

LANSDOWN



CRESCENT

Press Statement – Finials Replacement Project Complete Embargoed until 1230 pm on Sunday 16th Oct 16.

Finials are the pointy spears, often highly decorated, on the top of metal railings. More than 1000 have been missing from the railings of beautiful Lansdown Crescent, in Georgian Bath, for the last 70 years, having been sawn off in WWII to aid the war effort.

This type of restoration can usually be tackled only as an overall project, with group planning approval and with funding assistance, so, in 2012, the Lansdown Crescent Association (LCA) investigated. The World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund provided seed corn funding, and Rhys Brookes became the architect. Listed Building consent was granted in May 2013, including an approved method of replacement, and all affected owners were contacted (both to seek their agreement and to warn that a contribution from owners would be needed). Ex-LCA Chairman, Beccy Derry-Evans, took on project management.

Blacksmiths were contacted, including The Chapel Forge, led by Demian Bellaart, who had undertaken the Association's successful handrail project. Funding sources were pursued, with increasingly disappointing results. Three frustrating years passed before a funding route was found, approved at the Association's AGM in Feb 2016, which allowed the project to proceed (helped by a leading article in The Times on 26th March 2016). Ultimately, all affected owners agreed to take part, and thus, when completed, all missing finials will have been replaced. The principal benefactor was Dr Marianna Clark, a local resident, with significant contributions from the owners, the Ward Councillors' Initiative Funds and the Association.

The Chapel Forge undertook the work and the project was "declared complete" by The Mayor of Bath, Cllr Paul Crossley, at a celebration on 16th Oct 2016, in Lansdown Crescent, where Mr Mayor referred to this as a great example of community initiative, responsibility and awareness of our World Heritage City status. He congratulated the Association for its perseverance in bringing this about and especially thanked Beccy Derry- Evans for her vision and persistence, without which this would never have happened. Robin Kerr, Chairman, thanked all those who had helped to fund it, and Beccy added "a big thank you to everyone who made it possible to execute and complete the project, which in my opinion, and I hope those of everyone else, has made a tremendous difference to how the Crescent now looks. I feel privileged to have been part of such an achievement."

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Note to editors: This Statement is embargoed until 1230 pm on Sunday 16th Oct 16. There will be an opportunity for photographs outside 17 Lansdown Crescent at that time, and archive pictures, showing the progress of finial replacement work, are available. The LCA website at www.lansdown-crescent.org.uk/home.shtml has a wealth of detail about this project and about the wider work of the Association.