GOSFORTH PARK WAR MEMORIAL

Gosforth Park War Memorial is situated in the centre of Gosforth Central Park off Moor Road North, Gosforth, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

The memorial is essentially an octagonal column formed in red sandstone measuring around 12 feet (3.7 m) high, and was unveiled on 28 January 1925 by the Duke of Northumberland. Inscription panels, possibly in bronze, occupy the North and South lower panels.

The memorial is an important landmark structure located within a much beloved and popular recreational park in the heart of Gosforth. Whilst the memorial is not deemed a listed structure, it is significant both architecturally and historically, therefore a sympathetic approach regarding this phase of intervention was required.

In conjunction with Newcastle City Council's architectural and archaeological departments, designs and specification were prepared to improve the lower step formation to create a harmonious transition between the lower paved area and elevated memorial column. Key conservation principles and practice were central to the design process and decisions that were made, to ensure that all interventions did not detract but moreover enhanced this fitting tribute to our past.

The images above and to the right, illustrate the end result of the project to provide new steps to the memorial; a complete transformation from the original brick steps which appeared somewhat incomplete.

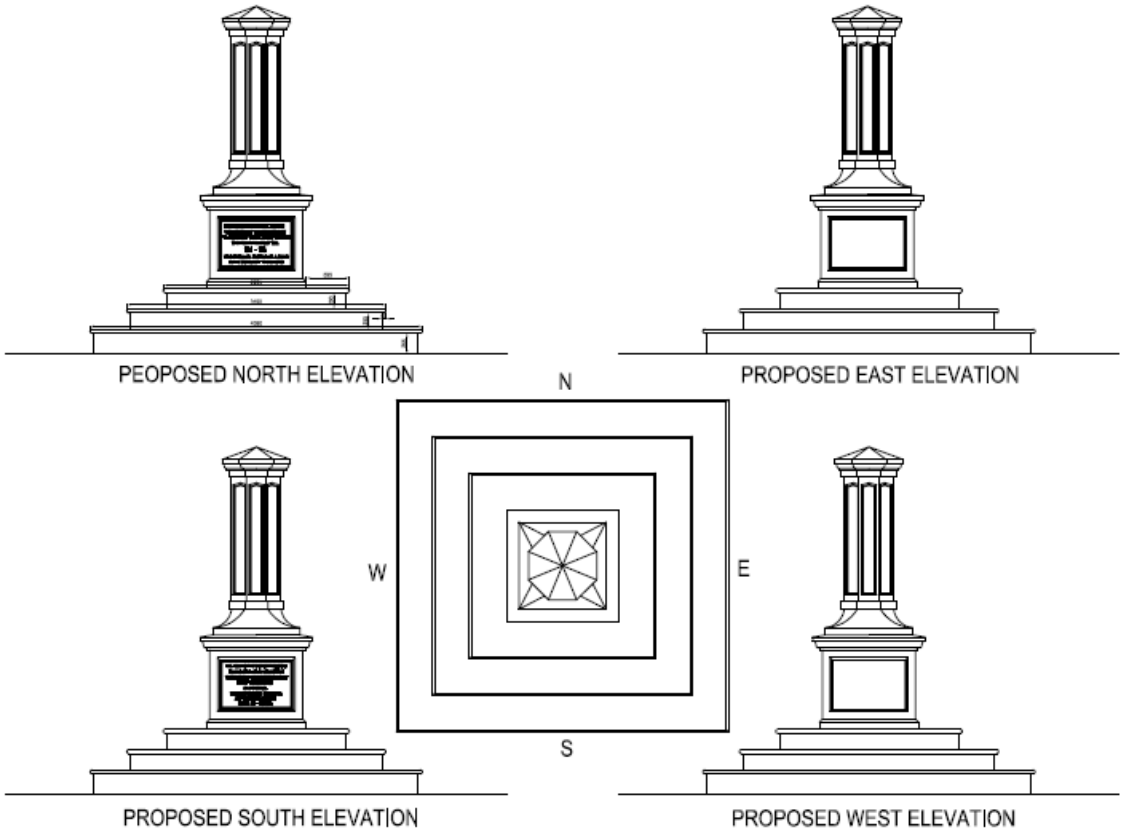
Stakeholders involved in the scheme included The Friends of Gosforth Central Park which was formed in 2013 for the encouragement of local participation in the promotion, management, maintenance and improvement of the Park and its facilities, including environmental conservation and education. The group has been influential and supportive to this particular scheme of work and their assistance offered throughout has been well received and acknowledged. They are delighted with the results and positive feedback has been received by all who have viewed the memorial.

