



HOUSE OF LORDS SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 10

Estates Works Update

*Paper from Carl Woodall, Director of Facilities and
Justin Hills, Head of Property and Office Services*

*Paper prepared by David Johnstone, Phil McArdle, and Tony Magnante
Senior Facilities Managers, Property and Office Services*

Purpose

1. This paper provides a summary of the proposed building works, repairs, and projects in the House of Lords parts of the Parliamentary Estate. A wide variety of works and projects have started or are continuing. This paper does not set out every item undertaken or completed but provides the Committee with an overview of the more significant projects and repairs.

Action for the Committee

2. The Committee is invited to note the estate works programme update.

Security Upgrades, West Front perimeter & Black Rod's Garden

3. In conjunction with the Victoria Tower fabric project, intrusive trial pits were excavated in Black Rod's Garden and borehole penetrations undertaken in Peers' Car Park to assist with the design for the security upgrades proposed in these areas. Full details can be found at paragraph 7.

Victoria Tower Fabric Project

4. The Victoria Tower protection deck essential maintenance and enhancements works were completed on 20 August and the covered passage was re-opened.
5. The Victoria Tower high level stone condition inspection using a large mobile working platform was completed on 27 August. The survey covered the Black Rod's Garden South elevation and the Royal Court East elevation. One piece of loose stone was found during the inspection.
6. The Chancellor's Court North elevation and Sovereign's Entrance West elevation condition surveys, along with surveys of Victoria Tower's lower sections, will be carried out using abseiling and are expected to take place before the end of the year, dates to be confirmed. The surveys' findings will be used to inform the scaffold design for the refurbishment project and to remove any loose stone for safety reasons.

7. Groundworks investigations around the Victoria Tower were conducted to inform the design for the scaffold which will start to be erected around the Tower in Spring 2022. Several different methodologies were used for the investigations including: Cone Penetration Testing (CPT) involving the advancement of a sensor into the ground to measure the soil's properties; Dynamic Probing Boreholes to verify the position of the existing Victoria Tower foundations; Cable Percussive Boreholes to 30 metres in depth to verify the ground's composition; and Trial Pitting involving the excavation of soils for observation and obtaining samples to a maximum depth of 1.2m which took place in Black Rod's Garden, at the base of Victoria Tower, in Peers' Car Park and Chancellor's Court.

Elizabeth Tower Re-instatement of the Original Clock Hands and update

8. All four sets of original clock hands, which had been removed for conservation, have been successfully re-attached to the clock dials, with the restored East Dial now fully visible.
9. Work to install supply pipes for the new Elizabeth Tower fire suppression systems were started under the Colonnade. A temporary access ramp over the Colonnade was built to maintain pedestrian access while these works were undertaken. The ramp will be removed by 18 October 2021.
10. The Elizabeth Tower conservation project is due to complete in the second quarter of 2022. The project will see a number of important milestones over the next few months; including the removal of further scaffolding during the autumn, and the re-installation of the Great Clock and the return of Big Ben's world-famous chimes in the first quarter of 2022.

Cast Iron Roofs Programme

11. The Cast Iron Roofs programme made excellent progress over the summer recess.
 - West Front - North Roof (Peers' Tower to St. Stephens Hall): Approximately 100% of external cast iron components have been removed, with 97% returned and refitted on site.
 - West Front - East Roof (runs across the far end of State Officers' Court): All the main roofing work is completed and the safe access system installation is ongoing.
 - West Front – South Roof (Peers' Tower to Victoria Tower): Approximately 95% of external cast iron components have been removed, with 5% returned and refitted. Structural repairs to the supporting structure are ongoing. Painting of the retained structure is ongoing.

Summer Boiler House Chillers Replacement Project (under Mechanical, Electrical, Public Health & Fabric Safety Programme - MEPFS)

12. The project will replace the four main Summer Boiler House chiller units between May and November 2021. The chillers provide cooling for both Houses' Chambers and Committee rooms; server and broadcasting equipment rooms; catering fridge and cold rooms; the Building Management System (BMS); and cooling to Air Handling Units (AHU) delivering ventilation across the palace.

13. To ensure continuity of critical cooling services to the Palace during the chiller replacement works, the project has installed two temporary chillers on State Officer's Court's East side. The Clerk of Parliaments has agreed for the parking spaces there to be used to site the temporary chillers.
14. The temporary chillers will only be switched on as a back-up if the main Palace chillers fail and to provide resilience during the phased replacement of the existing chillers. The noise level emitted by the temporary chillers was calculated to be 61 dB (Decibels) at 10 metres, which is equivalent to a busy street. The chillers sit inside an acoustically designed enclosure that will reduce their operating noise to the level of a conversation.
15. The programme of works has been extended from the original iteration i.e., commissioning and handover of the four replacement chillers will now take place in early March 2022 and therefore the temporary units located in State Officer's Court will need to remain in situ until this period for resilience purposes.

Restoration and Renewal

16. R&R surveys in the House of Lords were completed in August as follows:
 - Ecology (wildlife activity) surveys were completed in 51 out of 51 locations.
 - Visual Fabric Condition Surveys (upper floors) were completed in 289 out of 336 locations.
 - Basement Inspection surveys were completed in 87 out of 182 locations.
 - Historic Light Fittings surveys were completed in 101 out of 101 locations.
 - Room Study Part 1 surveys were completed in 11 out of 11 locations.
 - Door Study Part 1 surveys were completed in 14 out of 14 locations.
 - Window Study surveys were completed in 5 out of 5 locations.
15. The R&R Heritage Collection Asset survey is ongoing. Several further surveys within the palace's interiors and external spaces will be scheduled through to the Christmas recess.
16. The planned intrusive asbestos surveys in twenty-seven upper floor locations, including a small number of staff offices, were postponed until later in 2021.

