



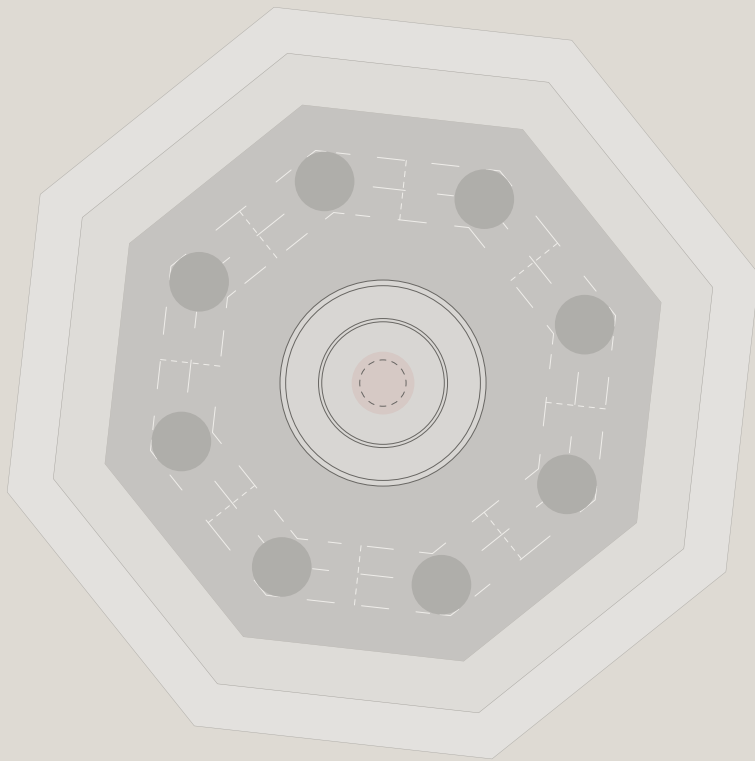
Rossmore Monument Monaghan

Conservation Report: Condition Survey

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CONTENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1.1 INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW	4
1.2 CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY	4
1.3 ARCHITECT BIOGRAPHY	5
2 ASSESSMENT	6
2.1 CONDITION CLASSIFICATION	6
2.2 ELEMENTAL CONDITION ASSESSMENT	6
2.2.1 SUBSTRUCTURE & PLINTH	6
2.2.2 PILLARS	7
2.2.3 PILLAR CAPITALS	9
2.2.4 CENTRAL FOUNTAIN	11
2.2.5 SANDSTONE CEILING	13
2.2.6 OUTER SANDSTONE ARCHES	15
2.2.7 UPPER MID SECTION	17
2.2.8 UPPER BODY	19
2.2.9 PINNACLE	21
3 SUMMARY	22



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the findings of a comprehensive condition assessment of the Rossmore Monument, a high-status Victorian Gothic Revival structure of significant architectural and civic value.

General Overview

Fundamentally, the monument remains a coherent and legible structure, retaining its original material hierarchy and decorative integrity. The majority of the external masonry is performing well, demonstrating the durability of the original construction materials. However, the condition of the fabric is variable; while the primary structural elements are sound, specific localised areas exhibit advanced deterioration driven by moisture retention and restricted evaporation, particularly within sheltered zones.

Critical Defects (Immediate Attention)

Internal Vault Soffit (Safety Risk):

The most urgent finding concerns the internal sandstone ceiling, which is in Poor/Very Poor condition. Severe spalling, delamination, and material disintegration are evident. Given the overhead location of this masonry within an accessible public space, this presents a clear Health and Safety risk and requires immediate stabilisation.

Heraldic Plaques:

The carved panels within the upper arcade have suffered extensive, irreversible loss of detail. Active delamination and void formation were observed, necessitating urgent specialist intervention to arrest further loss of historic fabric.

Significant & Minor Observations

Internal Capitals:

Significant erosion was noted on the sheltered internal faces of the lower capitals. While not currently structurally compromised, these elements are at Medium–High risk of further decay due to prolonged saturation.

External Superstructure:

In contrast, the upper registers—including the octagonal sandstone courses, lettered shields, hood mouldings, and the terminal spire—are in Good to Very Good condition, requiring only routine maintenance and biological cleaning.

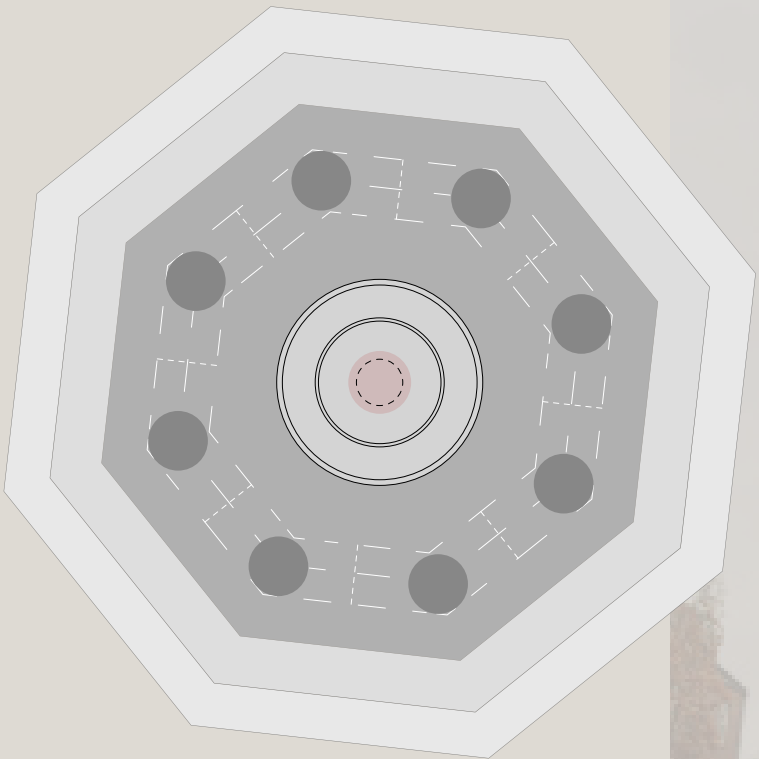
Fountain Assembly:

The central fountain column and bowl, though operationally defunct, remain structurally sound with only minor historic staining.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The Rossmore Monument does not require wholesale reconstruction. Instead, a targeted conservation strategy is required. Priority must be placed on resolving the immediate safety hazards associated with the internal vaulting and stabilising the fragile heraldic plaques. A secondary programme of planned maintenance should follow to manage moisture ingress and biological growth on the wider structure.

Prompt implementation of these recommendations will secure the monument's stability and ensure its continued role as the defining architectural focal point of Monaghan's Diamond.



SKETCH PLAN OF THE MONUMENT -
(NTS)



1.1 INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Project: Rossmore Memorial Fountain

Location: The Diamond, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan

Date of Assessment: 14/01/2026

Weather Conditions: Wet & Raining – Overcast

Asset Name: Rossmore Memorial Fountain.

Typology: Freestanding openwork memorial fountain (Gothic Revival).

Date of Construction: c. 1876.

Architect: Edward John Tarver (1841–1891).

Setting: Centrally positioned within ‘The Diamond’ public square. The site formerly housed a 17th-century stone cross/sundial.

