

CASE STUDY



Somerleyton Hall Suffolk

Goldholme
Stone

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Somerleyton Hall - Stone gateway restoration

Background

The Somerleyton Estate, situated in Suffolk, stands as a testament to grandeur and history, acclaimed as one of the finest Victorian stately homes in the country. While the Hall and Gardens exude a classic and historic charm today, there's a rich tapestry of hidden history woven into its fabric, dating back almost 900 years. Throughout its long and storied past, the Somerleyton estate has been home to influential figures who have left an indelible mark on its landscape and legacy.

At present, the estate is under the stewardship of Hugh Crossley, the 4th Baron Somerleyton, who oversees its vibrant and popular visitor attraction status. Notably, the estate has become a sought-after destination for film production companies, featuring in productions such as the Netflix series "The Crown" and the Channel 4 series "The Real Dirty Dancing".

Our Master Mason Wayne Smith collaborated with the architectural firm Nicolas Warns Architects embarked on a significant restoration project, guided by a commitment to preserving its historical integrity.

The restoration project presented a unique challenge, requiring a delicate balance between reconstructing certain elements of the gateway while preserving others for the benefit of future generations. Under the expert guidance of our team of masons, the intricate craftsmanship of the original gateway was painstakingly recreated, ensuring that its timeless beauty and historical significance endure for years to come.

In essence, the restoration of the stone gateway at the Somerleyton Estate symbolizes a dedication to honouring the estate's illustrious heritage while embracing the demands of modern conservation practices. It stands as a testament to the estate's commitment to preserving its rich history and architectural splendour for generations to come.



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Challenge

The restoration of the stone gateway at Somerleyton Hall presented several challenges. Firstly, the original French limestone, prone to substantial deterioration from chemical weathering, necessitated finding a suitable replacement material. This led to the procurement of Hartham Park Bath stone from Lovell Stone, the closest match available.

Secondly, the statues of stags atop the gate posts had undergone crude repairs with cement mortar, endangering the integrity of their antlers. Additionally, the gate's column had suffered damage from an unfortunate accident involving a lorry.

To address these issues, the restoration process involved expert disassembly of the gateway using traditional mason hand tools, followed by careful storage of carved statues and stone elements to be retained. State-of-the-art technology, including saws and robots, was utilized at the Ancaster quarry to cut replacement stones based on precise measurements taken from the existing gateway.

Furthermore, the restoration included the refurbishment of the cast iron parts of the gates and the installation of a new automatic system.



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Approach

Our Head Mason created drawings by measuring the existing gateway and utilized our advanced saw and robot at our quarry in Ancaster to cut the replacement stone. The original gates were made from materials transported in the 18th century through the English Channel from France, but due to depleted reserves, a search for a suitable replacement was initiated. The closest match found was Hartham Park Bath stone, sourced from Lovell Stone.

The gateway was carefully dismantled using traditional mason hand tools, followed by a crane to move components and safely store carved statues and stone elements that were to be preserved.

The restoration process spanned several months, enduring various English weather conditions, with the final reassembly in Spring 2022.



- **Stone Specified:** Bath Stone
- **Services:** Design, deconstruction of damaged gates, rebuilding, restoration of stone stags
- **Sector:** Private estate

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