



A historic Grade II-listed rural cob wall building was meticulously assessed, stabilised and restored to high-quality residences following a major fire event

Location: Bransbury, Hampshire

Client: Middleton Estate

Architect: BCM Wilson Hill

Residential / Heritage / Cob walls / Restoration



Background & brief

The project involved restoring a Grade II listed cob-walled building to residential use following a major fire. The structure, comprising five homes, originally featured timber floors, roof trusses and a thatched roof. The fire destroyed one chimney, around three-quarters of the roof and many internal floors. For the client, the aim was to rescue the historic property and restore it as rural homes while preserving its heritage value.

Our role & engineering challenge

We were engaged from the day after the fire through to completion, assessing fire- and water-damaged cob walls, floors and roof trusses, and advising on remedial works and new structural insertions. Material testing confirmed the cob walls were largely sound, requiring only localised repairs. Our design ensured concentrated loads from the new roof trusses were sufficiently distributed to avoid overloading the cob walls. The rebuild involved integrating new floors, a replacement roof while reusing original timbers where feasible, whilst charred sections were carefully stripped and threaded back into position.



Construction, outcome & reflection

During construction we conducted frequent inspections, providing rapid solutions as concealed damage was uncovered. Our involvement ensured steady progress and safeguarded the building's character. The completed scheme is a robust, sensitively restored collection of homes combining traditional craftsmanship with discreet modern structure — a clear example of engineering care in heritage restoration.