The Rossmore Monument (Rossmore Memorial Fountain)

The Rossmore Monument is a freestanding, openwork memorial fountain that serves as the architectural centerpiece of The Diamond, the central square of Monaghan town. Designed by the English architect Edward John Tarver and unveiled in 1876, the structure is a quintessential example of High Victorian Gothic Revival design. It is celebrated for its ambitious use of structural polychromy—utilizing a striking palette of sandstone, grey marble, pink granite, limestone, and copper—and its intricate sculptural detailing.

Origins and Commemoration

The monument was commissioned to commemorate Henry Cairns Westenra, the 4th Baron Rossmore (1851–1874). A Lieutenant in the 1st Life Guards, Lord Rossmore died tragically at the age of 22 following a severe riding accident during the Guards’ Cup steeplechase at Windsor. His death was deeply felt by the local community, leading to the public subscription that funded this elaborate tribute.

To accommodate the new fountain, the site’s previous occupant—the 17th-century “Old Cross” (actually a monumental sundial)—was relocated to the nearby Old Cross Square, clearing the visual center of the town for Tarver’s new Gothic spire.

Architectural Description

The monument is conceived as a highly ornate civic structure, rising in diminishing stages to a terminal spirelet.

The structure rises from a stepped octagonal plinth of Lescanor limestone, from which eight grey marble columns are arranged radially. These columns rest on polygonal, splayed bases of carved stone and are crowned with carved foliate capitals in the stiff-leaf style. They support a sandstone superstructure composed of a continuous arcade of pointed arches with chamfered reveals. The arches are articulated externally by triangular-arched hood mouldings (gables), which are enriched with crockets and carved foliate detailing with a singular hemispherical marble boss placed above the apex of each arch, alternating between red and grey marble.

The Inscription Band Set immediately above the primary arcade is a series of carved sandstone shields, one per bay. Each shield bears a

relief letter, collectively spelling R-O-S-S-M-O-R-E. These shields form a continuous decorative frieze, acting as a visual transition (string course) to the upper register.

The Upper Arcade and Spire Above the inscription lies a secondary, smaller arcade of pointed arches with moulded sandstone surrounds, containing heraldic devices and inscribed plaques recording the dedication. This upper tier is articulated by square-plan piers, each surmounted by a pyramidal cap. It is framed by hood mouldings that echo the motif of the lower level, with carved finials at the apexes reinforcing the vertical thrust of the composition.

The monument is crowned by domed superstructure, encircled by a final ring of miniature grey marble columns that match the order below. This upper colonnade supports the terminal sandstone spire, which creates a sharp silhouette against the skyline.

The interior is centered around a moulded grey marble base supporting a grey marble fountain bowl. Rising from the bowl is a central pink granite column with a foliate capital. This column once incorporated a copper animal-mask spout, from which water originally issued. The spout is still extant but the original copper detail has now been lost. The internal space is enclosed by a vaulted ceiling, and the floor is paved in a geometric pattern of lescanor limestone flags.

Current Status

Although the fountain mechanism is no longer operational and the structure exhibits localised material deterioration—particularly to the softer carved sandstone elements—the Rossmore Monument remains a vital component of Monaghan’s historic townscape. It functions as a spatially significant focal point within The Diamond, contributing materially to the architectural identity of the town.

1.2 CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

Structural System: Stepped stone plinth supporting a radial columniated base; openwork masonry superstructure rising to a terminal spire.

Material Palette:

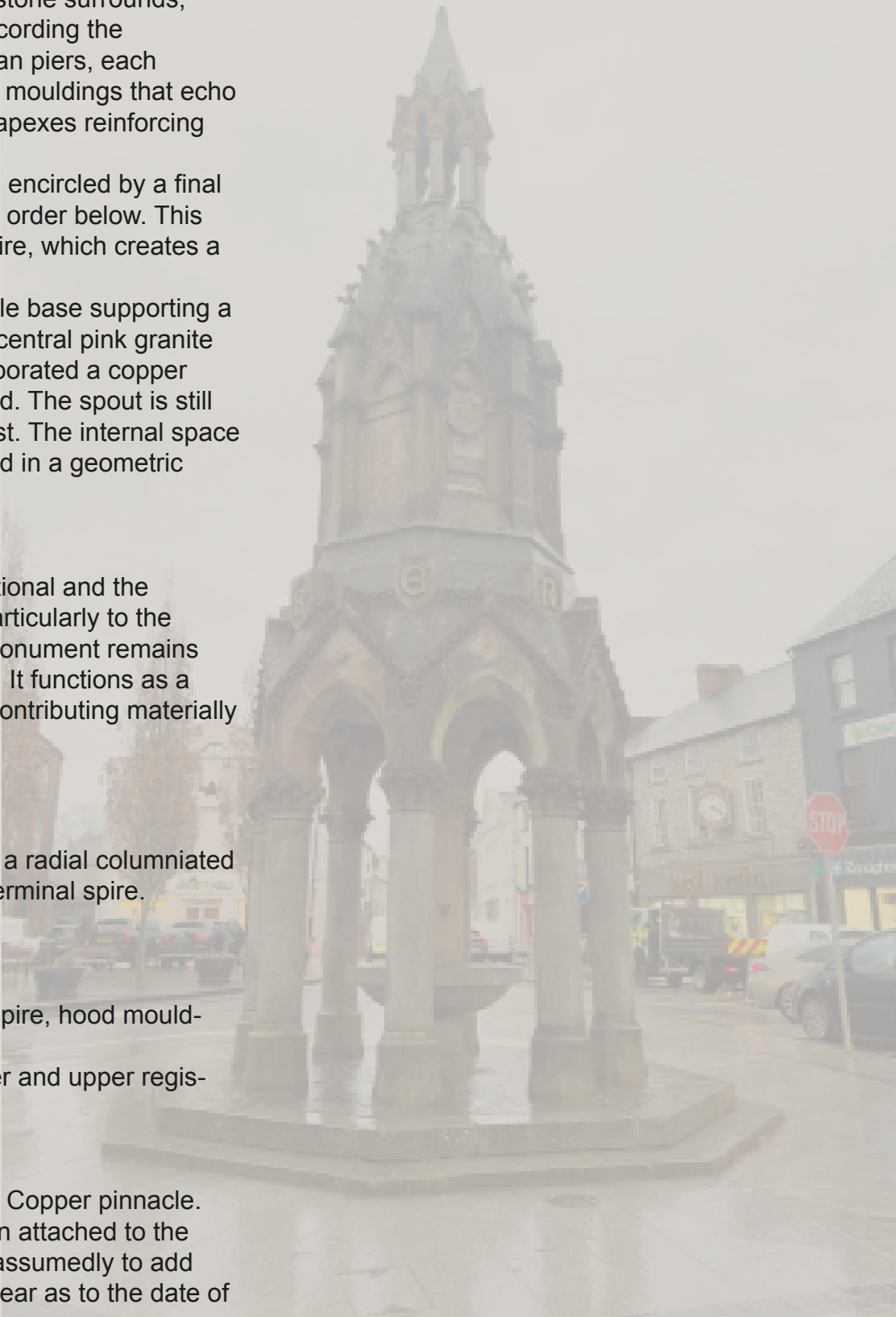
Sandstone: Upper superstructure, arches, shields, spire, hood mouldings.

Grey Marble – likely limestone: Radial columns (lower and upper registers), internal fountain bowl.

Pink Granite: Central internal column.

Limestone: Plinth, paving flags.

