



## **ARTiFACTS** - Conservation Report

Leon School and Sports College  
T-REX. Bill Billings, 1991

22 October 2007

Justin Neal

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Pictures B. Billings archive (1991)

## History

The Dinosaur (T-REX) was produced by Bill Billings in 1991, working with young people from Leon School. The project was commissioned as part of a children's workshop where pupils were invited to create model dinosaurs from Plasticine. One of the models was chosen and faithfully sculpted in the corner of the school playing field. It was designed to be seen from the railway line passing to the north. At approx. 20 ft. high x 28 ft. in length the T-REX is Milton Keynes' first landmark from rail. The original concept for the piece was not to be rendered but Ivy grown around the form creating a living sculpture. This never happened due to vigerous weedkilling from (the then) Bucks County Council.



## Construction

The Dinosaur (T-REX) was created with the assistance of many young people from the estate and the school. The following archive photographs from the project clearly show Bill working alongside and supervising the project. The following photographs give us a clear understanding of the structure and strength given to T-Rex whilst it was being built.

Pictures B. Billings archive (1991)



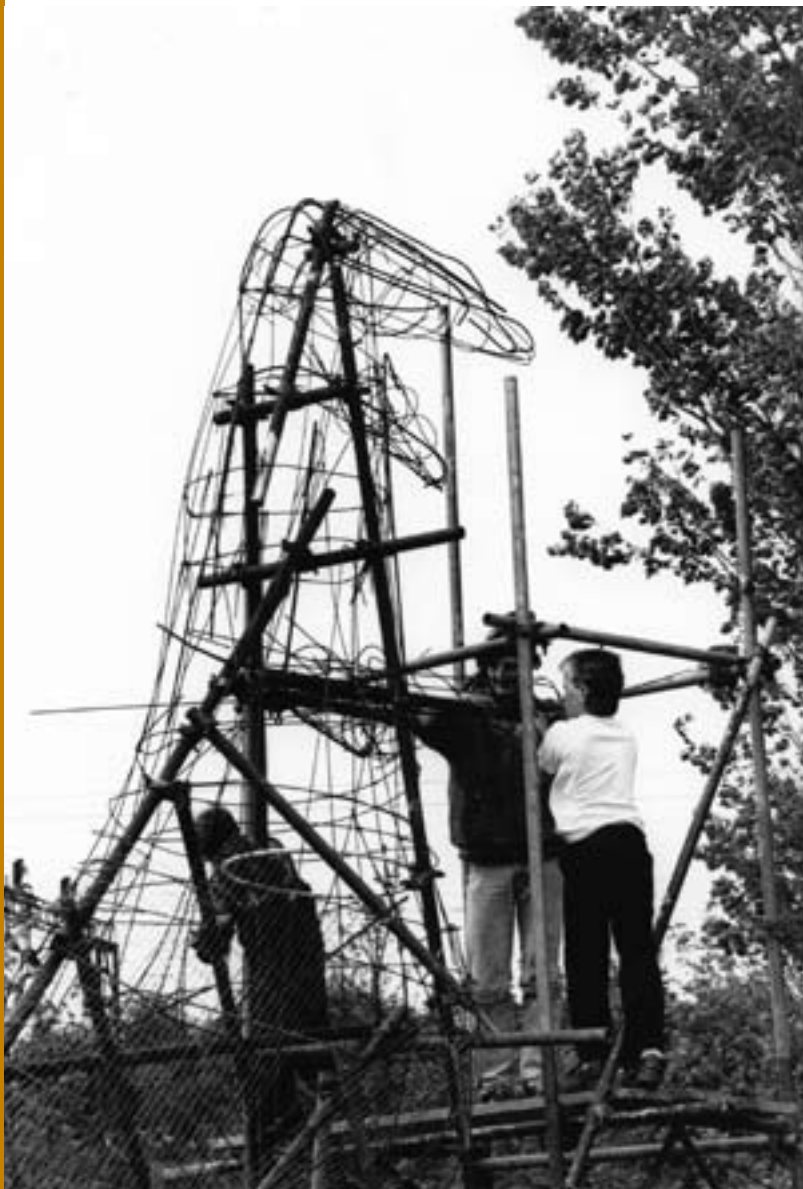
Pictures B. Billings archive (1991)



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Pictures B. Billings archive (1991)

## Completed project

T-REX. Bill Billings, 1991

The project was completed in July 1991, painted in blue/green, with facial details of white eyes and red eyeballs, white teeth, red gums, brown claws on the arms and white claws on the feet.



