Historic stones not seen by the public since 1996 will be on show in their new home next month.

The original façade of medieval Chantry Chapel was removed and relocated to Kettlethorpe Hall in the 1840s. After repeated vandalism the stones’ new home was granted scheduled monument consent by English Heritage in 1996 and Wakefield Council, which by then was responsible for the building, dismantled it in order to rescue them.

Now we are starting work to install what remains of the original façade in a raised bed in the Secret Garden in Thornes Park.

The £20,000 project has been funded by the George Hyde legacy which is administered by English Heritage.

Cllr Les Shaw, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport, said: "Chantry Chapel is an iconic building in Wakefield and its heritage is something we're keen to preserve for future generations.

"We are very grateful that Mr Hyde left this legacy which has enabled us to carry out this work and re-site the stones.

"We have received support from English Heritage throughout, and from the Friends of CHaT Parks who have been supportive of the project and who will be carrying out planting around the stones once they are in place.

"The Secret Garden is an ideal location as it is already home to other local artefacts, such as a pinnacle from a restoration of Wakefield Cathedral and a column from Wakefield’s original market cross."

Keith Emerick, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage in Yorkshire said: "We’re pleased the stones, which are an important link to Wakefield’s medieval past, will be on show for the public to enjoy. Sitting alongside other rescued pieces of local architecture, this will be an exciting new chapter in the history of these beautiful stones."

Chantry Chapel was built in the 14th century. The current façade of Chantry Chapel was installed by Sir George Gilbert Scott after 500 years of weathering and pollution took its toll on the original masonry. George Norton of Kettlethorpe Hall bought the stone in 1847 and reused it as the front of a boathouse by a small lake in his grounds.
When Kettlethorpe Hall was bought, the front became the responsibility of the Wakefield Corporation Council. The boat house and chapel frontage suffered repeated and severe bouts of vandalism which progressed so fast that English Heritage granted scheduled monument consent in April 1996 for controlled dismantling.

The dismantling was carried out in June 1996 and included rescuing large quantities of stonework which had been pushed into the lake by vandals. The stonework was transferred to a Council depot where it is has been stored ever since.

Earlier this year, we commissioned a survey of the remaining stones and an options appraisal of how and where they could be displayed so that they could be seen again by the public. Public consultation sessions to discuss the options were held earlier this year and it was decided to re-site the stones in the Secret Garden in Thores Park, Wakefield.

Work is due to start on July 14 and will take around two weeks to complete. There will also be an interpretation sign to explain to visitors what they are looking at and which will enable them to take a brass rubbing. During the work, access to the Secret Garden will be restricted for health and safety reasons.

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