



## Case Study

# Lullingstone Castle

### Introduction

Lullingstone Castle is an English Heritage site on the River Darent in Eynsford, near Sevenoaks, and is the ancestral home of the Hart-Dyke family.

The estate includes a 15th Century Manor House and Gatehouse, seven-hectare lake, meadows, and woodland. It also offers a World Garden which contains plants from around the globe. The garden was designed and created by the horticulturalist and 'orchid hunter' Tom Hart-Dyke, who manages the grounds.

The family is trying to expand and enhance visitors' experiences of the castle and its grounds, encouraging them to enjoy all that it has to offer, historically and horticulturally.

### Client Vision

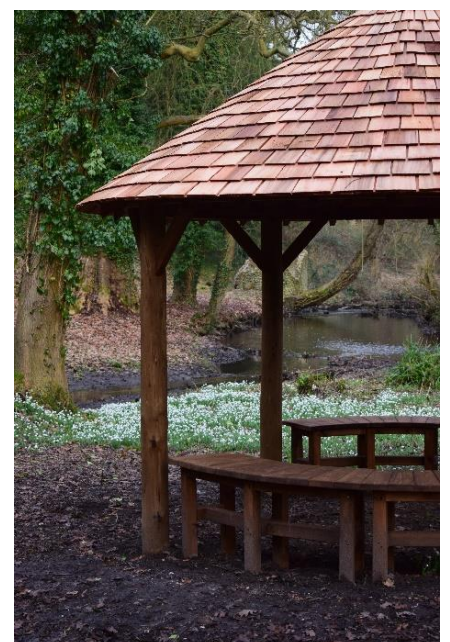
A large wooden gazebo was needed as part of a new circular walk that opened on April 1st 2017 at Lullingstone Castle. A key feature of the planned route for visitors, the gazebo is situated in a wood behind the orchid meadow. The intention of the building is to offer visitors a point of reference on their walk, a resting point for tired legs, and a shelter from the elements.

The proposed Gazebo needed to:

Create a sheltered seating area on a small island on the River Darent as part of the woodland walk and orchid meadow experience.

Use natural products which gently blend in with the location.

Ensure a long-life expectancy with minimum maintenance, whilst appearing as natural as possible.





## Why they chose us

This was our second project at Lullingstone castle. At the time of our first project Tom Hart-Dyke explained: "We were keen to find a local company to carry out the work, and when we came across The Lapa Company's website it was clear they had the skills and experience to create what we were imagining." From this enquiry, a bespoke four-posted thatched shelter was crafted by our team, who then carefully installed the building in the gardens.

Approaching the second project, Tom said: "I was not only delighted by the completed structure, but by the care taken by the team and their thoughtful approach. They installed the large hardwood poles into the patio without extra distress to the aging brickwork. They also made sure that an ancient yew tree, adjacent to the patio, was fully protected during the work. Due to the trust and respect we developed with the team, when we decided to have a second shelter created, we were pleased to be able to call in The Lapa Company."

## Project time

After the Hart-Dyke's first enquiry in November 2016, the design was signed off early in December. The structure was created over a week at our workshop and installed over two days at the end of December 2016.

## Materials used

- Hand cut Canadian red cedar shingles, selected for durability, natural appearance and low weight.
- Stripped and treated eucalyptus hardwood upright posts (comparable to oak in strength) imported by The Lapa Company from South Africa.
- Handcrafted, redwood benches. treated and stained for outdoor use.



## Design decisions

An open-sided shelter formed with four hardwood uprights, supporting a circular pitched roof, complementing the existing thatched shelter already within the grounds. All components had to be small enough to be carried a long distance over difficult terrain (the roof needed to be taken in separate pieces to the build site).

## Overcoming difficulties

“The most challenging part of the build was the remote location, a small area of land on the river behind a meadow on the estate”, explained project manager Simon Everett, “Vehicular access was not an option because of this, and the fact we didn’t want to damage the sodden lawns. We were also very conscious of the thousands of bulbs planted as part of Tom’s project and wanted to avoid disturbing them. This meant we needed to carry the components of the structure through the estate by hand, which was time consuming but worthwhile.”

## Project value

Up to £10,000

## Customer testimonial

“From an aesthetic point of view, the cedar and eucalyptus is a great blend with the location, and the installation itself is extremely solid and well done. We’re delighted with the result and have no doubt that the shelter will enhance visitors’ experiences for decades to come.”

Tom Hart-Dyke



The Lapa Company UK Ltd  
Unit 15 Orchard Place Business Centre  
Seven Mile Lane  
Borough Green  
Kent  
TN15 8QU



The Lapa Company  
L I F E O U T D O O R S

tel: 01732 884030  
email: [info@thelapacompany.co.uk](mailto:info@thelapacompany.co.uk)  
web: [thelapacompany.co.uk](http://thelapacompany.co.uk)