

25th January 2019

H M S Warrior

Treatment for Stern carvings

Extent of Carvings

The carvings are located around the stern of the vessel, see **Plates 1-2**. There are:

18 iris panels, Starboard 1-4, Port 1-4, Starboard Aft 1-5 including that on the corner, Port Aft 1-5 including that on the corner.

2 sea dragons, starboard and port

Stern Rope carving **Plates 17-19**

Rose and starburst boss **Plates 20-23**

They have been removed from the ship and are in in an adjacent store.

Description

These carvings were originally made circa 1987 and are carved in Quebec yellow Pine. For dimensions for the sea dragons see **REPAIRS 1** and for dimensions for the iris panels, see **REPAIRS 3**.

Items to include in Tender have an item number prefix in red.

General Strategy

The starboard sea dragon and iris panels Stb 3, Stb 4 and Stb Aft 1 have all suffered decay and instead of conservation with consolidants, it has been agreed that all decay will be cut out and the timber replaced and carved new. The reason for this can be shown by the only decay found (on any of the carving) is all on the carvings on the starboard side which is the most exposed. It is not felt appropriate to use resins whose interface with untreated timber may provide a location for further decay in the future.

It will be seen from **Plates 1-2** that the carvings are fitted at an angle, those on the stern are facing downwards and those on each side are tipped slightly backwards. Added to the prevalence of decay on the weather side of the ship, it is likely that the decay is also linked to the profile of the carving where the water pools and cannot escape. A **1.01** task should be undertaken for taking the angle of inclination of the ship sides where the carvings are fitted and setting up both the sea dragons and the iris panels at these angles to locate places where the water might be trapped or has been trapped. Only the carvings where water trapping can be seen to have caused damage should then be filled to ensure water runoff. Depending on the depth of fill, these could be made good with either a resin fill Dry Fix followed by Dry Flex resin or timber.

Another problem are the splits where the section of carving is very thin and the splits are where there is short grain. Do not try to close these joints up but fill them as they are. Note for example iris panel Port 4 on graphic **REPAIRS 4**.

Schedule of Timber Repairs

1.02 Collection

1.03 Wrap all carvings and collect carvings from Store

Carry out repairs as specified on repair sheets:

1.04 Starboard sea dragon, see REPAIRS 1

1.05 Port sea dragon, see REPAIRS 2

1.06 Iris Starboard 3, 4 and Aft 1, see REPAIRS 3

1.07 Iris Port 4 and 1 Aft, see REPAIRS 4

1.08 Carve new section of rope, see Plates 18-19

Ensure all new laminations are perfectly prepared and bonded with waterproof glue.

1.09 The panels have been sealed against the side of the ship with a rubbery/silicone filler, allow for removing this wherever found.

Gilding

The carving was gilded in 1987 and again approximately 20 years ago. The gilding is oil gilding. The carving includes a part lower background painted matt black.

General Strategy

Although much of the gilding is in good condition, it has been decided to regild all the carving. This ensures a homogeneous finish and complete layers of preparation and gilding with no edges of old and new gilding.

Schedule of work

Both sea dragons

All 18 iris panels

The entire rope carving

Condition

Much of the gilding appears to be in good condition with little loss or wear to the gold. However, others pieces exhibit wear and loss of gold on the edges of the carving. This may be caused by solar gain on the thin edges, leading to cupping of the paint and size layers which encouraged retention of moisture and eventually penetration leading to losses of the undercoats and the gilding. This is a particular problem on the 18 Iris pieces where the gold is lifting along the top edges of the carving. See photograph **001 18 12 18_0014 Stb 1**

In other areas the moisture has collected on the surface and has gradually penetrated beneath the gold, resulting in lifting and detaching of the layers of paint and gold. There are several wide sections where the gold is worn, perhaps by weather and salt water. See **003 18 12 18_0010 Stb 3**

Recommendations for Treatment

As some sections of the carving show opening and splits, with lifting and loss of the gold, this will require filling, followed by a base coat of primer and undercoat, before re-gilding.

Treatment

2.01 The timber background to the carving is painted a matt black and should be rubbed down and repainted with matt black. It is important to use durable oil paint, suitable for exterior use. Confer with client as to whether screw holes for fixing should be filled and redrilled or left. Any other losses should be filled before painting.

2.02 Gilded Components

1. Where there are losses and the surface appears unstable, all loose gilding should be removed and the areas filled.
2. Where the exposed timber beneath the removed gilding is found to sound, build up in paint layers to the level of the surrounding gilding using oil based primer then a second coat of ochre, oil based undercoat.
3. Where the timber is found to be slightly soft after removing loose gilding, consolidate with a flexible consolidant Dry Fix, a low viscosity resin.
4. Build up the surface with paint layers as described in Item 2 above.
5. Clean gently to remove dirt and salt deposits using distilled water and soft soap on cotton wool swabs. Finally wipe again gently with distilled water to remove dirt and soap residue. Allow to dry before gilding.
6. Check all upward facing surfaces of the carving and background to the carving to ensure that all end grain is totally protected with complete layers of paint.

2.03 Oil Gilding

Re-gilding

1. Recommend 12 hour oil size.
2. Gold leaf, 24 carat loose leaf to be laid over the entire surface of the carving.

New Carving

Rose and starburst boss, see **Plates 20-23**

3.01 Allow for getting out block of Quebec Yellow pine to carve new boss.

3.02 Carve new boss

3.03 Paint as directed

Delivery

4.01 On completion, wrap all carvings and deliver carvings back to site

After Fixing

5.01 Allow action for filling all screws after fixing, including retouching painting and gilding damaged in the course of fixing.