

**Conservation Method Statement based on Preliminary Onsite Assessment
of the Silverdale Mining Tribute Monument's Condition**

Method Statement

In line with the specifications of the tender invitation, we would intend to carry out thorough and comprehensive conservation in order to preserve the sculpture into the future as follows:

We feel it necessary to remove the figure, the wagon, the railway line and sleeper brackets from the plinth, this is so that we can access and remove the old rotten sleepers and replace them, fully access the track bed for treatment and comprehensively treat the aforementioned elements off site.

The steps involved in this would be removing the wagon side panels to access the interior with a view to detaching the figure's hand from the wagon and disconnecting the wagon from the bed (it may be necessary to cut the rods which secure the wagon to the bed, but they would be replaced at a later stage). We would also assess the stability of the cement top of the wagon.

We would need to disconnect the figures feet from the track bed, which may cause some localised disruption to the ballast; this can be rectified at a later stage.

We would use the services of RDM transport, who are a recognised and trusted art transporter and installer, dealing specifically with larger (monumental sized) objects (further details can be provided). They would attend on site to meet our team, with a suitable truck with the Hiab crane system in order to lift the components free. RDM will possibly occupy one lane of one side road but it is also feasible to park next to the

sculpture. They will protect the grassed areas using grass boards and it appears that the nearby trees will not disrupt any lifting activity.

With the above components now removed we will remain on site to remove the old rotten sleepers and prepare and carry out work to the plinth and track bed. We would use the DOFF cleaning system to remove organic growth, dirt, loose flaking paint and other debris from the brickwork plinth and concrete top and track bed. DOFF is an adjustable high temperature and pressure controllable water cleaning method used widely for stonework treatment. This will prepare the track bed for re-painting prior to insertion of the new sleepers and any areas requiring re-pointing. We will clean off leaching salts from the brickwork as far as possible, but these are likely to re-occur due to moisture moving through the bricks.

At this stage we will also clean and hot wax (see description below) the bronze plaques on the plinth walls.

If required we will also carry out minor re-pointing to the plinth and concrete.

We intend this phase of the work to take approximately 3-4 days.

With the removed components back in the P&S studio, we would dismantle all elements down to their component parts. The wagon appears to be constructed of bronze sheets bolted onto an angle iron structure. Once the undercarriage is separated from the main body of the wagon we would remove the heavily corroded sheet metal base and deteriorated fibreglass (it is possible that the fibreglass is a previous repair) and replace with galvanised steel or other appropriate sheet metal. We would investigate better drainage and ventilation options to increase the longevity of these components.

It is not known exactly how the concrete 'coal' is attached to the top of the wagon but this would be removed, cleaned of plant matter and re-painted in a suitable colour and finish as agreed with the client. Care will be taken to preserve the integrity and completeness of this component as its structure/support is unknown.

Where the fixings or components are too deteriorated or missing, we will fabricate replacements to match the original design, eg four missing bronze bolts on the wagon sides.

The rails are sound as are the steel sleeper plates and associated fixings.

Any Steel or Iron elements not to be replaced will be Media blasted with appropriate material for steel and then painted with a suitable paint system for long term outdoor display, including Zinc Phosphate priming, to give a uniform finish.

The bronze elements of the wagon and the figure itself will be hot waxed (hot waxing involves gently heating the metal and applying the wax to allow it to fully and evenly cover the surface) with Microcrystalline wax (tinted as appropriate). This will restore the intended surface coloration giving an attractive appearance and protection from the elements.

Once all of the wagon elements have been treated it will be re-assembled.

This phase of the work will be carried out in approximately 6-8 weeks.

Once studio work is completed, our relevant conservators will re-attend on site in Silverdale and re-paint the track bed and ballast with appropriate masonry paint (black). We did not see any signs of bitumen when we carried out our survey but it appears that paint was originally used.

We will supply and fit pre-treated (to reduce rate of deterioration) timber railway sleepers. These will not be painted as moisture can be trapped under the paint longer term and rot the wood. We will investigate the possibility of adding spacers between the sleepers and the concrete bed to allow air circulation and better drainage to prevent moisture retention and subsequent rotting.

RDM transport will then return with all of the other components which will be reassembled on the plinth as they were originally. The wagon will be secured into place with a similar method to the original but with corrosion resistant rods. The figure will be secured to the wagon via the hands and to the track bed via the feet and the ballast in this area will be made good.

This final phase of work will take approximately 4-5 days.

At this stage we will make good any snagging concerns. During the conservation process we will be dutiful in keeping the area clear of debris such as loose paint flakes etc. We will use our scaffold for access (we have PASMA training for this). Health and safety procedures will be followed at all times and RAMS and COSHH information will be available on request.

We will respect surroundings and safeguard trees and grass, to prevent any damage.

N.B. Whilst the sculpture is removed there is an opportunity for the restoration of the lights to be investigated. We can replace bulbs and restore the light fittings but would wish to liaise with the council on accessing the source of power and turning this on and off. We would wish to work with a qualified electrician (to be supplied by the council). As the lighting infrastructure is already in place in theory making it work again should be possible.

From our initial visit we noted that the pavement is disrupted by tree roots but the plinth looked unaffected. This can be further assessed upon removal of the sculpture from the plinth.