St Mary Magdalene

Duration: 4th November 2024, 13-14 Months

26.10.26

Client: Diocese, St Mary Magdalene, Newark
(Andrew Fearn, principle client)

Project Name / Location: Reawakening of St Mary Magdalene, Newark-on-Trent

Contract Value: £3.2 million + Variations and additional HE Grant (increased to £3.8 million)

Historic Status / Listing: Grade I listed





The Reawakening of St Mary Magdalene, Newark

St Mary Magdalene is a Grade I listed building and is one of the largest churches in England, being of comparable size to a cathedral.

The earliest parts of the church date back to the 12th century with large extensions being added over the next 400 years.

It was an important landmark and point of power during the English civil war in the 17th century.

The building had been suffering with leaks and much of the protective stonework had degraded which is why it was put on the at risks register.

The space inside was no longer suitable for the needs of today so both external repairs and reordering works would be part of the project.







Project detail

Due to the extent of stone repairs, especially the parapet stones, the whole building required scaffolding and scaffold to access the clerestory.

The sequencing of the roof works and masonry was really important to ensure works could be completed in an efficient and effective manner.

Striking scaffold at the right moments to release roof works was also vital to keep the project on schedule.

Upon survey the masonry works had to be reassessed and altered. Internally the font has been relocated, removal of pews and making good. Many of the lead roofs have been replaced with terne coated stainless steel.

Excavation for foundations of two new internal rooms/pods, structural foundations, structural steels, building of new pods, timber fin oak cladding, new toilets, new kitchen, Cabinetry and floor finishes.

Works to the crossing and altering the stairs. Window restoration works. New heating systems. Electrics. CCTV and fire detection. Internal lime plaster repairs and wall finishes.







Challenges

Archaeology during the excavation for foundations delayed works and the installation of the foundations were also delayed due to skeletal remains.

This process had to be done with sensitivity and extreme care. The skeletons were re-interned afterwards.

Subterranean structures such as hidden crypts had to be structurally inspected and capped with a structural design.

The extent of masonry works was vast, areas had to be surveyed individually and a new scope of works costed and accepted before continuation.

Complex bespoke scaffolding design to be both practical and safe. This had to include security, alarms and cameras to ensure safety, and deter anti social behaviour and people trying to gain access.

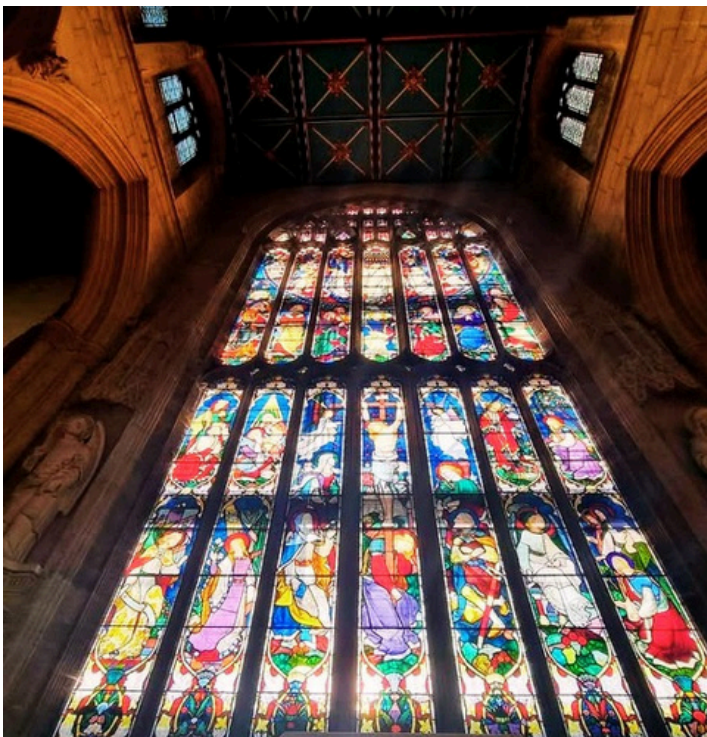
We contracted an external security company for 24 hour surveliance.

Due to the award of additional funding from Historic England, we carried out approx 3 extra months of additional works within the original project programme period. This included £140k of additional stone masonry.

We successfully delivered this by increasing numbers on site and working weekends.







outcomes

Top quality stone repairs, ensuring lasting stonework by replacing protective stone.

Making the roof watertight and being one of the **first companies** to implement the heri-tagging system on lead to make it more theft proof.

The outstanding look of the internal pods and the quality of the joinery aspects.

The public outreach and social side of the project, Hard hat tours, working with Lincoln college and taking on work experience students.

The building has been removed from the 'at risk' register.

Project **delivered on time**. Even with all additional works instructed following a £600k additional funding uplift from Historic England.

highlights

Being able to showcase the quality of ASBC's works.

The speed and efficiency shown by our masons considering the amount of work undertaken.

Being able to communicate well with the various contractors on site, Heating and Plumbing, Electricians, CCTV, Solar panels etc.

Showing the ability to improvise and quickly resolve variations and new works.

highlights continued...

Working heavily with the quantity surveyor to resolve budget issues and uncover where we could make savings and omit certain works, without compromising the delivery of the project.

The number of public engagement opportunities throughout the project and working with students to bring on the next generation of craftspeople.