Copper: Internal animal-mask spouts (now missing). Copper pinnacle. It is noted that a stainless steel structural tie has been attached to the underside of the spire, between the upper columns, assumedly to add further stability to the sandstone spire top. It is not clear as to the date of this addition.



1.3 ARCHITECT BIOGRAPHY

Edward John Tarver was a distinguished English architect and scholar of the High Victorian era, best known for his adept handling of the Gothic Revival style and his significant contributions to architectural education in London.

Early Life & Education

Born at Eton, Buckinghamshire, on November 27, 1841, Tarver was the youngest son of John Charles Tarver (1790–1851), a celebrated French lexicographer and French master at Eton College. Raised in an academic environment, he was educated at Eton and Bruce Castle before pursuing a career in architecture.

Professional Training

In 1858, Tarver was articled to Benjamin Ferrey (1810–1880), one of the foremost Gothic Revival architects of the period and a biographer of A.W.N. Pugin. This training under Ferrey deeply influenced Tarver’s stylistic trajectory, grounding him in the principles of medieval design, structural polychromy, and ecclesiastical ornamentation—elements clearly visible in his work in Monaghan. He subsequently attended the Architectural Association (AA) Schools in London, where he won several student prizes.

Career & Distinctions

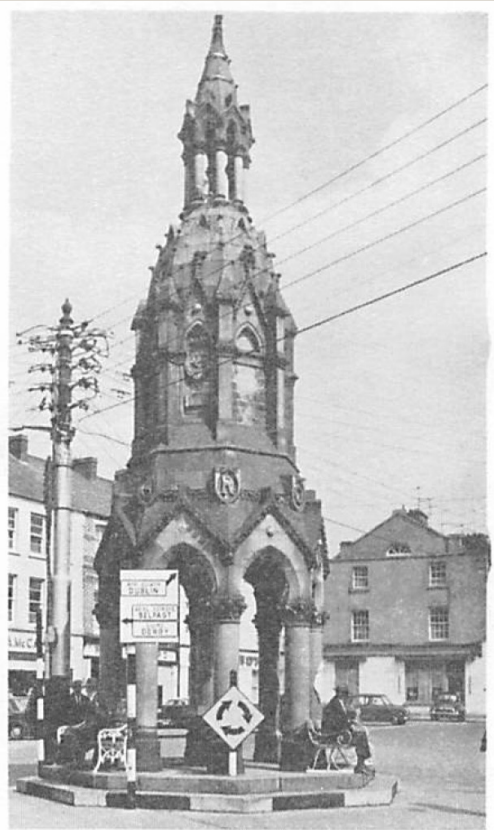
Tarver established his own practice in London in 1863. He quickly rose to prominence within the profession, becoming a pivotal figure in the Architectural Association, serving as its President in 1874. His scholarly inclination led to his appointment as the AA's first paid lecturer on the History of Architecture (1881–1887), and he later published A Guide to the Study of the History of Architecture (1888). He was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1865 and became a Fellow (FRIBA) in 1888. At the time of his death, he also served as the District Surveyor for South St. Marylebone.

Connection to Monaghan

Tarver’s work in County Monaghan appears to stem from a specific patronage relationship with the Westenra family (the Barons Rossmore). Following the tragic death of the 4th Baron Rossmore in 1874, Tarver was commissioned to design two significant structures in his memory: The Rossmore Mausoleum (1874): A private funerary chapel located in what is now Rossmore Forest Park. The Rossmore Memorial Fountain (1876): The public monument in the town Diamond. The commission of a London-based architect for these provincial Irish projects highlights the high status of the Rossmore family and their desire for a monument in the fashionable "Metropolitan" Gothic style.

Notable Works

Rossmore Mausoleum, Co. Monaghan (1874).
Rossmore Memorial Fountain, Monaghan Town (1876).
Church of All Souls, Harlesden, London (1877–1890).
Wadhurst Park, Sussex (1875) – A substantial country mansion.
Rectory at Broadstairs, Kent (1870).



ROSSMORE MEMORIAL
The Diamond

A c.1875; architect unknown. A formidable High Victorian fountain of red sandstone, now deeply weathered, in the very centre of the square on an octagonal plinth of two granite steps. The eight letters R-O-S-S-M-O-R-E are strung conveniently around the octagon above. There is an inscription, "In memory of the Rt. Honble Henry Robert 4th Baron Rossmore who died at Windsor 28th day of March 1874 in his 23rd year"; another inscription, now wholly illegible; and a scattering of escutcheons and badges. The central pink marble column supports a drinking bowl: around this, eight grey marble columns with floral sandstone capitals, support the pinnacled superstructure on pointed arches; the finial is borne on eight more little columns, this time of granite; the weathercock, the original railings, and the drinking trough, have now disappeared. It would be nice if the fountain could be restored.

The appearance of this striking, if at present rather unfashionable, monument is greatly disimproved by the fact that immediately beside it stands an enormous silver-painted steel pole carrying no less than 41 wires, and a lamp; and by three traffic direction signs.

Extracts from the Historic Buildings Groups of Buildings Areas of Architectural Importance In The Town of Monaghan - Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and An Taisce - C.E.B. Brett - August 1970

Source Note:
1970 UAHS Survey Reference: Brett, C.E.B. (1970). Historic Buildings, Groups of Buildings, Areas of Architectural Importance in the Town of Monaghan. Ulster Architectural Heritage Society & An Taisce.

This survey confirms the full dedication text: “In memory of the Rt. Honble Henry Robert 4th Baron Rossmore who died at Windsor 28th day of March 1874 in his 23rd year.”

It provides a critical timeline for material loss, noting that by 1970, the original weathercock, railings, and drinking trough were already missing. It further verifies the site history, stating the monument replaced the ancient “hiring cross” (Market Cross), which was relocated to Old Cross Square to accommodate the fountain.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 CONDITION CLASSIFICATION

For each component a colour code pertaining to a condition class shall be stated. The condition classification shall be based on an overall assessment of all the relevant symptoms. Four condition classes shall be used (see table below). (For further information see I.S EN 16096:2012). An overall recommendation for each element will be provided at the end of each section, proportional to the level of symptom classification established. Remedial measures will also be suggested noting urgency of intervention.

Symptom Classification

- No Symptoms
- Minor Symptoms
- Moderately Strong Symptoms
- Major/ Severe Symptoms

2.2 ELEMENTAL CONDITION ASSESSMENT

2.2.1 SUBSTRUCTURE & PLINTH

Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Plinth	Stepped octagonal limestone plinth featuring a smaller outer step, a larger upper step and a lescaenor interior to the colonnade	Good. Generally sound. Typical biological growth (algae/lichen)	
REMEDIAL MEASURES	Regular maintenance and up keep required. At present, beyond issues with algae and lichen growth, the symptoms are easily mitigated. with regular maintenance.		
URGENCY	Desirable / Low Priority		
Paving	Lescanor Limestone paving.	Good. Generally sound. showing minor signs of wear and tear.	
REMEDIAL MEASURES	Regular maintenance and up keep required. At present, symptoms are easily mitigated. with regular maintenance. Care should be taken when cleaning to avoid damage to grout etc.		
URGENCY	Desirable / Low Priority		



