

**STONE CROSS WAR MEMORIAL
ST MARY'S PRIORY CHURCH, TUTBURY, STAFFORDSHIRE**



CONDITION SURVEY REPORT

Submitted by:

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1 General Notes

- 1.1. The Stone Cross War Memorial was inspected on the morning of 17 March 2014 by Richard I Smith, RIBA AABC of Smith and Roper and Adrian Dempster MICE MIStructE of Ward Cole, Nottingham. Also on site were Fraser Andrew and 1 operative of A J Restoration Co. Ltd providing scaffold access and metal detection.
- 1.2 Access to inspect the Memorial was by freestanding traditional scaffolding surrounding the monument on all sides.
- 1.3 The Stone Cross War Memorial is sited within the churchyard of St Mary's Priory Church, Tutbury, being located to the south of the main east-west path and to the north east of the path leading from Church Street to the south porch of the church.

2 Description

- 2.1 The Memorial which was erected in 1920 is constructed in a combination of Red and Mottled Hollington Sandstone, comprises a base or lower plinth which is a truncated Reuleaux Triangle on plan. The vertical face of the lower plinth contains the carved text 'Greater love hath no man / than this that a man lay down / his life for his friends'. Sitting on the base is an upper plinth, hexagonal in plan incorporating three panels containing cast bronze plaques, alternating with stepped sections. The west facing plaque is a memorial to the Great War 1914 – 1919, the north east and south east plaques list the names of those who gave their lives. A supplementary plaque to those who fell within the 1939 – 1945 World War has been added to the upper north facing section.
- 2.2 Mounted on the upper plinth is the base to the main shaft. This is a truncated triangle in plan with multiple mouldings and shields carved into the three short faces. Above the shaft base is the single piece octagonal Cross shaft. At the foot of the shaft are three figures (a female angel, St George and St Michael) beneath crocketed hoods all carved into the single piece of stone. At the head of the shaft is a hexagonal moulded and carved finial upon which is mounted a carved stone cross of an elaborate fleury form.
- 2.3 The base of the memorial is surrounded by a single line of natural stone pavers which follow the plan of the base without its truncations. A short path of matching stone pavers runs northwards to three stone steps leading down to the macadam surfaced east/west churchyard path.

3. Condition

- 3.1 Visual observation of the memorial suggests that the whole structure has a slight lean westwards. This was checked by plumb line which indicated a westward lean of only 40mm at the maximum projection at the head of the shaft, however towards the top of the cross this increased to 64mm, indicating that the cross was not set perpendicular to its shaft. James Brennan Associates digital survey confirms a south westward lean of 57mm within the plain upper section of the main shaft, this equating to a south westward lean of 138mm for the combined capping, shaft and shaft base. It was noted that there was slight movement of the whole of the shaft including its cap and cross. This movement was evident between the shaft base and plinth. Metal detection indicated that there was a central ferrous metal spike, 80 – 90mm long, 25mm thickness, between the shaft and its base. Wood packers or plant matter was detected between the shaft base and plinth.

- 3.2 The cross was renewed in 1982 following a minor earthquake, however its failure may have been initiated by rusting of an original metal dowel as hairline fissures are evident within the top of the cap to the main shaft and extending down through the upper moulding. The cross sits neither fully square or central to the shaft beneath. The panelled section of the cap remains in good order with an element of weathering evident to north western facet.
- 3.3 The main shaft including its carving remains in good order, there is slight weathering at the head of the shaft to the north east, south east and south west facets. There is also slight weathering evident at the foot of the south western face of the main shaft. There is some weathering evident to the mortar joint between the main shaft and its base, and a lead wedge is visible within the south western facet.
- 3.4 Slight weathering is evident to the upper surfaces of the lower mouldings to the shaft base stone, principally to the west and south western faces. There is damage at the foot of both northern facets where a sizeable piece of stone appears to have sheared and has been rather crudely repaired. The proposed indent repair will be visible from the main approach to the monument, however if it can be established that the shields are not related to the figures above or plaques beneath, then the base stone could be turned to enable the repair to face away from the approach. The base stone rocks on the plinth beneath and it was found possible to insert a pointing trowel a distance in the order of 150mm beneath the southern side of the base stone.
- 3.5 The upper plinth comprises three large hooded blocks with stepped intermediate sections. The hooded blocks contain cast bronze plaques, all in sound condition. The cleaning of the bronze plaques is not recommended in view of the potential for theft. The top of the north eastern facing block is a separate section of stone, possibly a later repair. A small amount of metalwork associated with the capping was detected. There is evidence of slight outward movement to the upper plinth with mortar joints opening up generally, possibly associated with expansion or failure of the timber packers detected.
- 3.6 The lower plinth or plinth base remains in a generally sound condition. It was noted that the top of the base is slightly out of level, however it was considered that this could be accommodated in rebuilding by dressing the underside of the stones to the upper plinth. Moss and lichen growth is developing to the stone faces of the lower and upper plinths, and an element of gentle cleaning (possibly using the doff system) to give clarity to the carved text and to remove some of the heavy areas of biological growth is recommended.
- 3.7 The western capping to the lower plinth contains a cut-out with stone indent, possibly associated with the fall of the cross. The indent is loose and its edges have weathered. The cut out requires re-dressing prior to inserting a new stone insert.
- 3.8 Surrounding the lower plinth is a single line of stone pavers. The pavers to the western side of the monument appear to have lifted at their outer edge, giving the impression that the cross and its plinth are sinking into the ground to the west. The trustees wish to provide a double width path around the memorial in order to assist access and, in conjunction with this, would reduce the planting border to a crescent at the south of the monument.
- 3.9 The stone flag path leading from the monument to the steps has settled and is now appropriate for lifting and rebedding. The three stone steps are flanked by dwarf walls level with the upper paving. Two stones within the eastern dwarf wall are badly chipped and require replacing.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The following remedial works are recommended:

- Dismantle cross, main shaft and upper plinth complete.
- Clean stonework of lower plinth, redress and renew stone indent and repoint.
- Rebuild upper plinth to level, allowing for limited grinding of underside of stones and packing as necessary.
- Allow for incorporating stainless steel cramps to hold base and plinth together and provision of additional dowels between base and plinth.
- Cut out defective stonework within foot of shaft base and provide new stone indent.
- Provide minimum 3no non ferrous dowels between base and plinth.
- Re-erect main shaft.
- Renew moulded upper section of shaft cap and re-fix cap and cross centrally set and correctly aligned incorporating non ferrous dowels.
- Lift perimeter paving and stone flag path, adjust levels to fall away from monument.
- Relay paving incorporating additional line of pavers to path around monument.
- Replace damaged stones to east side of steps.
- Reduce size of planted border, infilling and turfing as necessary.

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