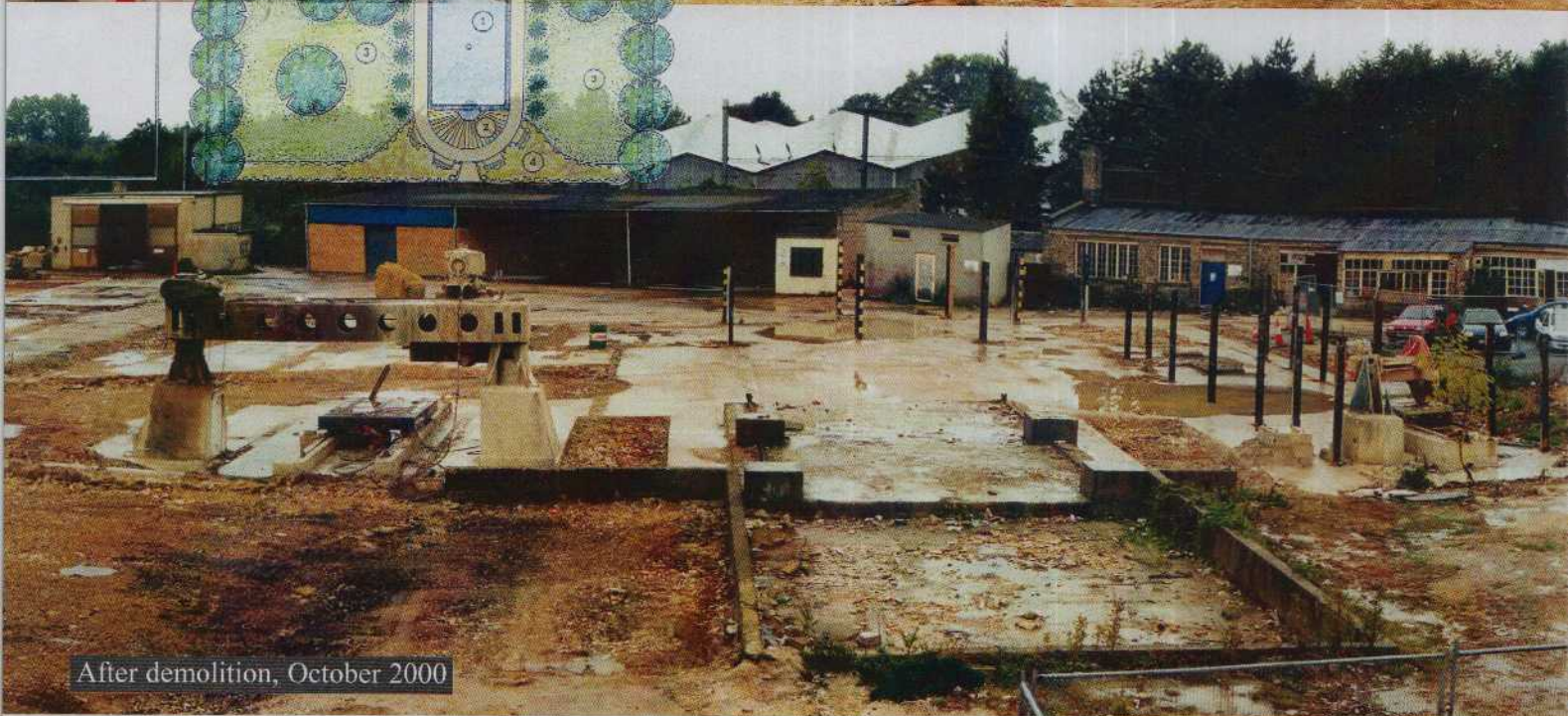
