



griffin restoration

fact sheet

Background

Two griffin sculptures were originally installed on Parkes Drive in the 1890s, at the junction of Hamilton Drive near the statue of Sir Henry Parkes. The griffins guarded each side of the main entry road leading down from Paddington Gates.

They were originally manufactured by Villeroy and Boch and made of ceramic. They sat on the same on sandstone plinths they sit on today.

By 1946 the griffins were in poor condition. Each sculpture was missing detail including the head, wings and feet. The surface coating of the sculptures and the mouldings on the top coping stones of the plinths had also eroded. In 1971 the griffins were removed for safekeeping to the Centennial Parklands Depot.

Although referred to as griffins, winged lions, such as the ones seen in Centennial Parklands, are not true griffins, but are a hybrid known as 'gryphonic'.

True griffins have the face, beak, talons and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion. In symbolism, the griffin combines the symbolic qualities of both the lion and the eagle. It is the king of birds and lord of the air united with the king of beasts and lord of the earth.

The eagle parts of the griffin represented the saints with their thoughts, aspirations and souls lifted towards God. Its lion half stood for their courage in the arena and in the continuing struggle against sin, evil, and the Devil. Because of the griffin's strength and powers of sight, it was believed to guard hidden treasures.

The repair process

In December 2004, the statues were removed from Centennial Park for reconstruction. The work was carried out by a number of expert organisations including the Department of Commerce, Government Architects Office, Heritage Services, Maxim Consulting and Millennium Art Services.

Modelling

The modelling of the missing wings and heads of the griffins was carried out on the existing griffins - this allowed for complete accuracy in modelling the new statues to the old. The modelling was guided by the catalogue supplied by Villeroy and Boch in Germany. Once completed, the mould making process began.



One of the Griffins on Parkes Drive

**Mould Making**

The detail was modelled in clay then coated with a silicon rubber up to the thickness of approximately 6-8mm. Once the rubber was cured, plaster cases were built around the rubber for support. The plaster pieces were then removed and the rubber peeled away from the modelling.

Casting

A micro ceramic composite material was used for casting. 16mm stainless steel rods were set into the wings and head for reinforcement.

Fitting

The newly cast pieces were then trimmed and secured to the original by means of stainless steel pins and epoxy.

Finally...

The griffins were reinstalled in their origins positions on Parkes Drive.