

March 2023



Slezer 'The prospect of the Town of Dumblane' 1693

A Tale of Two Chimneys

The scaffolding is complete on all elevations and the harling has been removed.

South chimney: This needs to be dismantled and rebuilt. The South gable wall shows moisture has been trapped and there is frost damage to masonry which is beginning to dry out. This will need repointing and some replacement. The sandstone dressings around the vents are crumbling and need repair. Evidence of old crowsteps have been found – red sandstone, which contrasts with the honey sandstone at the North end.

South chimney Picture: Tom Astbury



East elevation: There is loose masonry at pavement level, left of the cartouche and below.

West elevation: The sandstone window arches in good order and further investigation is required of the masonry. The 'blast wall' is an old construction and its purpose is not clear. It is possibly part of a demolished structure.

March 2023

March 2023

South chimney: Picture Tom Astbury



Ties South chimney: Picture Tom Astbury



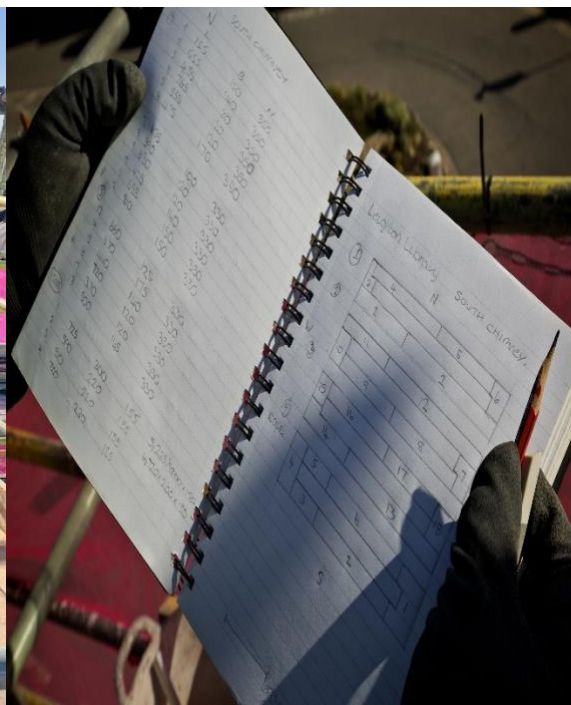
North Gable Stack and masonry below:

This was built to serve the adjacent Dean's Manse, against which the Library was built. It is of much smaller stones and has been harled using a very hard material in places. This will be photographed, stones numbered, and then dismantled and rebuilt. The stone apex is very loose and will be recorded before being dismantled. The crowsteps are buff coloured and in good order, except one which was red and has failed. This will be replaced in red sandstone. The North Wall has been an internal wall between two buildings. There is evidence of a fireplace, an opening to the flue and of a press. At the front there is a joint indicating where the front wall of the original Dean's Manse wall would have been.

Numbering and recording individual stones



Picture left: Tod & Taylor Architects



Picture right: Tom Astbury

March 2023

The dismantling of the chimneys is more complex than anticipated, particularly at the North end. This will mean the next phase of the roof and the pointing will be somewhat delayed, both because of the random nature of the joints and infill pieces, but also the recent cold weather preventing pointing, which requires a temperature of 7 degrees or higher.

The Cartouche

We have recently received a further Listed Building Consent from Stirling Council to repair the Cartouche and reinstate it in the niche on the East elevation. Prior to the reinstatement, we will be required to submit Building Recording in full accordance with Stirling Council's Historic Environment Historic Building Recording process. Before reinstatement, we will also need to submit details of the method for reinstatement, including details of new fixings. The cartouche is currently in Edinburgh at a sculpture conservation workshop. We plan to visit the workshop soon to agree the extent of conservation work to be carried out.

Some history

One of our Trustees, Gordon Willis, who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Library, has been helping the architect and builders with historic information to help interpret the architectural features being uncovered. Gordon has told us the library was built against the gable of the already existing Dean's Manse to the North. The Dean's Manse had two further small dwellings attached and linked to the others to form a terrace. These all had stairs into them, which ran at right angles. At a later date the stair into the library was altered to its present form.

The architect William Stirling (1772-1838)¹ was involved in replacing the Dean's Manse. Around the same time, he altered the library. He formed the three round headed windows, was probably responsible for changing the forestair, and carried out internal alterations.

The library originally consisted of three storeys, undercroft, main floor and attic. The main floor was divided into two rooms. The Stirling alterations raised the ceiling and made the main floor into a single room.

There has been some mention of the librarian living in the undercroft. This is unlikely. The undercroft was available to the librarian, but he probably actually lived in a dwelling nearby.

¹ Born in Dunblane, responsible for several country houses and churches in the area, as well as the Athenaeum in Stirling. He built and lived in Holmehill House.