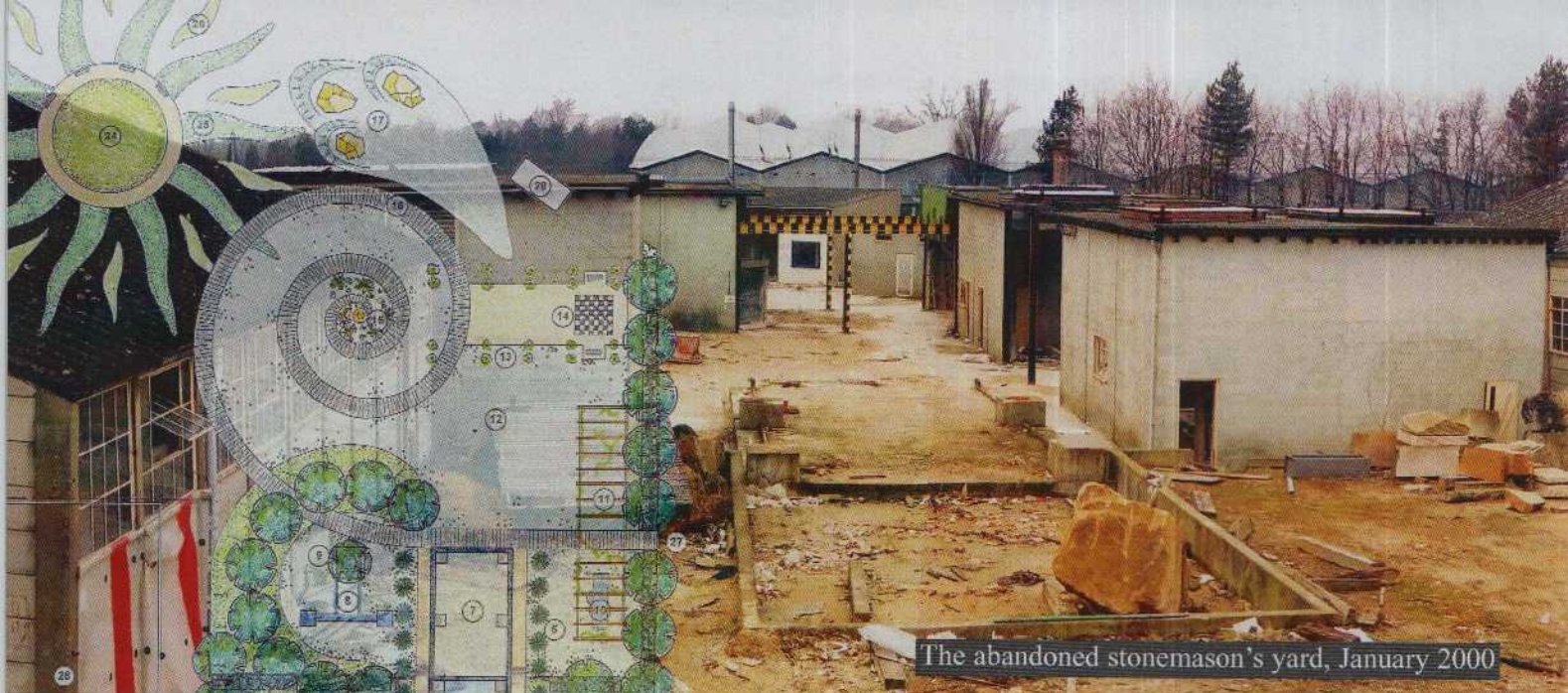