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Pillars	8xno. grey Lime Stone Marble Pillars 1xno Pink granite Pillar	Fair/Good. Polished stone surfaces are durable however, some deterioration of the base connection is prevalent with missing and poorly patched areas of grout. The pillars appear to be saturated at the base in many instances suggesting poor or ineffective drainage and capillary action. Some cracking at the base of the marbles at the joint with the base has occurred and repairs appear to have been attempted	
REMEDIAL MEASURES	Moisture Management and Drainage - Undertake a detailed inspection of ground levels, hardstanding falls, and sub-surface build-up immediately surrounding the column bases to establish pathways for water accumulation. - Where feasible and without disturbance to historic fabric, improve localised drainage at the plinth and column interface to reduce standing water and prolonged saturation at the base of the marble columns. - Ensure that any adjustments to falls or drainage details are subtle, reversible, and do not visually alter the historic plinth profile or setting of the monument. Mortar and Joint Repairs - Carefully remove failing, inappropriate, or cementitious patch repairs at the column bases by hand, ensuring no damage to the adjacent marble or stone fabric. - Repoint open or defective joints using a lime-based mortar compatible in permeability, colour, and texture with the original bedding material, allowing the joint to function sacrificially and to facilitate evaporation rather than trapping moisture. - Mortar composition should be confirmed through visual analysis and, where necessary, sampling, to avoid introducing an overly hard or impermeable repair material. Capillary Moisture Reduction - Address capillary rise at the column bases by ensuring that joint materials and surrounding substrates remain vapour-permeable. - Avoid the introduction of sealants, waterproof coatings, or water-repellent treatments to the marble or adjacent stonework, as these risk exacerbating moisture retention and salt mobilisation. - Where historic detailing permits, consider the reinstatement or subtle enhancement of drip profiles or micro-drainage detailing to reduce water retention at the base junction. Cracking and Localised Marble Repairs - Monitor existing cracks at the interface between the marble columns and their bases to determine whether movement is active or historic and stable. - Where cracking is judged to be dormant, avoid structural intervention and instead focus on environmental mitigation (moisture reduction) to prevent progression. - Where small localised losses or open cracks exist, consider discreet lime-based or mineral repair mortars, toned to match the surrounding marble, strictly limited to areas of material loss rather than cosmetic surface filling. - Avoid resin injection or rigid epoxy repairs, which may introduce stress concentrations and inhibit future movement. Previous Repairs - Record all evidence of earlier repairs photographically and in drawings prior to intervention. - Where previous repairs are performing adequately and are not visually intrusive or technically damaging, retain them in situ.		



URGENCY

- Where repairs are failing or demonstrably contributing to decay (e.g. hard mortars causing edge spalling), their careful removal and replacement with compatible materials should be prioritised.

Maintenance and Monitoring

- Implement a cyclical inspection regime focusing on the condition of column bases, joint integrity, and evidence of recurrent saturation.
- Maintenance should prioritise early intervention at the level of joints and drainage rather than reactive stone repair, in order to minimise future material loss.

Medium Priority (Short- to Medium-Term Intervention Required)

The condition of the marble column bases and their junction with the plinth is considered to warrant medium-priority intervention, addressing moisture ingress, joint failure, and incompatible past repairs in the short to medium term to prevent progressive deterioration and avoid the need for more intrusive conservation works at a later date.

Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Pillar Bases	Limestone Bases - Polygonal in profile, tapering to a cylindrical profile to meet the bases of each column with a concave scotia.	The marble column bases are generally in good condition overall. Surface biological growth, including algae and lichen, is present in places, consistent with prolonged moisture exposure at ground level. No structural cracking has been observed. Minor chipping and surface wear are evident locally, likely resulting from long-term exposure and incidental impact at the lowest level of the monument. Evidence of previous repair works is present; however, these interventions are largely sympathetic in character, following the original profile and geometry of the column bases and do not currently give rise to concern.	
REMEDIAL MEASURES	- Undertake gentle cleaning of the column bases to reduce surface algae and lichen growth, using non-abrasive, low-pressure methods appropriate to polished marble, avoiding aggressive chemical treatments or mechanical action. - Ensure cleaning trials are carried out in inconspicuous areas to confirm that surface finish and patina are not adversely affected. - Review local ground conditions and moisture behaviour at the base of the monument to confirm that water is not being retained against the marble bases. Where feasible, minor adjustments to surface falls or drainage detailing should be implemented to reduce prolonged dampness at the base interface. - Retain existing sympathetic repair works where these are sound and performing adequately. No wholesale replacement or reworking of these repairs is recommended at this time. - Where localised chipping or small losses are present, no immediate intervention is required beyond monitoring, provided edges remain stable and no progressive deterioration is evident. - Implement a cyclical inspection and maintenance regime, focusing on cleanliness, moisture accumulation, and the condition of existing repairs, to allow early intervention should deterioration accelerate.		

URGENCY

Low Priority (Routine Maintenance / Monitoring)

The condition of the marble column bases is considered to be of low urgency, with remedial measures limited to routine cleaning, moisture awareness, and cyclical monitoring as part of a planned maintenance regime.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Pillar Capitals	8xno. decoratively carved sandstone foliate capitals each with their own individual design.	Condition varies across the set. The external faces of the capitals are generally in relatively good condition, retaining a high degree of their carved detail and original profile. In contrast, the internal faces of the capitals, orientated towards the fountain, exhibit significant and in some cases severe deterioration. The internal faces of many capitals display advanced surface loss and hollowing, with several showing near-complete erosion of carved detail and localised loss of the stone fabric itself. This pattern of decay is markedly inconsistent with the condition of the more exposed external faces and is not readily attributable to uniform weathering or gradual erosion alone. The scale and character of the material loss suggests the possibility of past mechanical damage or deliberate interference; however, no definitive evidence is available and the precise cause remains uncertain. The internal faces of the capitals exhibiting the most advanced deterioration also appear to be persistently saturated, indicating prolonged moisture retention. It is considered likely that sustained saturation, coupled with limited drying potential, has significantly increased the vulnerability of the sandstone to decay mechanisms, including accelerated surface breakdown and granular disintegration. The disparity in condition between the sheltered internal faces and the more exposed external faces suggests that restricted drying conditions may be a contributory factor, although this cannot be stated conclusively. Of the eight capitals, six exhibit significant loss of carved detail to their internal faces. One capital in particular shows extensive and likely irreversible loss of profile and ornament, such that the legibility of the original foliate carving has been substantially compromised. Remaining areas of intact carving on the affected capitals are now at heightened risk of further erosion if current moisture conditions persist. Further deterioration is evident in the form of carbon staining, together with minor vegetation growth and lichen colonisation, primarily confined to the internal faces of the lower capitals. These deposits are indicative of prolonged damp conditions and limited environmental drying. The presence of biological growth further contributes to surface breakdown and obscuration of carved detail in already weakened areas of stone. The condition of the lower capitals stands in marked contrast to that of the upper capitals, which remain in excellent condition, retaining crisp detailing, sharp profiles, and minimal evidence of moisture-related decay or biological colonisation. This disparity reinforces the conclusion that the deterioration affecting the lower capitals is not solely attributable to exposure or material quality, but is likely influenced by localised environmental factors, including moisture retention, reduced air movement, and limited drying potential at the lower level of the structure.	Images  

