

Rev. A 17/01/2025

141532- Rutherford Building, University of Manchester

Review of Chimney Cows

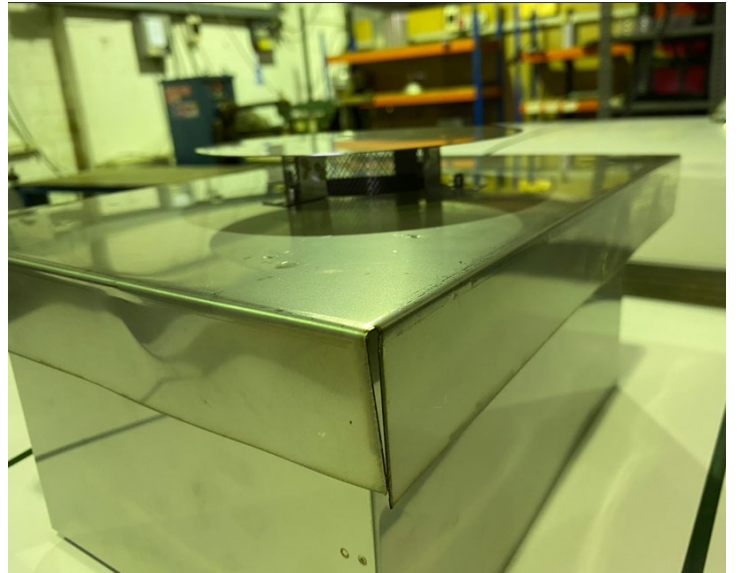
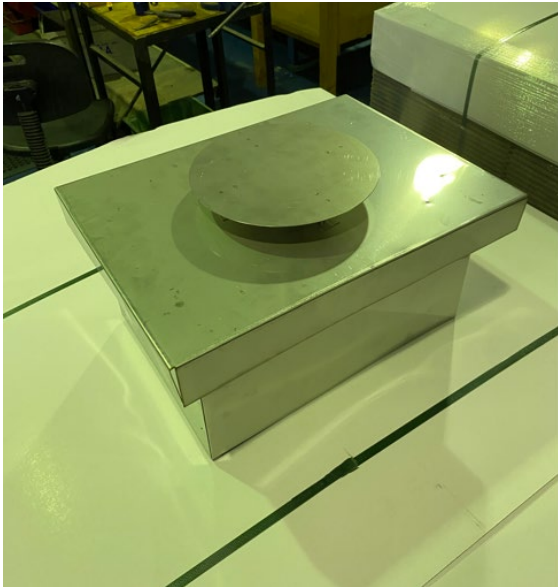
The Problem

Building surveys had established that the existing open chimneys admitted water and, in the current state, were posing a risk of degrading the building fabric below through both moisture ingress and nesting birds present. Ventilation to the stacks is essential to avoid condensation build up within the chimney flues that could further damage the building fabric. A solution that allows air flow but prohibits direct moisture ingress was required. Discussions with both the client team and MCC conservation took place to review possible solutions.



Given the large size of some of the pots a typical proprietary of 'off the shelf' capping here was to be problematic. Various options were reviewed; this included constructing timber casements in leadwork and procuring terracotta / clay cappings for the pots. These were discounted on the basis that they would need to be of such a size as to materially change the profile of the chimney stacks when viewed from street level.

It was established that a light touch solution would be more appropriate at Rutherford. Working with a supplier with significant experience in the heritage sector, Brewer Cowls, we developed some options and have had a sample mocked up as shown below.



The top flat area would sit flush to the top of the pot, and be stuck down, with the sleeve sitting inside of the pot itself. The central vented area is meshed with insect grade mesh so will provide ventilation as well as bird and bee protection.

To ensure that the pot was securely fixed it will have straps externally that will fix to the outside of the chimney pot and provide a robust mechanical fix to ensure the cowl does not dislodge in high wind. Each unit style would be made specifically to suit the measurements on site so that they are able to sit along side one another when the pots are immediately adjacent to one another.

Although shown in a natural finish it is proposed that the unit would be powder coated in a black (RAL 9005) matt finish. This will complement existing finishes on the roof- dormer cheeks and window catchers on the roof are black as can be seen below.



For the smaller 180mm diameter circular pots we are able to utilise a standard product and fixing strap. Again, this would be finished in matt black.



Conclusion

We believe this approach will have the minimum impact on the chimney stacks, as viewed from below, offering a lightweight solution that can be easily removed as required.

This strategy maintains the current character of the building whilst improving weathertightness, maintaining ventilation and better protecting the building fabric over the coming years.

If MCC agree to these proposals an order will be placed with Brewer Cowls to ensure all exposed pots are covered as described above.

Further information on this proposal can be obtained by contacting Alison Berry or Ed Mapplebeck at Arcadis.

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