## Findings

An inspection of T-REX was carried out on Monday 22nd October 2007. Weather conditions were favourable and no limitations impaired a detailed observation of the subject.

From the documentary evidence the subject appears to have been constructed with a mixture of metal components, namely scaffolding poles for the main triangular construction and neck and head sections, with both front legs and the tail scaffold poles set into solid concrete foundations. The tail extension is a solid mixture of brick and sculpted cement. No subsidence or movement in the base is detectable and the subject stands true.

The internal skin is composed of steel rod which has been wired together, covered by galvanised mesh, then chicken wire. The final exterior coating is rendered cement which binds the layers together to create a tight and strong casing.

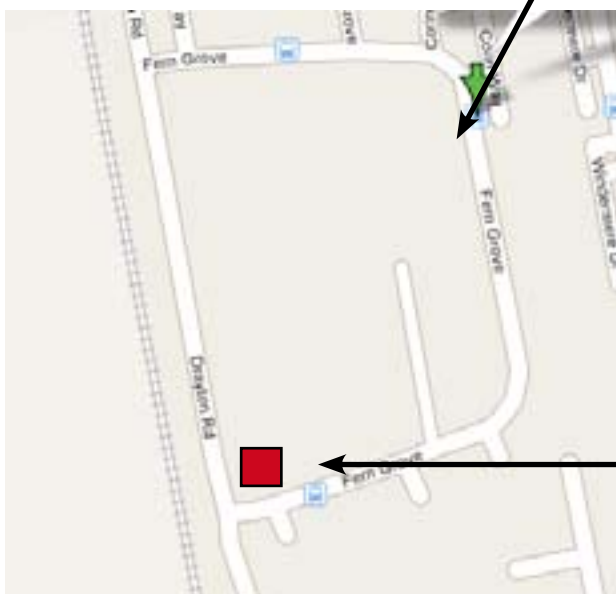
Observations from a hole in the east elevation clearly shows this superstructure and steel construction to be sound. The internal cement and concrete are dry and show no sign of deterioration from penetrating damp or internal water collection.

Damage to the subject is largely superficial with some flaking paint and some deterioration in the external cement render. The most damage seems to be with the claws on the arms, which have lost their rendering completely, and the teeth which have broken out in most places.

The subject is weathered and has some lichen growing in places, mostly towards the head, probably accentuated by the close proximity of the poplar tree to the North.

## Location

Leon School - Site location



T-REX - Site location

## Summary

Through conversations with Bill Billings, for this report, and knowing from experience with him, his robust working methods and professional construction techniques, I do not consider the subject to be dangerous or beyond repair\*

The subject has superficial damage only and appears sound thanks to 'over engineering'. A project designed to restore the damaged sculptured areas and treat the areas of damaged render, along with a fungicidal wash and repaint would return the T-Rex to a restored condition.

### Costs

Artist conservator - 4 days @£250 per day	£1000
Assistant - 4 days @£80 per day	£320

### Materials

Cement	£30
Fungicidal wash	£30
Paint	£200
Rollers / Sundries	£100

Scaffold construction**	£570
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<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£2250</b>
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Contingency @10%	£225
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<b>Total</b>	<b>£2475</b>
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## Ongoing conservation

Assuming no vandalism or impact damage the subject will need repainting every two or three years.

\* This conclusion has been made through observation only and is not a guarantee of structural integrity. For a complete structural analysis of the subject a specialist engineer should be employed and thorough tests undertaken.

\*\* Assumes vehicle access to the site within playing field

Notes. Inclusion of young people in the project will necessitate a H&S visit from Leon School or MKC, signed parent statements and some training.



T-REX - Site Photo 1,2 - WIDE



T-REX - Site Photo 1,2 - DETAIL



T-REX - Site Photo 3,4 - DETAIL



T-REX - Site Photo 5,6 - DETAIL



T-REX - Site Photo 7,8 - DETAIL



T-REX - Site Photo 9,10 - DETAIL



T-REX - Site Photo 11,12 - DETAIL



T-REX - Site Photo 13 - FRONT, SOUTH ELEVATION

## **Credits**

Leon School and Sports College  
T-REX. Bill Billings, 1991

With thanks to;

Leon School  
Living Archive  
Bill Billings

Justin Neal is an artist and sculptor and project manager with 12 years experience of working in public arts, and conservation.