REMEDIAL MEASURES

- Prior to any intervention, undertake detailed photographic and drawn recording of each capital, noting that each exhibits a unique carved foliate design. Recording should capture surviving profiles, depth of carving, tool marks, and areas of loss, to ensure that the individuality and evidential value of each capital is fully documented.
- Undertake carefully controlled, low-impact cleaning to remove carbon staining, biological growth, and surface soiling from the capitals, with particular care to fragile and hollowed areas. Cleaning methods should be limited to soft-bristle brushing and low-pressure water misting; abrasive techniques and aggressive chemical treatments should be avoided.
- Investigate and, where feasible, address environmental factors contributing to persistent saturation, including limited air movement and restricted drying at the internal faces of the capitals. Interventions should prioritise improving drying potential rather than excluding moisture, avoiding impermeable coatings or water repellents which may exacerbate decay.
- Areas of severely weakened or friable sandstone should be assessed by a conservation stone specialist. Where loss of cohesion is evident, localised consolidation using compatible, vapour-permeable mineral consolidants may be considered, subject to trial areas and performance assessment.
- Re-carving or replication of lost foliate detail is not recommended, given the degree of loss, the uniqueness of each capital's carved design, and the risk of conjectural restoration. Intervention should focus on stabilisation and retention of surviving historic fabric rather than reinstatement of lost ornament.
- Where active decay threatens remaining carved detail, minimal, discreet plastic repairs may be considered solely to protect vulnerable edges or undercut areas, carefully profiled to support existing forms without attempting to recreate missing foliage.
- Implement a regular inspection and maintenance regime, with particular attention to moisture retention, surface biological growth, and progression of erosion at the internal faces of the capitals. Monitoring should inform future intervention and ensure that further loss of surviving detail is identified at an early stage.

URGENCY

Medium–High Priority (Early Intervention Recommended)

The carved sandstone foliate capitals are considered to be of medium–high urgency, with early intervention required to stabilise remaining carved detail, address persistent moisture retention, and prevent further irreversible loss of historic fabric.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
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Central Fountain	The fountain is formed around a central vertical assembly comprising three principal architectural components: 1. a limestone basin, 2. a pink granite column, 3. a decoratively carved sandstone foliate capital.	The pink granite column is in excellent condition overall, retaining its surface finish with no evidence of cracking or structural distress. One decorative spout is missing, likely as a result of vandalism or localised removal. Its absence has resulted in localised damage to the column fabric at the point of removal; however, this damage is limited in extent and does not compromise the structural integrity of the column.	
	The limestone basin is of chalice-like form, with a raised central core from which the pink granite column rises. An annular trough is formed around the central rise of the basin, originally intended to receive water delivered from decorative spouts associated with the column. The basin thus acts both as a receptacle and as the base element to the central column.	The annular limestone trough exhibits light staining, likely associated with its former use as a functioning fountain. The staining is predominantly pink in hue, an unusual characteristic, the precise cause of which remains unclear. It may relate to historic water chemistry, mineral deposition, or prolonged contact with metallic objects such as coins, although no definitive conclusion can be drawn. The staining is superficial in nature and does not presently indicate active deterioration of the limestone fabric.	
	Rising from the basin is the pink granite column, which forms the primary vertical element of the fountain. This is surmounted by a carved sandstone foliate capital, which in turn is fixed to a vertical fluted sandstone element forming part of the interior superstructure. This assembly contributes structurally and visually to the formation of the vaulted soffit to the interior of the monument, such that the column does not terminate directly at the vault but mediates through the capital and fluted sandstone component.	Overall, aside from the loss of the secondary decorative spout and associated localised damage, the central fountain assembly remains in a highly legible and well-preserved condition, clearly expressing its original form, hierarchy, and functional intent. It is noted that the fountain is no longer operational and that its original function as a water-dispensing feature has been made redundant.	
	The presence of internal pipework supplying water to the fountain is acknowledged; however, all associated services are concealed within the fabric of the monument and are not externally visible.		

Images



REMEDIAL MEASURES

- Retain the central pink granite column in its present state, as it is in excellent condition and does not require structural intervention. Any works should be limited to protection and monitoring only.
- Address the missing decorative spout by first recording the area of loss in detail. Consider discreet make-good to the point of removal using a compatible mineral repair mortar, limited strictly to stabilising the damaged area and visually recessing the exposed outlet. Full reinstatement of a replacement spout should not be undertaken unless supported by reliable documentary or physical evidence of the original detail and approved as part of a wider conservation strategy.
- Undertake gentle cleaning of the limestone basin and annular trough to reduce surface staining, using low-impact, non-abrasive methods appropriate to limestone. Cleaning should aim to reduce visual prominence of staining rather than achieve uniform appearance,

- recognising that some staining forms part of the historic use patina. The pink-toned staining within the trough should not be aggressively removed, given the uncertainty of its origin and its superficial nature. Trial cleaning should be undertaken to assess the extent to which staining can be moderated without loss of surface integrity.
- Given that the fountain function is redundant, ensure that all redundant pipework is securely capped, drained, or otherwise made safe internally to prevent accidental water ingress or future leakage, without disturbing historic fabric.
- Avoid reinstating water flow unless there is a clear conservation or interpretive rationale and a fully resolved design that mitigates the risks of moisture accumulation elsewhere within the monument.
- Implement a routine inspection and maintenance regime, focusing on:
 - the condition of the basin and trough surfaces,
 - the stability of the repaired spout area,
 - evidence of moisture retention or biological growth,
 to ensure that the central assembly remains stable and legible over time.

URGENCY

Low Priority

The central fountain assembly is considered to be of low urgency, with any remedial works confined to planned maintenance and minor fabric stabilisation rather than immediate intervention.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Sandstone Ceiling / Vault Soffit	The interior ceiling is formed by 8 no. sandstone slabs, arranged radially and spanning between the outer sandstone pointed arches and the central fluted sandstone vertical element above the fountain column. Each slab is radial in plan and exhibits a Y-shaped inner profile in cross-section, with gently curved arrises forming the descending soffit surfaces.	The sandstone ceiling is in very poor condition. Extensive surface spalling and granular disintegration are evident across multiple slabs, with pronounced delamination of the stone fabric. Numerous open cracks are visible on the exposed faces of the sandstone, some extending across significant portions of individual slabs, indicating advanced material failure rather than superficial weathering.	
	The slabs converge inward to meet the central sandstone flute, from which they splay outward to bear on the surrounding stone arches. Collectively, they form a radially articulated vaulted soffit, visually read as a fluted ceiling centred on the fountain. The soffit is largely unornamented, with decorative emphasis confined to the central fluted sandstone element rather than the field of the ceiling slabs.	The sandstone exhibits signs of being brittle and friable, with loss of cohesion evident in areas of layered separation. Localised erosion consistent with prolonged water exposure is present, together with significant staining, suggesting ongoing or historic moisture ingress from above. The pattern and extent of deterioration raise concerns regarding a potential source of water migration from the upper structure, possibly manifesting as slow seepage or intermittent trickling.	
	Structurally, each slab spans between the perimeter arches and the central support, relying on radial geometry, bearing, and mass rather than applied fixings for stability.	Given the degree of cracking, delamination, and material loss, the sandstone ceiling is considered to be at risk of localised failure, with the potential for stone fragments to detach. The condition of the slabs presents a clear safety concern, particularly due to their overhead position within an accessible interior space.	

REMEDIAL MEASURES

Immediate Safety and Risk Mitigation

- Restrict access to the interior of the monument as an interim measure, or introduce temporary overhead protection, pending further investigation and stabilisation, to mitigate the risk of falling stone.
- Commission an urgent inspection by a conservation-accredited structural engineer, experienced in historic masonry, to assess the residual load-bearing capacity of the sandstone slabs and identify areas at immediate risk of detachment.

