

Project Update 4 February 2014

Timetable

There has been further delay to the main build timetable and as a consequence the next phase of on-site work is now due to start just after Easter.

Work	Timetable
High Altar Storage works	Due to be completed February
Wall paintings conservation	Completed
Main build (library and crypt)	April to Oct 2014
Exhibition/library fit-out	Oct/Nov 2014
Client fit-out of library and exhibition	Nov/Dec 14
Exhibition launch	Jan 15

Capital work completed to date

The 14th century wall paintings on the ceiling of the Crypt have been conserved by Perry-Lithgow over a period of 3 months. The conservators will return once the main building work is finished to undertake a final clean.

The new storage unit has been created behind the High Altar. This is an incredible piece of design provide much needed specialist storage for a wide range of items ranging from altar frontals to candle sticks. It is completely hidden and will be infinitely more useful than the piles of boxes that were there before.

The contents of the library have been carefully cleaned, packaged and transferred to the Kent History and library Centre in Maidstone where they are being kept in optimum archival conditions whilst the Library roof work is undertaken. The decant was managed in house by a team of committed and enthusiastic volunteers and events team with support from our Library Development Officer and an external specialist advisor.

A range of enabling works to create storage for that which will be displaced by the work in the Crypt and to enable contractors to work on site more effectively has also been completed. A number of external drainage issues have also been dealt with. These are all largely hidden from public view but are an essential forerunner to main building works as well as providing some longer term benefits.

Library and Crypt main building project

Finalising the design and putting together the tender documents has taken much longer than expected. There are a number of reasons for this but primarily it comes down to the complexity of the project, the need to co-ordinate designs between architects, structural engineers, mechanical and electrical services advisors and a range of other professional advisors. It is critical in such a significant building as the Cathedral to get the design right



LOTTERY FUNDED

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Hidden Treasures: *Fresh Expressions*

and some areas have had to be revisited in order to get the necessary permissions to move forward. However the tender for the main building contract has now gone out and the successful contractor is expected to start shortly after Easter. This is obviously much later than originally planned and once the contractor is on board the timetable will be revisited to see when the Crypt and Library will be open to the public again; the best estimate at present is towards the end of this year.

Activities

The project also involves a wide range of activities many of which are already underway and some of which depend on the completion of the building works. A summary of activity to date is outlined below:

Digitisation and conservation

The Textus Roffensis and the Customale Roffensis have both been digitised by the Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care (University of Manchester Library) Facsimiles, as well as digital images for both documents, have been received which can be used for interpretation. As part of the process a short video about the Textus Roffensis and the digitisation process has been produced and contains interviews with a number of experts including Michael Wood who continues to champion the importance of the documents to English history.

In moving the library contents into storage a number of books and paintings, in need of conservation, have been identified and the Kent History and Library Centre, who have a purpose built conservation studio, are undertaking this work for us.

Exhibition and community engagement

An interpretation strategy has been produced and approved along with a clear direction for the first exhibition.

There is a good ongoing relationship with the Kent Association for the Blind and a small group is being set up with them to provide help in selecting and/or producing tactile objects that can be incorporated into the timeline in the Exhibition area.

A Community Consultation Forum has been established and has had its first meeting in January. It is anticipated that this will encourage increasing community involvement in developing the first and future exhibitions.

Skills development

A range of opportunities for skills development have been provided including "Behind the scenes" talks by the wall painting conservators. Some more specific training for library volunteers in general cleaning and care of historic collections and specialist paper conservation has also taken place. A detailed training plan is being drawn up to ensure that staff and volunteers receive the training necessary to both look after our various collections and to interpret them to visitors.