

St Edmund's ceiling repair and redecoration – report 2 – 12 June 2020

We had a visit from our Architect this week and, together with the plasterer, made an inspection of the whole ceiling. From close up it was clear that in addition to the cracks visible from ground level there are quite a few other places where the plaster is broken or has been damaged due to the installation of cables and that there are a couple of places where a larger patch of plaster needed repair. However the bulk of the surfaces were found to be in good condition and firmly attached to the supporting timber laths.

The plasterer has started working on these defects, cutting out the damaged material and gradually building up the new surfaces. He expects to complete this by the end of the weekend. I went up today (Friday) to see what he has done and it looks like good work in progress. During his inspection the Architect found no signs of woodworm in the parts of the roof visible from inside so we will not be carrying out any treatment work on the roof. He did however find in several places some felt-like material within various enclosed areas which may possibly contain asbestos fibres. He has contacted a specialist surveyor from whom we are expecting a quotation early next week. I hope that we will be in a position immediately thereafter to instruct the surveyor to sample and analyse this material to see whether we have a problem or not.

I understand that next week the plasterer will call in the Architect to sign off his work so that cleaning can commence in the main areas where the suspect material has not been found. Whilst all this has been going on I have been cleaning within the bell chamber at the top of the tower. If you live nearby and you heard some extra bongs that will have been me manoeuvring around the bells. There is quite a lot of ironwork up there and the need for painting it was mentioned in the quinquennial inspection last year. It is now all prepared ready for me to paint it next week.

I attach a couple of pictures (on next page) showing the initial stage of building-up new plaster within damaged areas and of similar treatment in some of the plaster cracks. I discovered that the trusses have several different designs of carvings including these rather nice oak leaves, lofty and rarely appreciated pieces of work. A piece of timber moulding on the left has fallen away, leaving the nail exposed, but no-one seems to have missed it. The last photo shows part of the former gas lighting system, remnants of which and the holes for its fixings remain around the roof.



Geoff Bailey

