

REPORT ON PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL WORKS – REPLACEMENT OF THE NAVE ROOF AND REPAIR AND REDECORATION OF THE TOWER AND CUPOLA.

Every five years Chapter is required to commission a major survey of the Cathedral in order to identify where major repairs to the fabric of the Cathedral might be required. The last such survey was carried out by the Cathedral Architect – Michael Drury Associates in 2006. The two most significant recommendations in the subsequent quinquennial report concerned the replacement of the Nave roof and the redecoration of the Cupola and repair work on the Tower. When the copper roofs were installed on the Nave at the time of its construction in the 1930s the copper was expected to have a lifespan of 60 years. Even more pressing than the replacement of the Nave roof was the work required on the Tower and Cupola. The Cupola was last redecorated in 1998 and the paintwork was showing significant wear and tear to the extent that the wood beneath had been exposed in a number of cases and had started to rot.

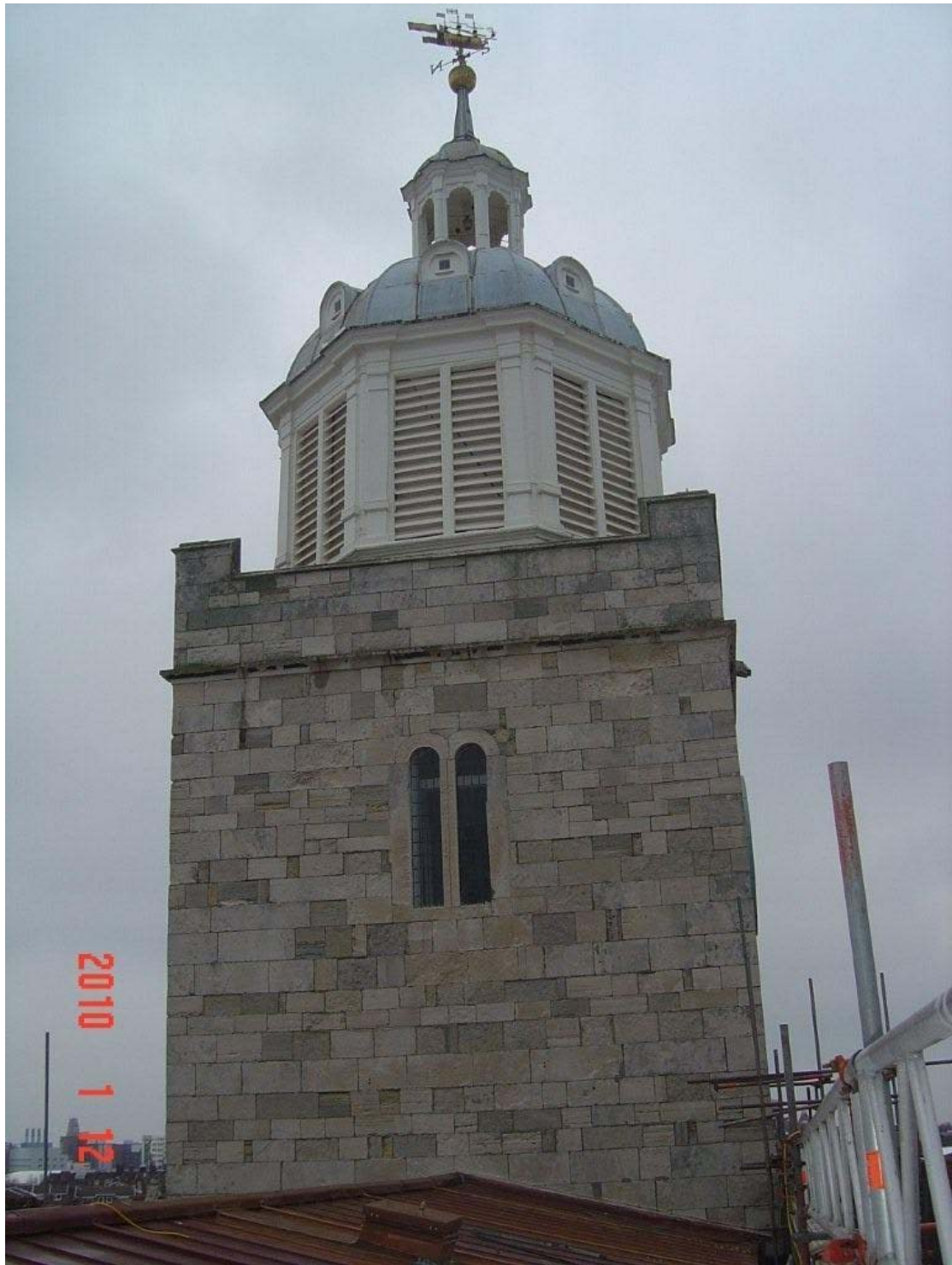
In March 2009 the Cathedral Chapter instructed the Cathedral Architect to commence the tender process for these two important projects. The tender documents were issued to 5 potential contractors at the end of April and tenders were received from 4 of the 5 contractors by the end of May. These tenders were then evaluated by the Cathedral Architect and Quantity Surveyor, who recommended that the Cathedral should accept the tender from Ellis & Co., who specialise in construction work on Cathedrals, churches and other historic buildings. With additional contingency sums included a final contract price of £193,327 was agreed. The Cathedral then signed a letter of intent with Ellis & Co in early June to proceed with the project and appointed Martin Ralph Chartered Surveyors to manage the delivery of the project on its behalf.