Investigation and Diagnosis

- Undertake targeted investigation of moisture ingress from the upper structure, including inspection of the dome, superstructure joints, and any concealed interfaces above the ceiling slabs, to identify pathways for water penetration.
- Record all ceiling slabs individually, noting crack patterns, delamination planes, thickness, and bearing conditions at both the central fluted element and perimeter arches.
- Avoid invasive investigation unless strictly necessary; any opening-up should be minimal and fully justified.

Stone Stabilisation and Repair

- Where slabs remain largely intact but exhibit delamination, undertake localised stone consolidation using breathable, mineral-based consolidants, following trials to confirm compatibility with the sandstone.
- Carefully remove loose and imminently unstable stone fragments by hand under



- controlled conditions, retaining them where possible for potential reinstatement. Pinning or dowelling of cracked slabs may be considered where structurally justified, using stainless steel or non-ferrous fixings set in lime-based grout, fully concealed and reversible, subject to engineer approval.

Moisture Management

- Rake out and repoint defective joints above the ceiling slabs using lime-based mortars compatible in strength and permeability with the existing masonry.
- Do not introduce impermeable membranes, coatings, or resin-based systems, which would risk trapping moisture and accelerating decay.
- Improve drying potential within the interior space by ensuring adequate air movement and avoiding sealing of the enclosure.

Repair Philosophy

- Replacement of ceiling slabs should be considered only as a last resort and limited to areas where stone has lost structural integrity and cannot be safely retained.
- Any replacement stone should match the existing sandstone in geology, texture, colour, and bedding orientation, and replicate the Y-shaped profile precisely without embellishment.

URGENCY

High Priority (Immediate Intervention Required)

The sandstone ceiling is considered to be of high urgency, requiring immediate investigation and stabilisation to mitigate safety risk and prevent further irreversible loss of historic fabric.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Outer Sandstone Arches	8 no. outer pointed stone arches, arranged radially and springing upward from the sandstone foliate capitals of the lower colonnade. Each arch terminates externally in a gable-form profile, centrally ornamented with a singular hemispherical boss positioned at the apex of the arch face.	The outer sandstone arches are in generally good condition and remain structurally intact. No evidence of significant movement, deformation, or structural cracking has been observed.	
	The arches are constructed primarily in sandstone, with each arch formed from approximately five voussoirs, including a central keystone incorporating the hemispherical boss. The bosses are of contrasting stone and appear to alternate in material between grey limestone and red sandstone, contributing to the polychromatic character of the monument.	Surface soiling is present in the form of lichen and moss growth, together with atmospheric and water staining, particularly along areas subject to concentrated runoff. Minor vegetation growth is visible locally within some joints; however, this is limited in extent and does not currently appear to be causing mechanical disruption.	
	A decorative foliate carved trim is present along the upper edges of the gable faces, articulating the profile of each arch and visually linking the arches as a continuous encircling register. The arches bear onto the capitals below and support the upper sandstone superstructure above.	Evidence of earlier repair and repointing works is present. The joints appear to be lime-based and are generally in good order, suggesting that repointing may have been undertaken relatively recently, although this has not been independently confirmed.	
		Several of the hemispherical bosses have been displaced from their original position or exhibit loss of carved detail, resulting in localised visual disruption to the gable faces. The loss of detailing does not presently affect the structural performance of the arches but detracts from their decorative completeness.	
		Notable water runoff staining is evident at the junctions where the triangular gable sections abut one another. The pattern and extent of staining suggest that these junctions act as preferential water pathways, leading to repeated wetting of the sandstone surfaces below.	
		Overall, the arches remain stable and legible, with deterioration largely confined to surface effects, localised loss of decorative elements, and moisture-related staining.	



REMEDIAL MEASURES

- Undertake gentle cleaning of the arch faces to reduce lichen, moss, and surface soiling, using non-abrasive, low-pressure methods appropriate to sandstone. Cleaning should be conservative and avoid removal of historic surface patina.
- Remove minor vegetation growth from joints by hand, ensuring root systems are fully extracted to prevent recurrence.
- Inspect jointing closely during cleaning works. Where joints are found to be defective or open, undertake localised lime-based repointing, matched in composition, colour, and texture to the existing mortar.
- Investigate the gable junctions where concentrated water runoff is evident. Where feasible, introduce subtle detailing improvements (such as improved joint integrity or discreet lead or stone water-shedding details, subject to consent) to reduce repeated saturation of sandstone surfaces.
- Repair or re-fix displaced hemispherical bosses in situ, where surviving fabric allows, using compatible lime-based bedding mortars. Where detail loss has occurred, limited plastic repair may be considered to reinstate overall form, provided sufficient physical or comparative evidence exists.
- Avoid wholesale replacement of bosses unless original material is missing or beyond retention.
- Record all repairs photographically and in drawings to maintain a clear conservation record.

URGENCY

Low–Medium Priority (Planned Conservation Works)

The outer sandstone arches are considered to be of low to medium urgency, with remedial works appropriate as part of a planned programme of conservation and preventative maintenance rather than immediate intervention.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Upper Body of Monument- Mid Section	The upper body of the monument is octagonal in plan, its geometry generated from the points at which adjacent gable ends of the outer arches intersect below. The principal arrises of the octagon align with these intersections, creating a clear and legible transition between the arcade level and the superstructure above.	The upper body of the monument is generally in fairly good condition, retaining its overall form, profile, and legibility. Widespread algae and lichen growth is present, together with limited vegetation growth in isolated locations, indicating prolonged surface dampness.	
	This element is articulated into two vertical stages, constructed in five sandstone courses overall, with the mass tapering subtly as it rises.	Some mortar joints appear locally open or partially depleted, although no associated displacement or instability of the masonry has been observed.	
	The lower stage, comprising the first three courses, forms the transition from the arch level. The lowest course is wedge-shaped in plan, infilling the angled geometry between gable intersections. The second course continues this geometry in a broader band, reinforcing the octagonal profile. The third course incorporates the lower portion of the projecting limestone shields, with shield profiles cut directly into the sandstone mass, marking the base of the inscription zone. This course also incorporates a foliate-carved sandstone string course, forming a strong horizontal datum, shadow line, and drip detail between the lower and upper stages.	The areas of applied facing material surrounding the lettered limestone shields are extensive and appear to have been introduced to repair or re-form the shield profiles. These repairs are currently performing well, with no obvious signs of cracking, detachment, or erosion. The precise composition of the applied material could not be determined at the time of inspection; however, its cohesion and apparent durability may suggest a cementitious material. This cannot be confirmed without further investigation.	
	The upper stage, comprising the remaining two sandstone courses, accommodates the principal mass of the projecting limestone shields, which are positioned at the points of the octagonal profile, projecting outward from the intersection of adjacent tapering sandstone planes. The sandstone masonry at this level is otherwise plainly dressed, with alternating joint work providing rhythm and regularity.	Algal staining is extensive across this section of the monument. Despite this, the individual shield profiles remain sound and well-defined, and no active loss of stone fabric was observed at the time of inspection. While current deterioration appears limited, continued biological growth and moisture exposure may result in progressive decay over time if left unmanaged.	
	At each vertex of the octagon, a projecting limestone shield bears a single deeply carved letter, together spelling R O S S M O R E. The lettering is executed in alternating red and grey marble, inset within the limestone shields and contributing to the polychromatic character of the monument. The upper surfaces of the shields are formed with a later levelled treatment, likely mortar-based, reinforcing the horizontal datum and providing a degree of water shedding.	Evidence suggests that the original stone surfaces of the shields were mechanically keyed to receive the applied facing material, resulting in permanent marking of the historic fabric. This intervention, while visually indistinct from ground level, represents a loss of original surface integrity.	
	Together, the two stages and five courses form a coherent and ordered superstructure, in which geometry, inscription, and ornament are integrated directly into the masonry mass.	The foliate-carved sandstone string course remains in good condition, retaining its profile and detailing. Elsewhere, the sandstone exhibits light carbon staining and minor weathering consistent with its exposed urban environment; these effects are not currently considered to be of concern.	



