

October 17, 2022



Stonemasons preparing to remove the damaged Wayside Cross from the Garden

Damage to the Wayside Cross Discovered

In our [previous blog post](#) about the stonework conservation in the Bishop's Garden, it was mentioned that the Wayside Cross had sustained damage which was likely the result of vandalism. The base of the cross had a significant crack which necessitated temporary stabilization.





Stone Masons to the Rescue

The cross has now been removed from the Garden for repairs. The Cathedral's stone mason, along with the stone carvers crew that is working to repair earthquake damage done to the Cathedral in 2011, constructed a lifting scaffold in order to remove the cross from its base. As the cross was lifted, the base crumbled and revealed a rusted steel rod.





A Medieval Artifact on a Base of Local Stone

The medallion (the round top of the cross) is the only portion of the Wayside Cross that dates to Medieval times. The vertical shaft (that supports the medallion) was formed of [Aquia Creek Sandstone](#). Aquia stone originated from a quarry about 40 miles south of Washington, D.C., in Stafford County, Va. This type of stone was used in the construction of many of D.C.'s most famous landmarks, including the White House and the U.S. Capitol building. It is also used throughout the Bishop's Garden and is the material that forms the [Pilgrim Steps](#).



The medieval Stone Medallion in the stone masons' workshop

Crafting a New Column Shaft from An Old Piece of Stone

The three-foot-tall stone shaft is cracked at both ends and cannot be salvaged. Fortunately, the stone mason located an old Aquia stone stair tread in the Cathedral's facilities building and moved it to the shop where they were able to create a sound replacement shaft that matches the appearance of the original. The rusted steel rod will be removed from the base and be replaced by a new stainless steel rod, the type being used for the [Cathedral earthquake repairs](#). The medallion will be anchored to the shaft with the same type of rod.

When the masons have completed the work, the newly stabilized [Wayside Cross](#) will return to its place in the Bishop's Garden.

UPDATE: The cross was reinstalled in the Bishop's Garden in November 2022.



The Wayside Cross in the Garden prior to damage