

Monument # 9 The Elmsall Family Memorial

The Works

A wall mounted monument is made from Dolomitic limestone. The monument was cleaned using a combination of solvents, de-ionised water and steam.

1 Monument Description

- 1.1 The monument comprises of a semi-circular headed, moulded pediment, which extends into the cornice. A pair of plain pilasters (each with a moulded base) display a pair of fluted console brackets, with diminishing, repeat foliate decoration beneath. A plain horizontal surbase is supported by a pair of larger flanking corbels which appear to be load-bearing. The lower curvilinear inscription panel is supported by a modestly sized, central, foliated corbel. The inscription is largely illegible due to it being only lightly scratched into the surface and the extent of residual soiling. Please see the full inscription from both panels, at the end of the report.

2 Location

- 2.1 The monument is located on the south elevation of the south aisle, between a pair of tracery windows. The bottom bed is 2.00m above finished floor level. An entrance door is situated to the left of centre, beneath.

3 Condition Assessment

- 3.1 Once a temporary access scaffold was safely erected, a fingertip survey of all surfaces was possible. A photographic survey was undertaken before works commenced.
- 3.2 Minor movement was noted to the left-hand, upper corbel but no-where else as the remainder of the monument was solid. There are visible lateral fixings in the top bed of the cornice/pediment, with four cramps spanning across the keystone (two either side) to neighbouring curved pediment sections.
- 3.3 There were no signs of tooling or chisel marks to the carved detail and initially it was thought the monument was constructed from Coade stone, this was found to be incorrect after a detailed geological assessment gave the closest current, geological match for the Limestone/Dolomite as being from the Jackdaw Crag quarry in Stutton near Tadcaster. *Please see the results as an appendix.*
- 3.4 The whole monument is heavily soiled and did not respond well to the range of cleaning techniques and materials available to us. Vertical water marking was visible over much of the total surface area. Once cleaned the majority of flat surfaces looked like they were covered with the kind of distinctive markings usually associated with bat urine on wall-paintings, although there was no evidence of any recent bat activity.

- 3.5 The case-hardened upper surface of the main inscription panel, displayed a number of aged blisters (where the substrate was exposed) with adjacent stone sounding hollow when gently tapped, where it had de-bonded from the substrate. The pilasters were in a much more sound condition, thus allowing the use of low-pressure steam.
- 3.6 It was noted there was very little paint remains in the shallow inscription to both panels, which made it difficult to read from floor level.

4 Conservation Works

Cleaning

- 4.1 All elements underwent a preliminary dry clean with a vacuum cleaner to remove the heavy layers of dust particularly from the top bed of the cornice.
- 4.2 A series of cleaning and solubility trials were conducted on the limestone and painted remains within the inscription, which did not respond all that well to the techniques available.
- 4.3 All architectural elements were sound with no de-scaling and were cleaned with low-pressure steam, with dirty residues collected with paper towelling to prevent re-distribution. The upper and lower inscription panels were cleaned with great care due to their fragile nature. This was carried out using cotton wool swabs dampened with a 1% v/v solution of de-ionised water and Synperonic A7 (a non-ionic surfactant).

5 Consolidation

- 5.1 The areas of blistering and adversely affected adjacent areas were consolidated by two syringe applications of a 2.5% w/v solution of Paraloid B72 dissolved in Acetone : IMS 50 : 50 and a single application of a 5% solution of the same material. This was successful in restoring physical cohesion to these depleted areas and restoring a bond between de-scaling areas.
- 5.2 Once the solvent carrier of the consolidant had dried, support fillings were introduced beneath and around the perimeter of the blisters to prevent further loss of surface material. A repair medium of sieved, Portland and Guiting stone dusts was mixed with a 10% w/v solution of Paraloid B72, which was then inserted behind blisters with dental tools. The dusts were selected to assimilate the colour of the exposed substrate and are easily reversible in the future due to the use of the acrylic resin Paraloid B72.

