

HEMPYARD HISTORIC BRIDGE



CLIENT: Suffolk County Council

LOCATION: Ixworth, Suffolk

MAIN CONTRACTOR: Milestone Group

COMPLETED: November 2024

Historic building conservation, structural repair and strengthening

Hempyard Bridge is a three span historic masonry arch structure carrying a Public Right of Way (Bridleway) over the Black Bourn River just to the West of Ixworth. The central span is 4m, with 1.4m span side spans.

The bridge has a clear width between parapets of 4.2m at the middle of the bridge and increases towards the banks due to the plan splay of the bridge.

The challenge

The bridge has been previously described as being in very poor condition, and in June 2016 a temporary timber walkway was installed as an interim measure to relieve loading effects on the structure, and to enable the bridge to remain open for pedestrian and equestrian use pending major refurbishment/strengthening or reconstruction.



- ✔ Wing wall bulging
- ✔ Scour under foundation
- ✔ Masonry loss up to two bricks thick
- ✔ Roots embedded in the brickwork
- ✔ Sizable cracks throughout the arches and various joints
- ✔ Heavily spalled brickwork
- ✔ Damage to render



Specialist teams

The bridge has listed Grade I status within the curtilage of the adjacent Grade 1 Listed Abbey. Our team were required to provide conservation advice in respect of the suggested repair programme. The project necessitated close liaison with the local authority conservation officer.

We used our in-house trained heritage craftsmen in combination with our bridge strengthening technicians to deliver a high quality repair to the structure.



Assessment and planning

A detailed report had been prepared for the client by Kier Group PLC which gave details of the damage and a scope of repairs works to be completed.

The team at Goldhawk liaised directly with the Environment Agency for works over and in the Black Bourne Brook. We provided detailed method statements to satisfy the local conservation officer.

Delivering the solution

Our experienced team carefully selected heritage lime mortars together with a matching brick type. It was essential that our solutions were low impact and left only a light footprint.

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