

Case Study

Downside Abbey

Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Bath

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&Co.

Craftsmen in the
Conservation of
Historic Buildings

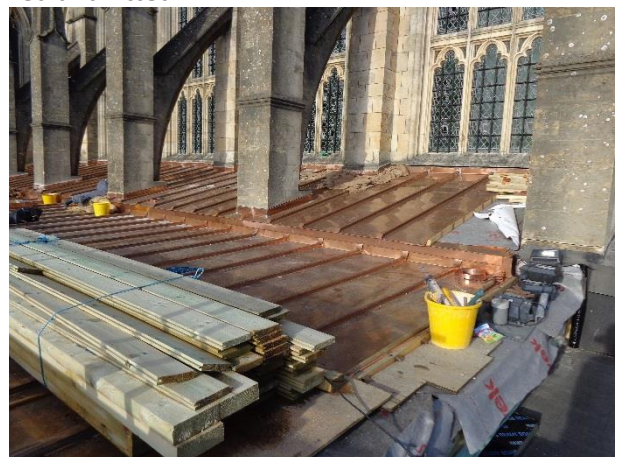
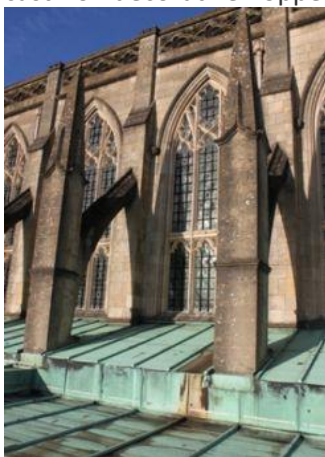
Extensive restoration of the Downside Abbey's metal church roofs.

A masterpiece of the Gothic Revival, Downside Abbey was described by Pevsner as "the most splendid demonstration of the renaissance of Roman Catholicism in England". In preparation for the Abbey's bicentenary we were commissioned to replace the pitched copper, lead and slate tile roofs of the Grade I listed Abbey Church, restoring them to their former glory. In addition, a fine stained glass windows was repaired and masonry cleaned. The Abbey is home to a Benedictine monastery and public school.



Before and after the copper pitched roofs, masonry and window repairs

Roof coverings were removed, the vaults cleared carefully so as not to damage the thin stone vaulting, and new treated softwood battens fixed. Hexagonal pyramid roofs of the Chapels of Sacred Heart, St Vedast, and St Joseph were recovered in copper, as were the gentle sloping roofs of the North and South Ambulatories and associated chapels. The lead roof of the Lady Chapel was repaired and thermally insulated with mineral wool. The Westmoreland Slate roof of the sacristies were retiled. New copper gutters and Alumasc rainwater outlets were fitted. Where possible hopper heads and pipes were repaired but a number of new cast iron decorative hoppers and pipes were commissioned and fitted.



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Slate roofs were repaired and reslated with original and new slates and finished with lead guttering.



Stonework in the vaulting and crypt and some areas of the main walls were cleaned and restored. Masonry was raked out, repointed and cleaned. A fire-barrier layer was also fitted. Internal walkways, steps, balustrades, inspection hatches were installed to improve access.



During the works, stained glass windows were removed and restored with new casements, replacement glass sections and leading and then reinstalled.



Downside Abbey Restored

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