Chamber Sound Upgrades

17. Works to install three additional microphones in the Chamber are being planned: at the time of writing the works are awaiting confirmation. Disruption will be limited and works will take place over a couple of days.

Pass-reader Voting Enabling Works

18. The Lords Commission has asked for a pass-reader voting solution to be developed in line with the Commons' development of an improved system. This technical solution is also needed for a Commons Business Continuity Planning Scenario in which the Commons Chamber became inoperable and relevant approval was given to relocate to the Lords Chamber. The technical details for the pass-reader voting stations are currently being finalised and cabling was installed in the Division Lobbies in the Conference recess. The Procedure and Privileges Committee will give final sign off.

New Palace Yard – Security Project

19. The Carriage Gates Exit Gate repairs were completed and normal access through both gates was restored. The next phase of the Project will begin later in the Autumn (the Committee was briefed on the arrangements for traffic movements and marshalling).

Chapel of St Mary Undercroft Investigative Excavation Works

20. The project works are to determine the causes of the current Chapel of St Mary Undercroft foundations movement. Site mobilisation began on 24 May 2021, but the external excavation work was delayed due to site Health & Safety issues and the new requirements for the approvals to begin the work. The excavation works began on 7 September and are expected to continue subject to archaeological and discovery findings.

Terrace Marquee Pot Wash Area

21. The current pot wash area in the Terrace Marquee is old and presents a Health & Safety risk to those staff working in this area. A project to decommission the current equipment and replace with new has been agreed, and there has been a revision to the programme of works, with delivery now expected by 11 October.

East Terrace Stone Repairs

22. Following the Terrace elevation stone condition surveys in 2019, a remediation works programme for the Churchill Corridor Tower and the Medals Corridor Tower was devised for 2021/22. The preparatory scaffold build works were planned in three phases.
 - Phase 1 - the existing protection deck's removal began on 17 September 2021.
 - Phase 2 (a) - the stone was prepared to absorb additional weight from full height scaffold.
 - Phase 2 (b) - a new, low level scaffold will be built to form a gantry, which will ensure safe protection over Terrace entrance from the Churchill Corridor.
 - Phase 3 - a scaffold will be built up the Churchill Corridor Tower's full height, with the materials stored on the gantry, on Saturdays in October/November 2021.
23. The Terrace was closed during the Conference Recess during the former protection deck's removal and the scaffold gantry build. The extent and duration of the works will not be known until the intrusive surveys are completed and the scaffold will be retained until the repairs are finished.

Millbank House Flood Works and Data Centre

24. Survey works have been completed in the basement area for both the flood alleviation works and data centre, and the final designs for the data centre (RIBA Stage 4) have been submitted to stakeholders and reviewed. Enabling works commenced on 1 June in the basement area and continued over the summer and conference recess periods. **The precedent used to facilitate the refurbishment of 5 Great College Street will be followed to ensure that occupants of Millbank House are kept fully apprised of the flood protection and data centre works proceeding in**

the basement and the noise nuisance they will generate. Stakeholder groups are being developed for both the Members and House staff who occupy the building. Communication will be frequent. Periods of particularly noisy work will be notified in advance in order that occupants can vary their work patterns if possible. Red-amber-green notices will be sent by email and posted in lifts and on noticeboards to signal anticipated noisy periods and to give information on other types of disruption occupants may experience.

25. Both projects are being delivered simultaneously by the same project team. Consideration is being given to accelerate the works to mitigate the risk of late delivery and it is likely that survey and construction work will have to take place on weekdays and weekends from now until project completion. More detail on the impact of both projects to occupants of Millbank House will be given as soon as possible. The Millbank House Café is impacted by the basement works and a Café Pod has been provided on the ground floor of Millbank House adjacent to the Courtyard.
26. Due to the unexpected delays in onboarding the alternative Principal Contractor, a contingency scheme was developed to set up a temporary data centre in Secondary Distribution Point rooms B, 35 and the ground floor facility, to mitigate the risk of decanting the data centre from 7 Millbank prior to the lease expiry in December. These works are currently in progress by the original Principal Contractor and are expected to be delivered by the end of October.
27. The Alternative Principal Contractor onboarded in early August and has carried out their numerous validation surveys: their temporary welfare provision has been set up in the basement dining area (a formal application with Westminster City Council is currently in progress for their permanent welfare facilities on Great Peter Street) and the pre-construction enabling works for the main Data Centre project are expected to commence by mid-October following approval of Listed Building Consent earlier this month.

Lift Refurbishment Millbank House

28. Work on HoP 326 (the lift in Millbank House Reception) is now due to complete on 22 October, a week later than intended due to the summer flooding. Imtech have experienced delays in the delivery of the new polymer pulleys which will now be arriving in November. The contractor has confirmed that the lift can be brought back into action using the old pulleys and the new ones can be installed over the Christmas recess.

Communal Lighting Millbank House

29. A small project to replace the wall-mounted lighting units in the communal areas of 2 Millbank was due to take place over the summer recess. The current lighting is old, expensive to run, maintain and in some places does not provide sufficient lighting. The existing lighting will be replaced with LED fittings that mirror the current communal lighting present in the 5 Great College Street side of the building. The commencement of this small project was delayed pending an asbestos survey which has now been successfully completed. The LED bulkhead lighting installation has now commenced and is expected to last two weeks and will include redecoration.

Carl Woodall
Director of Facilities

Justin Hills
Head of Property and Office Services

October 2021