

October 2023

Despite the unhelpful weather and some supply delays, work has been progressing. With the slates removed, the roof woodwork beneath has been repaired and felt and slates have started going back on.

- West slope roof – Timber repairs to the rafters and sarking have now been completed.
- New cast iron gutters have been fitted.
- A breathable membrane has been fitted.
- Re-slating has commenced.
- North Gable – Repointing works have commenced.
- East slope – Timber repairs are now underway.
- East Elevation – The stonework has been dressed and built.
- Work has commenced on the new dressed stones for the Cartouche and will be dressed in preparation for rebuilding, week commencing 9th October.
- The lintel supports for window 3 on the south gable are currently being fabricated and will be installed shortly
- Wall head consolidation is required on the east slope at the south gable. This is currently being carried out.



Wooden pegs on old timbers

All photos this month by Tom Astbury who is compiling a comprehensive photographic record for posterity (and the Council!)

THE LEIGHTON LIBRARY RESTORATION NEWS



Unforeseen additional costs

There is always the possibility with old buildings that you find further problems when you start going in. We knew from the outset that there was always this risk, and such problems then can't be ignored. In the Library's case, removing the cement harling and stripping the roof have exposed a need for considerably more work, over and above our original budget. It is estimated we will need an additional £177,000. We continue to bid for grants and fundraise. If any reader knows a possible wealthy benefactor, please get in touch!

For example:

Sarking – The sarking on the east slope was very badly worm eaten and rotted. The west slope sarking is later but with areas of decay at both ends.

Roof trusses – Timbers were found to be badly worm eaten and soft.

Rainwater – The west gutter was running wrongly and the east was cracked. It was noted water has tended to run over the gutters and all needed to be replaced. The stonework of the wallhead was extremely uneven and loose due to water damage. Consolidation of the masonry is required.

Existing harling – Removal of the existing harling was even more difficult than expected, with multiple layers of harl found. The condition of the masonry beneath was considerably worse than expected, with deep voids becoming apparent as the harling was removed. The moisture in the walls caused the mortar to fail completely, resulting in areas of unstable face masonry. On the East, there was a very large area of loose masonry on the external face.

Chimney works - The North stack was found to be of unstable random loose rubble once the harling had been removed. It was necessary to take it down completely along with the top six courses of the gable. The South chimney was found to be unstable and poorly supported. It was dismantled and built back. New stonework was required at the base, as the wallhead masonry had been resting on sarking boards.

Cartouche – The cartouche has been removed and repaired as planned, but the fixings to the building behind the cartouche were found to be complex and new fixings are being designed.

'Blast wall' on the West. This was found to be of particularly loose stonework, probably due to water overrun from the gutters. It has required a considerable amount of consolidation before being sound enough to repoint.

Windows and doors – Stonework, particularly to the South window, was found to be very poor. Stones beneath the harling had been badly affected by damp. There were badly decayed timber lintels with loose masonry above. As it is risky to prop up loose masonry, a stainless-steel plate has had to be made to provide support. Two West windows require similar treatment.

Management costs - as the project has required considerably more time than anticipated, costs have increased to include insurance, site protection, toilet etc. as well as professional fees. Increased off site storage costs for the collection.