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College House Baronial Hall Significance and Methodology for repair of stone flag flooring at Chethams School of Music

Approach

The intention of this document is to inform an evidence-based approach for the renovation of the stone flag flooring within the Baronial Hall.

Prior to removal of any fabric, the stone flag flooring would be fully photographed for record purposes. Once recorded any flags to be lifted would have their positions and orientation recorded on a drawing so as to ensure they are relaid in exactly the same positions.

Significance and History of Baronial Hall



The Baronial Hall towards the inglenook fireplace

The hall is a well preserved example of the timber halls found in the north west of England, and is comparable in size with Ordsall Hall, Salford, and Rufford Hall, Lancashire. The grand open timber roof once accommodated a louvre opening to allow the evacuation of smoke from a hearth in the centre of the room. Some time in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries this was replaced with a simple fireplace with a shallow lintel, which was in turn replaced in the nineteenth century by the large inglenook fireplace still seen today.



The Baronial Hall towards the inglenook fireplace

The current stone flagged floor was laid in the mid-seventeenth century as part of the alterations to the Hospital and Library, and in the days of the College would have been swept earth laid with straw or rushes. The hall retains the ornate oak screen of three equal sections, of which the central part was originally moveable, but is now fixed.

The purpose of the screen was to keep out draughts and to conceal the entrances to the buttery and pantry situated at the back of the hall. At the top of the hall an impressive oak canopy projects over a raised dais, where the warden and visiting dignitaries would have dined at high table.



The Baronial Hall showing the screens passage

Process

The works as fully described on attached drawing "Baronial Hall & Access Corridors College House Ground Floor As Proposed 9424 BA ZZ OF DR A (04)001 Rev"P1.

In summary the proposed works involve retaining all existing fabric, no new areas of stone are proposed at this time. Existing material will either be:

1. Stone flags lifted and carefully relaid to be level with adjacent stone.
2. Open joints are repointed in lime and sand mortar to match existing.
3. Where stones are significantly worn they will be carefully lifted and modified. This will involve mechanically skimming the existing stones to produce a surface with less surface irregularity. Stones with the greatest variance have wear upto a depth of 25mm. It is assumed that the flags have a thickness of at least 75mm therefore once the flags are fully rebedded on lime mortar their integrity will not be compromised.

Advice has been sought from Bullen Conservation relating to this matter who are willing to provide a trial sample area onsite during the construction period for approval prior to the commencement of the restoration project.

Below is an image which illustrates the proposed methodology of repair using the reskimming technique.

The area highlighted in red graphically illustrates the proposed material to be removed by skimming the top surface of the stone to a maximum depth of up to 25mm depending on the degree of wear.

The flags would be carefully lifted (position and orientation of flag with the Hall recorded with a chalk mark to the rear of the flag), removed from the Hall prior to skimming. Once skimmed the flags are relaid on a full lime and sand mortar bed/ Once levelled to the adjacent flags the immediate area is repointed in matching lime/sand mortar.

