



The font and stepped-base prior to any treatments. Note its un-helpful proximity to the entrance to the toilets (to the right and out of shot) the door of which was once the main door into the church, before building of the tower opposite.



The font before any treatments with the hardwood door, the original entrance into the church, to the left. The font sat in front of the kitchen and welfare facilities.



A detail of the historic efflorescence in the paving beneath the bottom step of the plinth, which has adversely affected the upstand of the bottom course. There was little point de-salinating this course, which is likely to have exacerbated the problem with long-standing soluble salt activity and created a very different cleaning differential with other courses.



The new location prior to opening-up works, with soft-wood floorboards overlying substantial timber joists. There is a supporting wall running along roughly the same line as the right-hand edge of the dust-sheets.



The hole has been formed down to the required depth and a solid base, following the footprint of the font exactly. There were no items of archaeological interest save for a few nails and a pencil. The joists on top of the floorboards were secured to strengthen the underlying joists during these works.



The concrete pad was poured level and to the required height, with a layer of re-enforcing mesh incorporated midway in the slab. This was allowed several days to harden, before building commenced.



The block-work beneath the timber joists supporting the flooring, with an additional layer of damp-proof membrane beneath the new sandstone plinth course.



The final layer of lean concrete just after application, with the underfloor heating pipe cast into the concrete, which they are usually. Note the concrete was brought up to the same plane as the new sandstone perimeter at the recommendation of Inspecting Architect, to make a solid and even base to spread the load of the whole font, which weighs in excess of a ton.



Cleaning in progress, whilst the opening-up works take place in tandem.



A cleaning contrast to the middle step, showing the subtle level of difference in cleaning achieved, whilst removing decades of accumulated airborne dirt/debris.



A cleaning contrast showing the right-hand capital and everything above having been cleaned. The vulnerable faces of the font bowl were cleaned with paper-towelling compresses as they were not up-to low-pressure steam cleaning.



The font before cleaning, note how it was uniformly dirty, particularly the lower four courses.



The font after all cleaning processes, note the more obvious difference in colour and texture between the different materials and paving in the foreground.



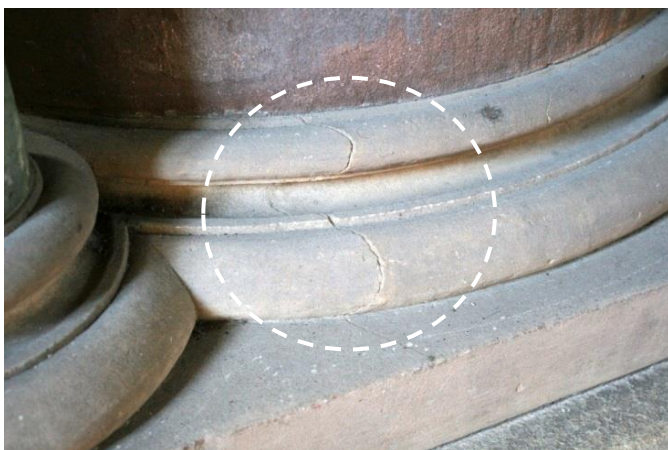
Another view of the font after all cleaning processes. The font received direct (albeit diffused) sun from the tall windows to the south. This would have meant repeated heating and cooling cycles over the decades, perfect for soluble salts in which to flourish. It is shielded from the sun in its new location and its proximity to the nearby south wall.



Some of the inherent transverse fractures through the moulded-base course, which would have been particularly vulnerable to lifting despite being strapped horizontally.



The relative tightness of the original jointing mortar which were difficult to remove prior to dismantling, even with very thin scrapers/chisels, as the very-hard material was well bonded to the coarse, open-textured sandstone.



Another inherent fracture through the moulded-base course (indicated) which was by far the worse in terms of structural integrity. As a result the decision was taken not to disassemble these three courses for fear of avoidable damage, no matter how carefully planned and executed.



The font bowl being rolled horizontally onto the pallet-truck. There was no room for even thin endless-slings (for lifting) between the foliate decoration of the capitals and the chamfered bottom edge of the bowl.



Removing the remains of the very hard mortar from the top bed of the moulded capital course, which was in four uniform pieces. Leaving the very hard mortar in place would have made final positioning of the font bowl problematic.



Removing courses 3 – 5 horizontally on steel dowelling, to prevent exploiting the inherent fractures, which lifting/lowering (twice) is likely to have done. The bottom of the three courses was the single biggest block of stone and strapped as a result with additional protections at the corners. There was a crude vertical drill-hole for drainage, which had burst the bottom bed off. The underling courses were made-up of several pieces.



The bottom course of the stepped base, with the additional new sandstone plinth recommended by the architect to raise the whole font upwards, due to the likely addition of under-floor heating within the church in the future. Shims of the correct thickness were used to maintain neat uniform joints whilst the mortar between the heavy units hardened sufficiently for the next course.



The bottom two courses of the stepped base in-situ. Note the regular void in the centre which was covered completely with the next composite course.



Hardwood wedges were used to maintain level front to back, whilst the bedding mortar hardened. These were removed once the mortar had hardened sufficiently. The crow-bar was used to achieve perfect level before wedging.





Two of the four moulded capital blocks in place. There were no fixings in this course and we made the four separate units solid by using a casting plaster, whilst maintaining a sufficient gap for the necessary drainage pipe.



Re-instating the font bowl horizontally onto the underlying courses. The correct height and bedding had been determined beforehand by using stacks of lead shims of different heights, to achieve a level across the different stacks with a spirit level. With the bottom bed of the font bowl being worked smooth.



The font-bowl in correct alignment, note once again the different colours at play in what must have been the original intention of the designer/architect.



A context view showing the incised inscription to the bottom three courses of the stepped base. Note the lustre on the green marble columnettes which no longer appear dull and lifeless.



A three-quarter view of the font complete with new copper bowl within the sandstone bowl, which fits perfectly.



Another three-quarter view showing the historic, chronic soluble-salt activity in the masonry in the background. The new sandstone plinth blends in well with the bottom bed of the stepped base, but is likely to be obscured by future composite layers of under-floor heating.



A view from the 'front' of the font, you can just make out support fillings to the vulnerable edges on the vertical face of the font bowl on this elevation.



The location from which the font was removed, showing the remaining level of efflorescence in the laminar sandstone paving after vacuuming. Vulnerable laminations were rationalised to prevent being a trip hazard. The small diameter drainage hole can just be made out (indicated) in the centre of the paving. The defective joints were raked-out and re-pointed and left with a sponged finish.