

**NATIONAL TRUST TASMANIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ADDRESS BY MR RICHARD WARNER
CLARENDON HOUSE, EVANDALE, SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER 2019**

Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to talk to you today.

I wish to acknowledge the Aboriginal community as the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to aboriginal elders past, present and emerging.

Today, I would like to share with you something of my experiences in looking at the conservation of historic buildings in Britain in 1996 and again in 1999 as part of a Churchill Fellowship. My interest in this subject arose from my desire to conserve a group of buildings on my property, Valleyfield, New Norfolk; work which continues today.

I was particularly interested in the concept of bringing a new commercial activity to an old building and in many cases, redundant historic buildings. This concept is called adaptive re-use.

What is adaptive re-use? Adaptive re-use is a process that changes a disused or ineffective building into an effective building and usually involves being used for a new purpose. The most successful built heritage adaptive re-use projects are those that best respect the building's heritage significance. Where a building can no longer function with its original use, a new use through adaptation may be the only way to preserve its heritage significance.

I thought I would tell the story of a property in Yorkshire which I have been fortunate enough to visit and discuss with the owner.

Broughton Hall is a property of some 3000 acres and is located near the town of Skipton adjoining the southern border of the Yorkshire Dales. The property has been in the Tempest family since around 1100 AD and the current owner, Roger Tempest, is the 31st generation to have cared for the property. The central feature of the property is Broughton Hall itself, a Grade 1 listed home which was built in 1597.

Roger's father, Henry Tempest, unexpectedly inherited the property in the 1960s. At that time Broughton Hall had around 200 disintegrating farm buildings, a large debt, death duties due and foot- and-mouth and disease which had decimated the farming activity. Henry Tempest was forced to sell some of the family silver, paintings, books and even the local pub to keep his head above water.

In the early 1980s, Broughton Hall epitomised decay and here I quote Roger Tempest:

“It was riddled with dry rot, snow on the billiard table, unheated, unsafe wiring, perished plasterwork, damaged external stonework, leaning chimneys and the conservatory dome in danger of collapse. The outbuildings were redundant and deteriorating with houses and farms in a bad state. Survival was in jeopardy.”

A key turning point was reached in 1982 when a Swedish engineering company was seeking office space in the area. Roger's father established the first office space. An idea was born. The mission was to create new sources of income based on putting the buildings and estate back to work, but by doing something relevant to the 21st Century. So it was that Roger Tempest took control of the property in the late 1980s, got out of farming and embarked on a major refurbishment of the farm buildings, one by one, for conversion into office space and other uses.

Today there are over 50 businesses operating employing over 600 people in buildings that were originally built as barns, cattle sheds, a dairy, stables, a stonemason's shed, a watermill, residences and many storage buildings.

The Broughton Hall story is one outstanding example of how an historic house and estate reinvented and redefined itself in order to survive in the 21st Century.

A feature of the planning process enabling the business park development has been the commitment to retain the heritage values of the buildings and retention of the rural ambience of the property.

In 2012 Broughton Hall won the Enterprise Award given by Countryside Alliance, the entity which promotes rural life in Britain. This award is sometimes known as the Rural Oscar.

Businesses operating from the business park include medical recruitment, cruise ship entertainment, magazine publication, software development and fire risk and fire safety consultants.

By successful adaptive re-use of its buildings, Broughton Hall has been able to generate sufficient funds from its rental income to maintain the property and continue to develop additional activities.

The Broughton story is one of decline and revival after 900 years in one place. The estate was tottering on the edge of survival and the task of weaving together an equation to let it survive fell to Roger Tempest. The Broughton story was about finding new principles of regeneration and new ways to survive.

To quote Roger Tempest again:

“The business park underpins our survival. Without it we would be trapped in a cycle of decline with the house deteriorating and nothing to pay for repairs.”

Broughton Hall itself with its 97 rooms has been refurbished, heated, its roof repaired and it is used variously as a filming location; accommodation; a venue for Children’s literary festival; and is Roger Tempest’s residence. It is also available for hire for special occasions.

I could tell you of the revitalisation of other places I have visited: two villages in Northumberland, called Ford and Etal; or the adaptive re-use of buildings in Kent formerly used to produce hops; or the revitalisation of the Spitalfields area of London; or the development of Cornbury Park near Oxford. In each of these cases, the story is the same: they have all found a successful survival formula and implemented it to end the decline and to provide a viable future for each historic collection of buildings.

All of these have used adaptive re-use in one form or another in their highly successful revitalisations.

What does this have to do with Tasmania and the National Trust?

I think there are many lessons to be learnt from Broughton and I would like to mention three here. Finding a survival formula for each site and building is crucial for success. Sustainable income generation is absolutely vital for survival.

Historic buildings do require new ideas to enable them to survive in the 21st Century. Who would have thought a successful cruise ship entertainment business would be based in a former barn in Yorkshire? Or that a test circuit for Range Rover would be an alternative to grazing sheep?

It is not just tourism that is able to revitalise older buildings.

Tasmania already has excellent examples of re-use: the Henry Jones buildings in Hobart; Pump House Point at Lake St Clair; Highfield House near Stanley; the Callender Mill in Oatlands; and of course many other buildings have been converted recently to accommodation uses.

I'm not suggesting that the Broughton Hall example can be replicated here, but what it does demonstrate is that it is possible to bring new life to existing buildings through the generation of creative ideas.

Tasmania has approximately 40% of all of Australia's built heritage and the conservation of this asset is important. Our built heritage is an integral part of the Tasmanian story and brand.

Broughton Hall has led the way in Britain in how to preserve its redundant farm buildings and the historic Hall itself, making the property economically sustainable and enabling re-investment while retaining its heritage values. Broughton Hall is one example in a country with a population of 65 million where re-use opportunities are far greater than here in Tasmania.

Despite the population constraint, my firm view is that our built heritage can only be preserved by being used, and used in a sustainable commercial way. This will mean our buildings will be used in part or in whole for purposes other than the building's original purpose.

The National Trust in Tasmania can play a lead role by exploring ways in which its priceless stock of buildings can become self-supporting into the future. There are no simple answers to the task of preserving Tasmania's built heritage, but I am sure the Broughton Hall experience and other UK examples can provide examples of how to proceed.

It's been nearly 20 years since I explored this subject in Britain and I know there have been many developments since then which are worth exploring. The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust offers annual fellowships which could help allow that investigation.

Thank you.