CONSERVATION REPORT

Brief

To clean, conserve and mount a samurai armour for display. The armour is made from multiple separate pieces and constructed of iron, lacquer textile and leather.

Condition

Overall, the armour had a layer of dust across all surfaces. General handling had dulled the surface. Some individual elements (see below) had condition issues however it is in a stable condition.

Iron: The iron components were corroded were the surface lacquered either had been lost or failed over time. The corrosion was most noticeable on the chainmail elements with the iron corrosion products being a brighter orange. The iron was not activity corroding.

Figure 1: Orange iron corrosion on chain mail.

Iron attachments between the helmet and the neck guard had failed leaving one side loose and hanging.

Figure 2: Neck guard not attached to helmet on one side.

Some iron plates on the arm and leg guards are broken and some iron attachments were missing which resulted in some plates being loose.

Figure 3: broken iron plate.

Lacquered surface: The lacquer had a dull finish and multiple scratches. Some areas of loss and damage most noticeable on the helmet which had a large crack.

Figure 4: Scratches and areas of lacquer loss.

Textile: The textile elements are stable, general handling wear and movement has misshapen the tie elements. There are a few areas of loss but nothing that will cause long-term issues.

Figure 5: Textile tie elements misshapen on shin guard

Conservation

The aim of the conservation will be to ensure the object is stable, it will not to seek to make elements "as new". The armour was given an overall clean with brushes and vacuum to remove surface.

Iron: All iron elements were cleaned with acetone on cotton swabs to remove excess surface corrosion products. Once the surface was cleaned a layer of pigmented Paraloid B72 was applied to the surface. The pigmented Paraloid B72 both protected the surface and improved the aesthetics of the finish.

Figure 6: Chainmail after conservation

Lacquer:
The lacquer was surface cleaned to remove dusts. Areas or cracking on the helmet were stabilised with 5% Paraloid B72 in acetone. Lost areas of lacquer were replaced with a dyed black 15% Paraloid B72 in acetone.

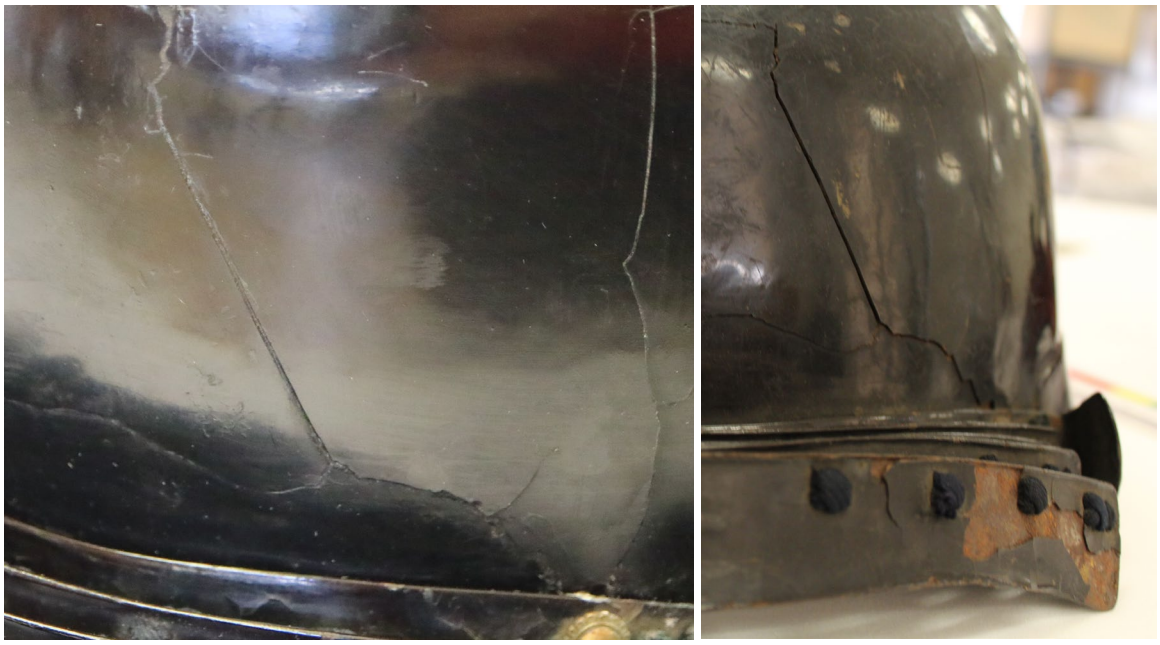

Figure 7: Cracked helmet side after and before conservation.

Textile:
Textile was gently brushed to remove surface duct and lightly wetted with distilled water on a sponge to allow manipulation back into original shape.

Figure 8: Textile after cleaning and reshaping

Mounting

The armour will need a new mount with bespoke padding to support all the elements of the armour. Padding will be a mix of mount, Plasterzote and Fosshape to best support each element of the armour as appropriate.

Figure 9. Mount supporting armour.

Figure 10: Completed armour.