

X1828

Sue Kelland B.A., Museums Association Conservation Certificate

Lawrence Kelland

*Conservation of Stonework and Sculpture*

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Whitelock Monument, Fawley Church  
Conservation Report and Proposals

## Structure

The monument is dated 1631, two years earlier than the date on the Whitelock Chapel and it seems likely that the west wall of the chapel was built around and at the same time as the massive outer structure of the monument.

This consists of a gabled 'roof' built from four massive grey stone slabs, their lower ends braced by the wall on either side and resting on the plain vertical sections which form the side walls of the monument. At the front, the roof sections are supported on each side by a column. The back wall is clad with an inscription tablet with gilded lettering, framed by relatively thin alabaster panels, several of them dislodged and distorted.

Within the outer structure is built the table, shaped like a black marble sarcophagus and stepped so as to display both the two effigies fully and also give an illusion of depth.

The wall into which the monument is built is approximately 93cms thick; the maximum depth of the monument is 80cms. This means that the wall plus the backing panels is only approximately 13cms (5ins) thick, so that penetrating damp is probably reaching the back of the monument easily.

There is no sign of any movement in the vertical sections of the monument and columns. Similarly, the larger (front) slabs of the 'roof' seem to be completely stable. There is, however, some misalignment in the sinister (true left) smaller ceiling slab, indicating that some movement has occurred. This is almost certainly not serious, but needs to be watched; we suggest that the joints be refilled as soon as possible with a soft lime-based mortar coloured to match the stone; any movement will then be apparent immediately.

These ceiling slabs seem to be responsible for supporting the wall above them; there is no evidence to suggest that there has been any settling here and this whole area seems to be very stable.

## Condition

The main problems in the monument are caused by damp, coming up from the base and in this case possibly from the thin wall behind as well. The main evidence of rising damp is on the front of the sarcophagus, where iron fixings have expanded in rusting and split the stonework, breaking a whole piece away. Similarly, a section of the base has been pushed outwards, perhaps also due to rusting iron fixings. The sarcophagus has lost much of its polish through wetness. This all goes to suggest that the core, around which the marble facings are fixed and which provides the support for the effigies, is very damp and is supplying a large amount of moisture to the facing stones.

There is damage to the wall-plaster on the sinister side from rising damp; beside it, however, the alabaster facings are in good condition. Alabaster is soluble in water and goes opaque in the presence of damp, which has not happened here. We suggest that the plaster be repaired in a porous lime-mortar; this is important, as modern gypsum plasters and emulsion paints do not allow rising damp in the walls to pass out through them and instead it escapes through monuments, often causing very rapid destruction. An edging barrier should be put between the alabaster and the lime-plaster.

There is considerable staining towards the back of the monument, apparently from heavy condensation.

The monument is very dirty and would respond very well to cleaning. This can be carried out using a variety of solvents and Solvol Autosol paste, avoiding the excessive use of water. Paint survives in the more sheltered areas, so cleaning must be done carefully. However, cleaning is not essential to the survival of the monument and could be omitted if the cost be thought too great. We have therefore priced it separately. Cleaning is followed by waxing of the marble and alabaster sections.

Suggested Work

A great deal of damage has already been done to the lower sections of the monument by rising damp and we think that it is essential that the central part be isolated and the iron fixings be replaced with stainless-steel. To do this, the central section would need to be dismantled, along with the thin panels on the back wall and the whole area lined with lead. The monument would then be rebuilt with a dry core of blockwork laid with glue, so as to give small, non-compressible joints, and using stainless-steel to reattach the facings. We cannot see any need, other than to prevent dampness problems that may arise in the future, to dismantle the outer structure and isolate it, as we can find in it no evidence of damage or structural failure. The proviso here is that no current movement is discovered in the back sinister roof-panel.

Suggested Programme of work.

1. Remove effigies.
2. Remove backing-sections and inscription-tablet.
3. Brace the sides to prevent caving-in.
4. Dismantle the table and core.
5. Clean if required.
6. Insert lead to the back, floor and sides.
7. Rebuild the core.
8. Replace the sections of the monument and the effigies, using stainless-steel fixings and reattaching the animal head at present missing.
9. Renew the damaged plaster.

Quotation for work specified in report

£7580.00 + VAT

Quotation for all specified work except cleaning

£5360.00 + VAT

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Notes

1. Our programme of work is often booked up for up to a year ahead, since these projects normally take a very long time to actually get under way. Please bear this in mind if and when you have any definite plans for this work.
2. Prices are guaranteed for six months, after which time it may be necessary to review costs.
3. Our prices do not include accommodation charges. We use a 14ft touring caravan for accommodation; if a site can be found for this nearby, there will be no accommodation charges.

Specification of Materials

Adhesives: Paraloid B72 Acrylic resin.

'General' Verticale Transparent polyester stone-glue.

Cleaning Materials: Various non-aqueous solvents.

Synperonic 'N' non-ionic detergent.

Solvol Autosol Paste, removed with white-spirit.

Poultices of Sepiolite clay, or

archival blotting paper.

Waxing: Cosmolloid microcrystalline wax with Ketone 'N' resin.

Lead: Code 4 coated on wall-side with bitumen, and fixed with stainless-steel screws and washers in stone-glue to seal them.

Fixings: Austinitic stainless-steel, set in polyester stone-glue where they pierce the lead.

Core: 'Celcon' or other lightweight block glued together and dowelled with stainless-steel, to avoid compressible mortar joints and the introduction of moisture.