REMEDIAL MEASURES

- Undertake gentle surface cleaning to reduce algae, lichen, and general biological growth using low-pressure, non-abrasive methods appropriate to sandstone and limestone. Cleaning should aim to reduce moisture retention and visual staining rather than achieve uniform appearance.
- Carefully remove minor vegetation growth from joints by hand, ensuring roots are fully extracted to minimise recurrence.
- Inspect all open or depleted mortar joints and carry out localised repointing where required using a compatible lime-based mortar, matched in colour, texture, and permeability to the existing mortar. Repointing should be limited strictly to defective joints and avoid unnecessary disturbance of sound fabric.
- Retain the existing applied facing material around the lettered shields where it is currently sound and performing adequately. No removal or wholesale replacement is recommended at this stage. Any future intervention should be informed by material analysis to confirm composition and long-term compatibility.
- Avoid introducing additional coatings, sealants, or surface treatments to the shields or sandstone courses, as these may interfere with moisture movement and accelerate decay.
- Monitor areas where original stone was mechanically keyed for previous repairs. No remedial action is required at present, but these locations should be recorded and reviewed during future inspections.
- Maintain the foliate-carved string course through routine inspection only; no active intervention is required at this time.
- Implement a cyclical maintenance regime, focusing on biological growth, joint condition, and moisture staining, to ensure early identification of any change in condition.

URGENCY

Low–Medium Priority (Planned Maintenance)

The upper body of the monument is considered to be of low to medium urgency, with remedial works appropriate as part of a planned programme of maintenance rather than immediate intervention.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Upper Body of Monument	Above the lettered shield course is an upper arcade of pointed arches, each formed with moulded sandstone surrounds and containing heraldic devices and inscribed plaques. The heraldic panels are set within pointed-arch recesses, recessed from the external face to create depth and shadow within the composition. The arcade is articulated by square-plan sandstone piers, positioned between each arch and projecting forward from the plane of the arcade to frame the heraldic recesses. Each pier rises from a square-profile decorative footing, extruded vertically from the octagonal base below, and continues upward as a plain square shaft. Approximately midway up each shaft is a foliate-carved band, above which the shaft continues to a foliate capital zone supporting the capping elements. The piers are terminated by pyramidal sandstone caps, carved with a faux semi-circular slate roof motif, evoking a stylised roof covering. Each pointed arch of the upper arcade is surmounted by a triangular-arched hood moulding, matching in profile and detailing those below. These hood mouldings are enriched with carved foliate ornament, with carved finials marking their apexes. The hood mouldings are formed internally with a trisegmented pointed-arch profile, creating a cowl-like expression over the finials. Bosses are positioned centrally on the gable-ended faces of the vertical heraldic panels, reinforcing the axial emphasis of each bay. Running along the edges of the octagonal form as it tapers upward towards the dome are projecting carved sandstone crockets, arranged in vertical groups of three to each arris. These foliate crockets stand proud of the surrounding stonework and accentuate the upward movement of the monument, visually guiding the transition from the octagonal upper body to the domed superstructure above. Together, this register forms a richly articulated zone in which heraldic imagery, vertical pier elements, Gothic arch forms, and applied foliate ornament are tightly integrated into the overall architectural composition.	By and large, the external faces of this register are in relatively good condition, exhibiting similar patterns of biological growth, including lichen and light vegetation, as noted elsewhere on the monument. Localised atmospheric and water-related staining is evident. The masonry generally appears structurally sound, with no indications of significant movement or widespread instability. Minor cracking is present but does not currently give rise to concern. The principal and most significant area of deterioration within this section is confined to the heraldic plaques set within the pointed-arch recesses. In almost all instances, the carved detail of the plaques has been almost entirely lost, to an extent that is beyond meaningful conservation or recovery. The stone exhibits advanced delamination, with an estimated loss of approximately 90% of the original carved surface. In several locations, deterioration has progressed to the formation of open voids within the stone fabric, raising concern that rainwater may be collecting within these cavities and accelerating ongoing decay. The condition of the plaques indicates that deterioration is active, rather than historic or dormant. The stone comprising the plaques is light grey in appearance, contrasting markedly with the surrounding sandstone arches and piers, which remain in good condition. This disparity suggests that the plaques may be either of a different stone type or have been subjected to a surface coating or applied treatment at some point in their history. The presence of a surface coating cannot be confirmed; however, its potential effectiveness is now questionable given the advanced state of decay of the underlying stone. Areas of deep red staining are present on some plaques, suggesting moisture migration through or behind the surface layer, with subsequent leaching or mobilisation of pigments or minerals. This staining further supports the conclusion that moisture retention at this level is contributing significantly to ongoing fabric loss. By contrast, the surrounding pointed arches, moulded surrounds, piers, hood mouldings, finials, bosses, and crockets remain in generally good condition, with their deterioration limited to surface soiling, biological growth, and minor weathering.	Images  

Immediate Risk Management and Investigation

- Undertake prompt detailed recording of each heraldic plaque, including high-resolution photography and measured notes, to capture remaining form, voids, and evidence of surface treatments prior to further loss.
- Engage a conservation stone specialist to assess the plaques specifically, distinct from the surrounding sandstone arches and piers, given the advanced and atypical nature of deterioration at this level.

Moisture and Decay Control

- Investigate potential water ingress pathways at and above the plaque level, including junctions at hood mouldings, crocketed arrises, and upper masonry interfaces, to identify sources of moisture contributing to active decay.
- Where feasible, introduce discreet water-shedding and moisture-management measures above the plaque level, ensuring interventions are minimal, reversible, and do not alter the architectural character of the monument.

Plaque Stabilisation

- Remove loose, delaminating, and imminently unstable stone fragments from the plaques by hand under controlled conditions, retaining fragments where possible for record or potential future reference.
- Undertake localised consolidation of friable stone using breathable, mineral-based consolidants, subject to trials and performance testing, to arrest further material loss where any cohesive fabric remains.
- Avoid aggressive cleaning or mechanical intervention, which would further compromise already fragile stone surfaces.

Surface Treatments

- Do not apply additional coatings, sealants, or water repellents to the plaques, as these may further inhibit drying and accelerate decay.
- Where existing applied surface layers are present and demonstrably trapping moisture, their careful reduction or removal may be considered on a trial basis only, subject to specialist advice and approval.

Loss of Detail

- Given the extent of irreversible loss, re-carving or conjectural restoration of heraldic detail is not recommended. Intervention should focus on stabilisation, moisture reduction, and retention of surviving fabric rather than visual reconstruction.
- Any infill or plastic repair should be strictly limited to preventing water ingress into voids and should remain visually recessive.

