



Limestone Sphinxes

BILTMORE ESTATE, ASHEVILLE, NC

As part of multi-year conservation work with Biltmore Estate, we were contracted to conserve the French limestone sphinxes and Vicenza stone figures installed throughout the formal gardens. The sphinxes sit atop piers that flank the entrance drive and the limestone figures decorate the nearby fountain garden. Each is representative of the garden statuary that was created to grace European estates and was collected by Americans for their homes during the Gilded Age.

Even the mild North Carolina mountain climate caused deterioration of these fragile stone sculptures. Previous repairs using iron pins and inset dutchman repairs caused substantial deterioration and increased losses on the four sphinxes, which were literally fragmenting when inspected. Limbs and tails were missing and other elements had been lost from these fragile carvings. Substantial biological growth, including moss and lichen colonies, as well as typical green and black biota, masked all of the sculptural features.

Our conservators worked with Biltmore Estate's conservation staff to clean and restore the sculptures. Failed mortar and fills were removed. All surfaces were cleaned using appropriate detergents and biocides. Biological growth was also removed by careful picking with wood skewers. Failed fills were repaired or recreated with custom color-matched mortar. Cracks were filled with lime injection grouts. A treatment report with recommendations for follow up treatment was submitted upon completion of the work.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/limestone-sphinxes/>

SERVICES PERFORMED

Conservation Treatments



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