6 Treatment of Fixings

- 6.1 The iron cramps between the keystone and both curved mouldings were removed of loose corrosion products with nylon abrasive pad, before treating twice with Jenolite (Orthophosphoric acid). The next day, two coats of a 10%w/v solution of Paraloid B72 dissolved in Acetone and I.M.S 50 : 50 were applied by brush to hinder future corrosion.

Near this Place
 In ye Church Yard lie,
 Several Bodies of the Elmsalls
 of Thornhill
 As below particularly named;
 Of Percival Elmsall Yeoman
 Who was buried the 1st of August 1580
 Of William his nephew ye 9th September 1598
 Elizabeth his wife ye 17 August 1584
 And several of their Children who died
 In their minorities
 of Ralph Brother to ye said Edward
 January ye 28th 1639
 of William Son to ye said Edward
 of Elizabeth ye 11th January 1677 Aged 68
 of Ann his Wife, ye 9th October, 1677
 Aged 73
 Of Edward Son to William & Ann
 January ye 6th 1690 : Aged 52
 Frances his Wife Mary ye 13th 1684 aged 40
 And John, Edward, two Iofbvas
 George, Richard, & Ann, their children
 Who died in their Minorities
 Anna, ye firft Wife of William
 Son of Edward & Frances
 April ye 17th 1702 Aged 36
 Elizabeth their Daughter died an Infant
 & of Ann, ye second Wife of ye said
 William May ye 7th 1718 Aged 60
 William laft mentioned Novr 15th 1740 Aged 73
 Henry 3d Son of William laft mentioned
 Who was born Iuly 31st 1691 & died Iune 18
 1758 having been Rector of this Parish
 Near 26 Years
 Ralph Elmfall Son of the above mentioned
 William, who departed this Life 4th Iuly
 1767 Aged 70



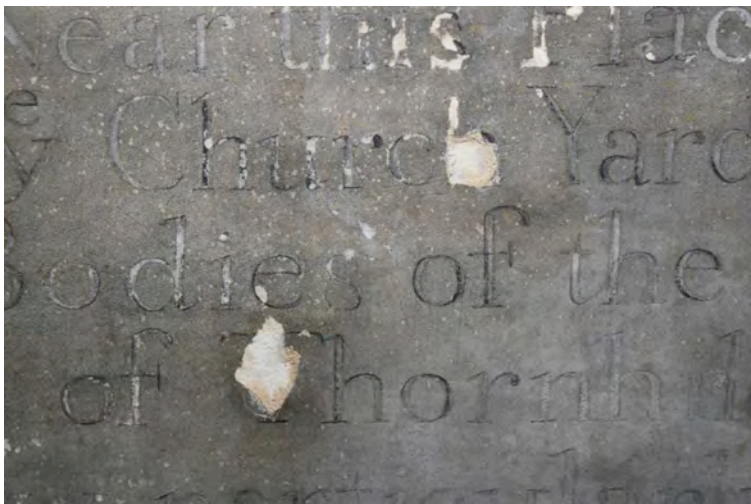
General views of the monument during cleaning, with the viewers left side partially cleaned on the left image and the right-hand pilaster during cleaning on the right. Note on this image the small, splash marks which became apparent all over the surface during cleaning with cotton wool swabs. This type of random, soiling is sometimes seen on wall-paintings and is attributable to bat urine, close to a roost.



Steam cleaning of the left pilaster in progress, with dirty residues collected in sponges to prevent re-distribution.



A clear cleaning contrast on the upper inscription panel. Neither panel were up to anything other than cleaning with cotton wool swabs, as great care had to be taken around de-laminating and blistering areas as well as the need for applied water to be kept to a minimum.



Detail of some of the blisters which were concentrated on the upper section of the larger inscription panel. Support fillings were inserted where practicable. Note how lightly incised the inscription is, coupled with the level of cleaning achievable making the lengthy inscription difficult to read, even when up close.



Cleaning in progress to the lower inscription panel. Note the random splashing is not so evident over the surface of this panel.