

January 2024

The exterior is nearly finished



All being well, the end is in sight! There remains some pointing work to be finished on the west side and at ground level on the street, including the forestair, but lime mortar will not work in low temperatures, so it's a bit of a lottery now with the weather. The latest estimate is that by the end of February, the exterior will be finished, all the scaffolding removed and the site cleared. We are particularly pleased with the reinstated crow steps at the south end which match those on the Burgh Chambers beautifully.



THE LEIGHTON LIBRARY RESTORATION NEWS

We now turn our attention to the interior. The books have been kept in controlled storage in Glasgow and will not return until conditions, most importantly relative humidity, are right. We have already recorded a drop in readings, which is encouraging. Firstly, we need to do a deep clean and decorate, with the intention of presenting the Library Room essentially as it was before. We have received expert advice from the National Library of Scotland regarding suitable cleaning and restorative materials. We also need to change the lighting to LEDs, as, in addition to more economy and clearer light, it seems old lights contain UV, which can damage the books. Again on advice, we shall replace the storage heaters with thermostatically controlled oil radiators and replace our dehumidifier. The woodwork is generally in good condition, other than the outsides of the three pairs of shutters, which have long been exposed to sunlight and need to be sanded down and waxed.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our call for cleaners/decorators and the book replacement team. We had a very good response.

When conditions are right for the books to return, advice is we do this gradually and monitor the environment as we go. We are told it is best to replace the more modern and less valuable volumes first, and the treasures last, to avoid any risk. Our current assumption is that this could be around the end of March/early April.



Interior on 10 January

Harling and the Cartouche

The cartouche has been restored and will be replaced on the east wall facing the Cross later this Spring. Whilst it was affixed in an ingenious way in 1687, those fixings had to be cut and now a new way of fixing has been designed, which is with the planners for approval.

Many people have commented on how attractive the exposed stonework looks and have asked whether this will be harled over eventually. As with any listed building, we are required to comply with the requirements of the authorities who protect our heritage, in this case Stirling Council. There is no agreed plan on the final finish at this stage and we expect to consult the authorities over the coming months.