



**CROSSRAGUEL ABBEY, BELLCOTE CROSS & COPING STONE  
PROPOSED REINSTATEMENT OF TEMPORARILY REMOVED MASONRY  
ANNEX A SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**version 31/10/2016**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Crossraguel Abbey is a Cluniac abbey complex founded in C13 with periodic reconstruction and major alteration continuing into the C16. Consolidation works had begun before the site formally came into State care in 1928 and it is now a staffed Historic Environment Scotland site open to the public.

Standing masonry remains are extensive and include the church with its choir and nave areas separated by a substantial masonry gable constructed in the C16. This is topped with a bellcote which terminates in a carved coping stone detail bearing a carved masonry cross visible across the site. Early photos show these stones in situ.

- 1.2 High level inspection in 2014 revealed the cross to be loose in its socket within the coping stone, with mortar eroded. The mortar bedding below the coping was also found to have lost adhesion and the coping stone could be moved. Both stones were carefully removed for safety. A small section of one of the cross arms was also found to be detaching.

**2.0 THE PROBLEM**

- 2.1 The original fixing detail for this bellcote termination stonework relied upon the base of the cross inserting into a housing socket in the coping, with only tight fit and mortar securing it in place.

The housing socket in the cope is now worn and partly eroded and there are concerns that the cross could fall in future if the original fixing detail is simply reinstated, should stone decay further. In addition present day expectations for high level finial elements are for mechanically secure fixings to be incorporated. This is to avoid exposing persons below to danger. A further consideration is preventing loss of significant stonework elements by removing the risk of them falling to the ground and smashing.

- 2.2 The means of dealing with the detached fragment of the cross arm requires to be resolved.
- 2.3 Whilst current absence of these two stones locally detracts from the appearance of the bellcote, the missing cross stone diminishes perception of this ecclesiastical site hugely disproportionately relative to the stone's actual size.

**3.0 PROPOSED SOLUTION**

- 3.1 Liaison with HES South Gyle Conservation Centre has confirmed that though weathered, both stones are sound enough to be reinstated. They have also advised the detached fragment of cross arm is capable of reattachment using standard conservation repair techniques (see drawing spec), with this repair effective for the exposed bellcote location.



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- 3.2 It is proposed to return the stones back to their former positions on the bellcote following conservation of the cross. Together with reinstating mortar bedding, incorporation of a new stainless steel dowel mechanical hidden fixing is proposed to secure both the coping socket stone and the cross in place. Proposals are to carefully drill for dowel housings up into the shaft of the cross stone and through the base of the socket of the cope (see drawing spec). Whilst the dowel would be resin fixed into the bellcote 'tympanum' rubble work, the coping stone and cross would be attached to the dowel with mortar alone so they can be eased off and lifted off from above in future if required.
- 3.3 Bellcote tympanum rubblework will be inspected on site once safe access is available in connection with the proposed dowel fixing detail formation. In the event that straightforward drilling down into this masonry from the top surface is assessed as, or found problematic, any revisions to fixing details or to remedial measures such as locally resetting stones and repointing or grouting tympanum masonry would be communicated to HES Heritage Management for advance agreement of details. Note that should any revision to the new stainless steel fixing detail be required a fundamental consideration will be to ensure it remains hidden.
- 3.4 Proposals set out above are considered the best option to enable historic fabric to be returned back into position whilst meeting safety requirements, minimising monument intervention and maintaining established appearance. The stones have been scanned for posterity should further repair or replacement prove necessary in the future.
- 3.5 Other options have been considered but discounted. Doing nothing and reliance on reinstatement using mortar alone were rejected on the grounds stated above. Matching replacement of coping and cross with new carved stones for high level installation was considered, with the originals then retained and displayed at ground level. However avoiding the minor intervention to less significant faces required to accommodate the dowel fixing was felt to be outweighed by the benefit of enabling retention of historic fabric in situ, lending greater authenticity to the Monument.

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