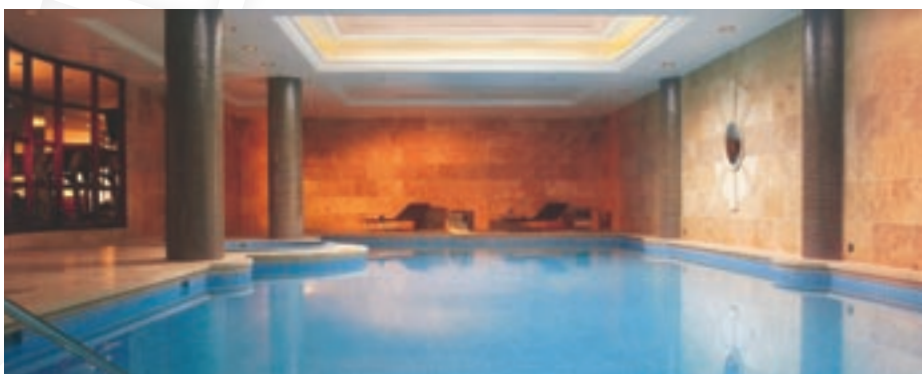
Appointed by prime residential developers Sabre Developments in 2001 the Practice was engaged to design, plan, procure and project manage the conversion of the Grade II listed mansion house and construction of 80,000 ft² of new build enabling development. This £72M award winning world class residential scheme was completed in 2008.

Purchased originally by industrialist Frank Parkinson in the 1930s he commissioned Aide Button and Partners to create what Country Life called "one of the last great country houses to be built in Britain". Visited by personalities such as Winston Churchill and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor Charters enjoyed high social status until 1959 when it was sold for use as a research and development facility first by Vickers and latterly by De Beers.

After extensive consultation it was agreed that the restoration of such a magnificent building was to be championed through planning using "English Heritage's Guidance for Enabling Development and the Restoration of Listed Buildings". To that end the Practice teamed up with architect James Wood, from which the development consultancy MMDS was established, to prepare conceptual plans for the complete redevelopment of the estate. After considerable effort permission was eventually granted for a substantial scheme comprising two new apartment blocks and an underground spa in addition to the existing mansion conversion. With planning obtained the Practice was appointed to develop the design and optimise the scheme to achieve "prime development" status during which process Phil Simmons joined the MMDS team as interior designer to the Practice.

In all 6 apartments were to be accommodated within the existing mansion, which was now conditionally to include the reconstruction of the west wing, lost during the building's industrial days, and reinstatement of the former two storey ballroom with its colonnade and massive picture window. Lobbying of English Heritage direct further enabled a magnificent three storey "penthouse" apartment, utilising the best of the former state rooms, by permitting sensitive structural alterations for the insertion of an additional marble staircase. Distinctive features of this listed building included the "bronze" folding windows, Portland stone facades, marble staircase, walnut cabinetry and marble bathrooms. Parkinson had also installed a centralised "hoovering" and ventilation system, with perfumery, the machinery for which was to be retained within the building as a living museum.





The permitted "enabling" development of two 14 apartment buildings were designed as a fusion of Classic Art Deco features and modern contemporary styling. Underground parking beneath the new buildings minimised unnecessary clutter from the splendour of the 20 acre estate and a new piazza was created between the Mansion and the Court House beneath which a fully serviced spa facility was incorporated.

With conceptual design complete the Practice was appointed as cost consultants and project managers to procure the consultant design team for construction. Broadway Malyan for

architecture, Upton McGougan for engineering and services and Enplan for Landscape were later novated when construction was procured via the design and build route and Trant Construction Limited were appointed. The £35M construction works were completed in a little over 24 months during which time two fully operational show apartments were completed and furnished for sales and marketing purposes. The Practice was also commissioned, in conjunction with Phil Simmons, to prepare a number of bespoke interior design schemes for individual purchasers.



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