The  
**Sculpture Garden**  
at the Michael Young Centre

LAKE  
LINT  
ASSOCIATES







## THE NEC SCULPTURE GARDEN – THE STORY SO FAR .....

The National Extension College (NEC) is a non-profit-making trust dedicated to widening educational opportunities for adults through distance learning. When in 1999 it acquired the three-acre Rattee & Kett stonemason's yard, it decided to create a 'workplace garden' – an oasis where NEC staff, tenants and visitors alike could relax and socialise away from the pressures of office life.

NEC's design brief for the garden stressed the importance of retaining the site's historic connection with stone carving and stone masonry. It was to include water features, existing on-site structures and the abundance of stone and other recyclable materials left by the stonemasons.

In January 2000, Liz Lake Associates (LLA), chartered landscape architects, were asked by project managers FPD Savills to prepare a master plan for the site, to be phased over a three-year period. LLA started by cataloguing the structures and materials that could be reclaimed and used as part of the garden.

Most of the original concrete hardstanding and some of the associated structures were kept and incorporated into the design. This reduced the need to cart vast quantities of materials and dump them in landfill sites - a sustainable solution that made environmental and economic sense. The retained structures and machinery suggested their own strong design vocabulary and layout.

Matt Lee, the project landscape architect, set out to create an atmospheric sculpture garden with a strong sense of place, complete in its own right but with sufficient space and opportunity for sculptors to make their own contribution to the garden as it matures. The design is articulated around a series of strong axes and vistas. New planting of formal clipped yew hedging and architectural-shaped trees further define the spaces and frame the views. The construction of the garden began in the year of the Millennium. To mark this event, 20 cypress trees were planted to frame the vista along the formal pool.

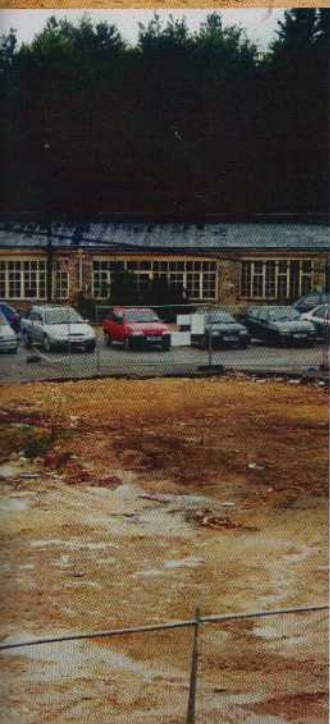
The main entrance to the garden is through an archway supporting the Rattee & Kett sign that originally marked the entrance to the stonemason's yard.

The process of designing constructing and planting the garden was a positive experience for all involved.

*"It is always pleasing when client, landscape architect and contractors work closely together as a team with a common sense of belief and purpose. We have felt from the start that this project is particularly imaginative and innovative and we feel sure it is a strong contender for a landscape award. We hope that all at the Michael Young Centre will enjoy the experience of the garden as it matures, as much as we have enjoyed contributing to its construction."*

Roger Orford, G. Miles and Son Ltd; hard landscaping and water engineering contractor

To celebrate the opening of the Michael Young Centre, and to mark the completion of Phase Two of the garden, NEC has commissioned Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley, of the Cambridge-based Cardozo Kindersley Workshop, to create the garden's first major sculptural installation. The sculpture is in the centre of the garden at the end of the spiral path. You can discover the concept of the sculpture yourself by following the path to the garden's centre.







*The site we are on was a stonemason's yard – a place where rough blocks of stone arrived and were worked to become the finely shaped stones of the Cambridge we see around us. Clear steps have to be followed to make a rough block part of architecture, the visible structure of society. It is a process of refinement, as is education. Firstly, one makes the overall plan, then moves the elements into position. Finally, the journey can begin through which one is guided to the centre. Every step is made individually, and the sense of discovery goads us along. The great skill of education is to know the plan and to have a helping hand ready when needed. We do need a clear path to follow; a path from which we may (and will) stray; a path on which we will be overtaken and overtake; a path which shows a new perspective on a familiar environment because of the new angle we perceive as we move along.*

*On our symbolic path we will be able to reach the source. We will all be able to enjoy the experience of seeing rough blocks being made human, by observing the discipline of the process of refinement. Each stage has its tool, each completed step its new perspective, each generation its shape to wrap around our perceived truth.*

Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley  
Sculptor and Alphabetician



NEC and Liz Lake Associates would like to thank the following for the positive contribution they have made towards the creation of the garden.

**FPD Savills:** planning consultants and project management (Cambridge).

**Marriott Construction:** main contractor overseeing demolition (Rushden).

**Ironline Ltd:** demolition contractor (Hardwick, Cambridgeshire).

**G. Miles & Son Ltd:** hard landscape/water engineering contractor (Bury St. Edmunds).

**Amenity Landscape Ltd:** soft landscape and on-going maintenance (Braintree).

**The Cardozo Kindersley Workshop:** (Cambridge).