Associated Fabric

- Maintain the surrounding arches, piers, hood mouldings, finials, bosses, and crockets through routine cleaning and maintenance only, as these elements remain sound.

High Priority (Immediate Intervention Required)

The heraldic plaques within the upper arcade are considered to be of high urgency, requiring immediate specialist investigation and stabilisation to arrest ongoing decay and prevent further irreversible loss of historic fabric.



Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class
Pinnacle	The monument is crowned by a sandstone pinnacle, rising from a small open arcade formed by a ring of slender granite columns arranged radially beneath it. These columns support a series of pointed arches, creating a visually permeable transition between the octagonal body below and the terminal element above.	The pinnacle and upper colonnade are generally in very good condition, with no evidence of structural instability or significant material degradation. Moderate surface staining is evident to some elements, consistent with long-term exposure at this elevated level.	
	Each pointed arch is heavily enriched with foliate carving, contrasting deliberately with the plainly treated sandstone pinnacle, which relies on its form and mass rather than applied ornament. The arches are internally tapered, reinforcing the upward thrust of the composition and visually directing focus toward the apex of the monument.	Evidence of earlier localised repairs to a small number of the granite columns has been noted. These repairs do not appear to be performing poorly and do not currently give rise to concern. No cracking, displacement, or loss of fabric of significance has been observed, and the architectural elements remain well aligned and legible.	
	The granite columns are finished with carved foliate capitals, which transition into the gable-ended decorative profiles expressed along the upper edge of the octagonal register below, maintaining continuity of ornament and geometry between the architectural stages.	Overall, this element of the monument is well preserved, with only minor surface weathering and staining apparent at the time of inspection.	
	The bases of the granite columns are formed with circular-profile footings, each projecting slightly beyond the edge of the supporting masonry beneath, clearly articulating the junction between the upper colonnade and the structure below.		
	A central stainless steel structural tie is present within the assembly, extending vertically through the core of the colonnade. This is understood to function as a stabilising restraint, securing the sandstone pinnacle back to the underlying structure. Although a later intervention, it is discreetly accommodated and does not detract from the overall architectural legibility of the monument.		
REMEDIAL MEASURES		- Retain the sandstone pinnacle and granite upper colonnade in their current state, as the elements are generally sound and do not require structural intervention. - Undertake light, non-abrasive cleaning to reduce moderate surface staining where visually intrusive, using methods appropriate to sandstone and granite. Cleaning should be conservative and trialled in inconspicuous locations. - Inspect the areas of earlier repairs to the granite columns to confirm continued stability and compatibility. No removal or alteration of these repairs is recommended at present, provided they remain sound. - Monitor the central stainless steel structural tie to ensure it remains secure, free from corrosion-related staining, and does not introduce localised stress or moisture pathways. No alteration is required at this stage. - Include the pinnacle and upper colonnade within the monument's routine cyclical inspection and maintenance regime, with particular attention to joint integrity, surface weathering, and early signs of movement or cracking.	
URGENCY		Low Priority (Routine Maintenance) The sandstone pinnacle and granite upper colonnade are considered to be of low urgency, with remedial measures limited to routine maintenance and ongoing monitoring rather than immediate intervention.	



3 SUMMARY

The Rossmore Monument remains, in overall terms, a highly legible and largely intact Victorian civic structure, retaining the majority of its architectural form, material hierarchy, and decorative intent. The monument continues to read clearly within its urban setting and, despite localised areas of severe deterioration, much of its stone fabric remains stable and well preserved.

Condition across the monument is variable, with a clear distinction between elements that are generally sound and those experiencing advanced or active decay, largely associated with moisture retention and limited drying potential.

The most critical condition issue affects the internal sandstone ceiling / vaulted soffit, where severe spalling, delamination, cracking, and material disintegration are present. The deterioration at this level is active, presents a clear safety concern, and is likely driven by persistent moisture ingress from the superstructure above. Immediate investigation and stabilisation are required.

Significant deterioration is also present to the heraldic plaques within the upper arcade, where carved detail has been almost entirely lost in nearly all instances. These elements exhibit advanced delamination, void formation, and evidence of ongoing moisture-related decay. While adjacent arches, piers, and associated ornament remain in good condition, the plaques represent a critically vulnerable component of the monument requiring urgent specialist intervention to arrest further loss.

The lower internal capitals exhibit medium–high levels of deterioration, particularly to their sheltered internal faces. Substantial loss of carved detail has occurred, likely influenced by prolonged saturation and restricted drying. Although not currently structurally compromised, remaining historic fabric at this level is at risk of further erosion if environmental conditions persist.

By contrast, the upper body of the monument, including the sandstone courses, projecting lettered shields, and foliate string course, is generally in fair to good condition. Deterioration at this level is predominantly superficial, consisting of biological growth, staining, and localised mortar loss. Existing repair interventions appear to be performing adequately at present.

The outer arches, upper arcade piers, hood mouldings, finials, crockets, bosses, and the pinnacle with its upper granite colonnade are all in generally good to very good condition, with only minor weathering, staining, and biological growth evident. These elements do not presently give rise to structural or safety concerns and are appropriate for planned maintenance rather than urgent intervention.

The central fountain assembly, while no longer functional, remains structurally sound and well preserved. Aside from localised damage associated with the loss of a decorative spout and historic staining to the basin, this element is of low concern.

Overall, the monument’s condition reflects a pattern common to complex historic stone structures: localized severe decay within sheltered or moisture-retentive zones, contrasted with broader areas of stable, well-performing masonry. Future conservation efforts should prioritise safety, moisture management, and stabilisation of vulnerable fabric, while maintaining a programme of routine maintenance and monitoring for the remainder of the structure.

Element	Description	Condition Notes	Symptom Class	Key Issues Identified	Urgency Class
Internal Sandstone Ceiling / Vault Soffit	Radial sandstone ceiling slabs spanning between outer arches and central structure	Very poor condition		Severe spalling, delamination, open cracking, brittle stone, active moisture ingress, risk of falling material	High
Heraldic Plaques (Upper Arcade)	Recessed heraldic plaques within pointed arches	Very poor condition		Near-total loss of carved detail, advanced delamination, void formation, suspected moisture entrapment, active decay	High
Lower Internal Capitals	Carved sandstone foliate capitals to internal colonnade	Poor to fair condition		Extensive loss of detail to sheltered faces, saturation, biological growth, restricted drying	Medium–High
Upper Body (Sandstone Courses & Lettered Shields)	Five-course octagonal superstructure with projecting limestone shields	Fair to good condition		Algae and lichen growth, staining, localised joint loss, historic repairs of uncertain composition	Low–Medium
Outer Sandstone Arches	Lower pointed arches with gable faces and hemispherical bosses	Good condition		Biological growth, staining, displaced or degraded bosses, localised runoff staining	Low–Medium
Upper Arcade Piers, Hood Mouldings, Finials & Crockets	Square-plan piers, heraldic surrounds, carved ornament	Good condition		Surface soiling, minor cracking, biological growth, localised staining	Low–Medium
Pinnacle & Upper Colonnade	Sandstone pinnacle with granite column arcade	Very good condition		Moderate staining, evidence of historic repairs	Low
Central Fountain Assembly	Limestone basin, pink granite column, sandstone capital	Very good condition (non-functional)		Loss of decorative spout, historic staining, redundant pipework	Low
Plinth and Lower Bases	Stepped octagonal stone plinth and column bases	Good condition		Saturation at interfaces, grout loss, minor cracking	Medium