ORIGINAL DESIGN AND ARRANGMENT & VIRUTAL IMAGERY OF THE PROPOSALS

The original brick steps at the base of the memorial can be seen on the image above to the left. As mentioned earlier, this arrangement appeared somewhat incomplete and really failed to present such an important elevated memorial column to its full potential.

Designs were prepared to essentially over clad the steps with a compatible and matching red sandstone and current technology and visualisation aids were utilised to illustrate the proposals (see above) including a half rendered section for comparison.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN



STONE SELECTION

GEOLOOGY, AESTHETICS, FUNCTION & FORM

Various material options for the new steps were considered and whilst the memorial pedestal itself is believed to have been formed in St Bees sandstone, this stone, although excellent for vertical applications is not particularly good for paving use and could become slippy over time.

An alternative and more durable stone, Bowscar Red Lazonby was therefore offered and although this may not be a perfect geological match for the pedestal, aesthetically it is very close and from a design and functional perspective will provide a greater life span and a good tactile finish.

Bowscar Red Lazonby is a medium grained sandstone from the Permian age. It is light pink in colour with a high quartz content giving it distinct sparkle in the sunlight. Its hard wearing and consistent texture make it ideal for walling, cladding and paving.

Bowscar Quarry is situated 3 miles north of Penrith, although the quarry was dormant for many years Bowscar Sandstone has been used in many high profile projects throughout its history. The quarry was re-opened in 2006 and is now providing an excellent high quality raw material with reserves available for many years to come.

Origin	Bowscar, Penrith
Density kg/m³	2367 kg/m³
Water Absorption %	2.2-2.7% wet
Compressive Strength	93-118 MPA
Porosity %	10.3-13.1%
Abrasion Resistance	18.4-19.6
Flexural Strength	3.6 MPA
Slip Resistance (wet)	76-80
Salt Crystallisation	0.23% mean wt loss
Saturated Coefficient	5.1 mean wt loss
Slip Resistance (dry)	Not Determined

ESTABLISHMENT OF LEVELS AND SETTING OUT

The initial task was to establish levels across the site to each of the step tiers and calculate fall etc. to rise positions.

The paving to the perimeter of the memorial was carefully uplifted and taken to the workshops to be cut to accommodate the base of the first step riser to ensure isolation and maintain the integrity of the new steps, if the paving was to be removed in the future.

The bottom riser stones were fixed first using stainless steel dowels, drilled into the brick substrate and set in an epoxy resin to ensure a good purchase with the substrate to provide bearing for the subsequent goings or treads. Additional stainless steel flat bars were introduced between each riser at the perpend joint locations for additional restraint.

The initial level of goings/treads, pre masoned with a 50mm bull nose projection, were then laid on a bed of lime mortar to an agreed fall to provide a weathering for water run off. The corner stones were fixed first to establish square external corners with masoned weathering to suit agreed design from a mitred rise and an internal and external return on each stone to create a more visually pleasing arrangement and avoid a angled joint.

Nb. Please note that much of the cutting and masoning of stone was carried out off site within workshops to ensure minimal inconvenience and disruption to the Park.

PROGRESS

The subsequent layers of stone are laid in the same manner until reaching the plinth of the memorial column.

All joints are pointed in a lime mortar with a red pigment to match the stone and paving to the perimeter is re-set.

The area is thoroughly cleaned and washed down to remove any mortar staining before fencing is removed, memorial wreaths are reinstated and memorial presented for approval.

COMPLETION – ENHANCEMENT OF AN IMPORTANT MEMORIAL STRUCTURE