



CORBEL

HALSWELL ROTUNDA



Restoration of Rotunda, including recreating the dome in green oak, adding ventilation and lead covering; lathing and plastering of roof structure with traditional lime putty; entrance gates and circular glass eye.

Location: Goathurst, Bridgwater, Somerset

Client: Private client



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The Rotunda, also known locally as Lady Busby's Temple, had fallen into disrepair. Several failed attempts to reinstate its semi-spherical roof structure had come and gone, and all that remained were the six Bath Stone pillars topped by the circular ring beam with decorative frieze.

During the 1970s a temporary scaffold with over-roof had been erected in an attempt to slow any further deterioration.

In 2015 Corbel was appointed by the new owner of Halswell House to bring the Rotunda back to its former glory, aided only by a few fragments of the original roof that were found rotting away in the grounds. Using these original curved rafters we were able to determine almost exactly the original profile of the dome and set about constructing it in green oak. Ventilation was added at eaves level to allow circulation through the new structure, and a double layer of marine ply was used to form the sarking to take the new lead covering. Segments of Code 8 sand cast lead were then fitted to the dome with a standing seam detail interlocking them all together.

Internally the underside of the roof structure was lathed and plastered using traditional lime putty to complete a perfect semi-spherical inverted dome.

Even more interestingly, the Rotunda sits on top of an ice house with the entrance being in the side of the mound it stands on. A new wrought iron gate and railings were installed at the entrance along with a new floor structure internally.

To add some 21st century technology, a circular structural glass eye was fitted into the paving below the Rotunda that can be lit from below. This allows the structure to truly be the eye-catcher that it was intended to be, even during the hours of darkness.