Hard hat tours to raise awareness of the struggles of these historic landmarks.

Engagement with Newark Collage and providing placements for 30no students.

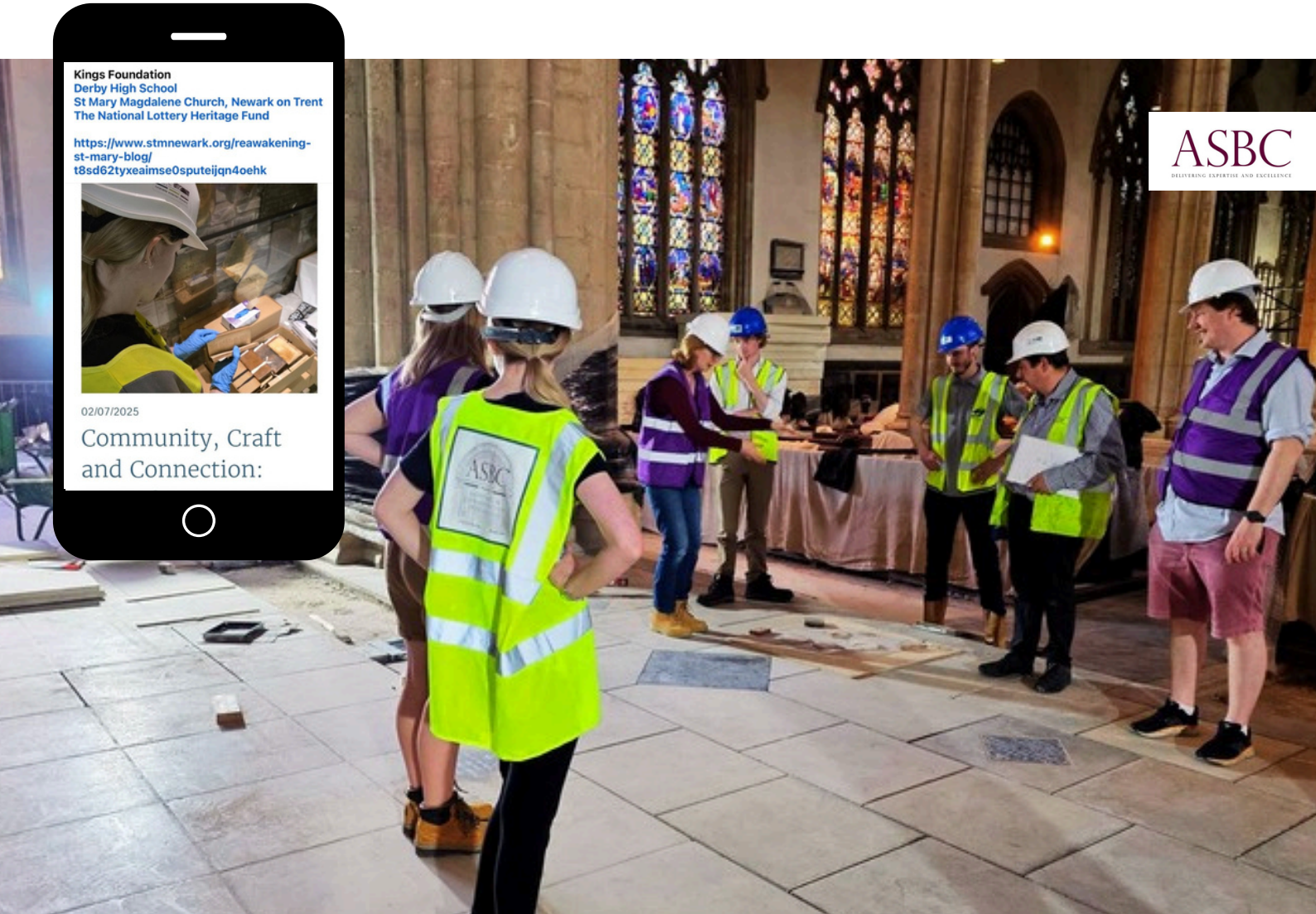
Engaging with the Kings Foundation and providing placements for students.

Providing 'work experience' for High school pupils.

Positive feedback from our clients, the DAC, the wider project team and from visitors and students.

Local community and media support – BBC News have showcased the project on several occasions.

Historic England have showcased this project and describe is as a 'flagship' project because we have introduced traditional and modern working methods and materials to provide a collaborative finish.



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Director's comments

The St Mary Magdalene's reawakening project has gone extremely well with only a slight change to programme which required weekend working to prevent delay. Practical Completion was on time.

ASBC have worked as efficiently as possible and this has been recognised by the clients, funders, and project team. Our site managers have done very well in working with a large project team and managing all expectations.

There have been some new experiences such as the heri-tag system and ASBC have had to provide more design-based work and drawings than usual. We have taken the positives from this as it was an opportunity to engage trainee designers from Newark College.

Overall we feel this is an exemplary project and have received positive feedback from everyone throughout. This is reflected in the supporting references accompanying this case-study.

We are delighted that Historic England are using this project as their 'flagship' project and it will be showcased, visited, and talked about for many years.

ASBC are proud to be supporting HE with talks and discussions to other clients considering future projects.

Historic England

Made possible with Heritage Fund