

# Abbey garden honours King Alfred

By Denis Archdeacon

THE first stage of a £100,000 project to commemorate the last known resting place of King Alfred the Great has been completed.

The memorial garden, Winchester's official project to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee, is on the site of the east end of Hyde Abbey Church in Hyde, Winchester, and traces the outline of the apse of the church, destroyed with almost all the rest of the abbey buildings at the Reformation.

The site of the east end of the church with its associated chapels has been excavated in recent years and archaeologists from the Winchester Museums Service have identified a large, empty grave pit in the apse as the likely site of the burial of the king, his wife Aelswitha and their son Edward the Elder.

The excavated foundations have now been reburied and lie between 18in and 3ft below the garden. Three ledger stones in the garden mark where the royal coffins lay.

The three bodies were moved from their original graves in the New Minster



Three ledger stones in the garden mark where King Alfred and his wife and son lay

beside Winchester Cathedral to the newly built Hyde Abbey, which replaced the New Minster, in 1110. The abbey was destroyed in the years after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538 and the graves were lost.

The completed garden, which has been designed by Kim Wilkie, one of the country's foremost landscape architects, will include planting, stone and wooden benches,

and holly trees in burnished steel frames which will be lit at night and will mark the positions of the apse pillars. Two of the tree frames have been completed and can be seen in the photograph, above.

The entrance will be marked by a panel to be engraved by Tracey Sheppard, the noted glass engraver; it will show a representation of the interior of the church.

Money for the project is

being raised by the Friends of Hyde Abbey Garden, a registered charity; they have already raised more than £34,000 towards the projected £100,000 cost of the completed scheme.

□ Further details may be obtained from, and contributions to the project may be sent to: Friends of Hyde Abbey Garden, c/o The Historic Resources Centre, Hyde Street, Winchester, SO23 7DW.