

# The King Edward VII Building, the British Museum - Leadwork Conservation Project

## The Trustees of the British Museum

The project, which has taken 15 months to complete, involved the rebuilding and repair of the parapet to the King Edward VII Building, at the British Museum. The parapet is constructed from reinforced clinker concrete with cast lead ornamental coverings including decorated frieze panels and a substantial armorial of Athena.

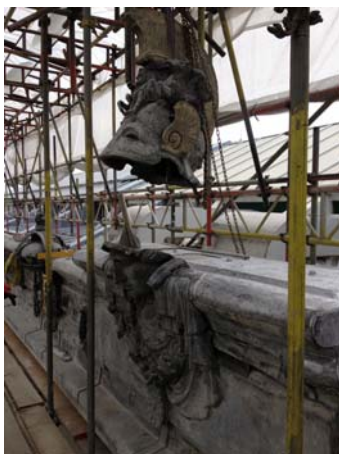
The leadwork covering the parapet had become ineffective due to inadequate laps, unsuitable previous repairs and thermal movement. Water had penetrated through the lead detailing and the parapet was structurally in a poor state. If repair work was not carried out immediately it would have been subject to further deterioration and failure with potentially catastrophic results.



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The British Museum carried out a series of investigative works, following which a project of repair was developed to address the continuing deterioration of the fabric and to ensure that it was safe. The works were funded through the British Museum's own budget allocations without outside sponsorship or grant aid.

The lead was carefully removed and repaired off site in controlled conditions. The existing concrete parapet was demolished and the reinforcement treated and repaired. A new profiled concrete parapet was constructed to match the original parapet. The experience and knowledge of the specialist leadwork contractor, Mundy's, proved invaluable in providing practical solutions to making good the inadequacies of the previous lead detailing. The physical repairs were carried out sympathetically by re-using some of the original cast lead from the rear parapet face, extending flashings with new lead where this was discrete, and repairing splits on the rear face to minimise any patching on the exposed elevation. The central relief was independently supported using stainless steel armatures secured back to a base plate attached to the parapet. All of the armatures and support details were designed by the sub-contractor following the design team's initial performance specification; these details were discussed and developed in association with the design team.



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Annotated drawings were maintained as a record of each repair and digital photography has been

used to record work as it progressed, and will provide a record of work done for any future repair work. There was also a substantial amount of interest from the Museum's staff and a number of site tours were organised to explain the works.

Mike Davis, Project Manager, Dept of OPM, the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG



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