

Case Study

Old Blue School

Thatcham

Roof, Masonry and Render Repair to a Grade I listed Chapel.



The Old Bluecoat School is an interesting Grade I listed building of mixed materials with origins in the 14th Century. National Trust note it as “One of the most important buildings in the area and of National importance”. In 2014 Ellis and Co completed a programme of external refurbishment. This included repairing roof timbers, re-tiling and insulating the roof, undertaking masonry repairs, re-rendering and lime-washing external walls, and fitting new leaded light windows. Given the historic significance of this wonderful small building we worked closely with English Heritage, West Berkshire Planning Department, and members of the Conservation Trust in deciding how best to restore this beautiful chapel.

To repair the roof we removed all of the clay tiles, sorting and cleaning those suitable for reuse. Then we could assess the state of the historic timbers. These original oak beams were sensitively repaired with new oak inserts and steel supports inserted discretely so as not to be visible to visitors. The roof was lined with insulating materials and the roof retiled with original tiles and interspersed with new tiles chosen to blend with the originals.

The chapel is constructed from a wonderful mix of flint, brickwork and stonework. Our masons repaired some of the stonework tracery in the windows and coping stones. We were able to conserve some of the render on one elevation and re-rendered the rest of the exterior. On three elevations we repaired stone work and rendered the walls anew. Many samples were prepared and the final lime-wash pigmented with a mix of Yellow Ochre, Yellow Ochre Tint, and Raw Umber restored the exterior.

A series of six plastic glazed windows were removed and replaced with new conservation grade leaded-light windows. Secondary glazing was installed with acoustic seals to protect the chapel from traffic noise as the chapel is used to host community events and concerts.