The contractor set up his site compound in early July and erected the required scaffolding, which involved two towers against the north aisle and 360 degree scaffolding on the Cupola and some scaffolding on the South side to allow access to the South Aisle Nave roof throughout July. The work on the redecoration of the Cupola started in August and was completed by the early October, at which point the scaffolding surrounding the cupola was removed. As anticipated a considerable amount of additional repair work was required to the timber structure of the Cupola. Designated repair works to the Tower were completed in the same timeframe as the work on the Cupola. However, at this phase of work was being completed, it became apparent that additional repair work would be required to the guttering of the Tower and the scaffolding against the west side of the Tower was left in place in November in order to enable this work to be completed.

Work on replacing the copper roofs over the Nave started with the South Aisle roof in August. This was largely completed by the end of September. Whereas the contractor was initially assisted by the fine Indian summer he had to contend with some very wet and windy weather thereafter. Work on the replacement of the main aisle roof took place in October and November and completion was slightly delayed into December by the requirement to maintain the scaffolding on the west side of the Tower for the repairs to the gutters. Work on the North Aisle roof took place in November and December. A combination of staff sickness, difficult

weather conditions and the late delivery of specialist roof hatches inevitably delayed work and the contractor did not succeed in meeting the contract completion date of 18 December 2009. At this point approximately one week of work remained. Consequently the contractor retained both scaffolding and compound on site, while taking a two week break over Christmas and the New Year. Returning on 4th January completion of the project was further delayed by the heavy snow and severe winter weather. Work to finish off the roofing works was completed by 15th January. With the scaffolding and site compound removed the following week, the Cathedral Architect issued the practical completion certificate on 22nd January 2010.

The attached collection of photographs shows the results of this work. The timber structure of the Cupola has been repaired and the exterior repainted. Repair work to various aspects of the Tower including exterior masonry, leaded windows and the interior structure have been completed. Last but not least, the roof over the Nave looks resplendent in its shiny new copper sheathing, although, unlike the Cupola, the results are not visible from ground level.



Tower and Cupola after repair and redecoration



New copper roof over the Nave main aisle



Repaired and redecorated lantern – south facing elevations.



Repaired and redecorated timber casement window within main cupola roof. One of eight similar dormer windows.



Long strip copper roofing to Nave roof – north slope.



Long strip copper roofing to South Aisle roof.



Louvres to the Belfry. Some of the louvres were decayed and have been replaced with new.



Cornice and mouldings above Octagon Louvres to the Belfry.