

Odiham Castle

RIBA South Conservation Commendation 2009


Location:

Warnborough Green, Odiham

Client:

Hampshire County Council
Countryside Services

Value: £490,000

Completed: May 2008

Specialist teams:

Building conservation: HCC Historic Building Group
Archaeology: Wessex Archaeology
Contractor: R. Durnell and Sons
Masonry repair: Cathedral Works Organisation (Chichester)
Lime plaster conservation: St. Blaise

King John built Odiham Castle between 1207 and 1214. It is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument, cared for by Hampshire County Council.

The Basingstoke canal cuts across the southern edge of the inner bailey and the ruin has become popular with visitors who can access it from the canal towpath. But its increasingly unstable condition meant remedial work became a priority.

The Council began a project to improve the protection, management and interpretation of the monument and its site. An archaeological survey was undertaken by English Heritage including investigation of the stonework by Wessex Archaeology.

A measured survey was commissioned using true-to-scale rectified photography to identify every stone and enable a detailed schedule of repairs to be produced. Thanks to a successful bid for Heritage Lottery Funding, large areas of eroded wall were re-faced with random flint in lime mortar and unstable over-hanging sections were secured using concealed stainless steel dowels.

Failing hard cement mortar repairs were, where appropriate, removed and reinforced turf was fixed to the tops of the walls to protect them from the effects of rain and frost. A viewing area was created in the keep by raising the ground level over a buried layer of polystyrene blocks, to protect the archaeology underneath.

Key Benefits

- Public enjoyment and understanding of the monument was increased.
- Visible and hidden archaeological elements at the site have been conserved.
- The landscape setting and access to the site are improved.
- The local community has become involved in the management of the site.
- Future maintenance of the ruins has been made sustainable.

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