

Hartpury Bee Shelter

Relocation and repair of unique stone structure



This ornamentally carved stone Bee Shelter is unique in the world consisting of 28 individual recesses on two levels and a further 5 larger recesses beneath. It was discovered in 1957 and has been listed Grade II*. Having been moved to Hartpury Agricultural College, the threat of redevelopment arose in the late 1990s. The Shelter was badly affected by settlement cracking and scheduled as 'at risk' but was then rescued by the Hartpury Historic Buildings Trust who arranged for its dismantling, repair and re-erection in the churchyard of the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Hartpury.

After meticulous research, it became clear that the Shelter had been incorrectly reassembled in the 1960s. Its existing form was recorded noting all cracked or damaged stone. These plans were then annotated showing the variety of every piece of stone used and, using early photographs, these were amended to show how the Shelter would have originally appeared.

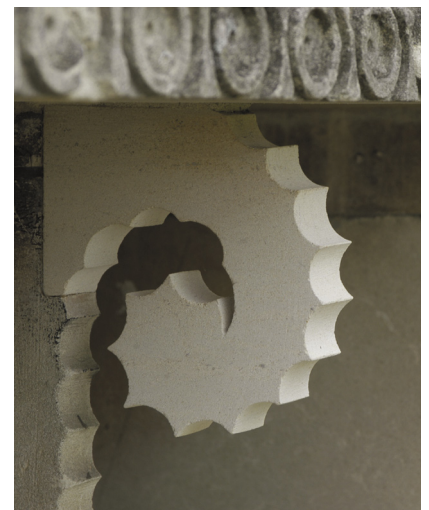
Conservators from Nimbus undertook the work and carefully dismantled, photographed, recorded, labelled, wrapped and crated every piece of stone. Previous cement mortars were also removed. The stones were then transported to the churchyard of St. Mary the Virgin where each stage of the Shelter was first dry assembled, testing the positioning to ensure that the original design of the Shelter would be replicated.

Broken or missing elements needing replacement were hand carved using traditional techniques with stone sourced from the original quarries. The stone used to construct the Shelter was identified as Cotswold limestone, Weatherstone from the Hampton quarry and Freestone from Balls Green quarry – actually worked underground as a mine. Although this quarry had been closed in the 1930s sufficient cut stone, abandoned underground, was recovered to carry out all the repairs. Following construction of a concrete base reassembly was carried out to the rear and the front of the shelter. Lime mortars were used throughout for fixing and pointing mixes.

Client: Hartpury Historic Buildings Trust



Bee shelter on completion of works



Detail of small section of new carving

Nimbus Conservation Ltd Eastgate Christchurch Street East Frome Somerset BA11 1QD

t: 01373 474646 f: 01373 474648 enquiries@nimbusconservation.com www.nimbusconservation.com

Registered in England: 2674189 Directors: David Odgers Adam Daybell Manjit Phull Jez Fry Associate: Ben Wild