

Theatre Royal refurbishment update

4 November 2015

With the asbestos issues now fully resolved the full extent of the problems with auditorium floor have been determined. At first inspection, the architect had hoped that only localised repairs would be needed. However, the structural engineer has since undertaken a detailed assessment of the floor structure and his verdict is not good. Indeed, he has expressed surprise that *"localised collapse had not occurred in the past when the floor was fully loaded"*. A number of the timbers are rotten, some are unsupported, all are undersized and many bear onto a stud partition in the basement that that was never designed to be loadbearing. Full replacement of the floor has now become an imperative and this will be at significant cost. This, combined with the asbestos works, other costs relating to the seventeen architect's instructions that have been issued to date, prolongation costs associated with delays to the project programme and a reduced level of VAT recovery from HMRC has left the project in a difficult financial position, with an anticipated overspend of £17,000. We are currently in discussion with the Big Lottery Fund and Monument Trust about how best to address this problem. A number of cost saving measures have already been identified and we are exploring the options for an increase in capital funding or virement of funds from the revenue allocations.

Despite the set-backs, work to the Wilson Street properties is progressing well. Work to the central stair core is substantially complete with structural steelwork fully in place, new landings formed and the lift installation imminent. Plastering and second fix electrics are under way. A new lobby, as required by the fire safety consultant, has been formed to the youth reception. Acoustic lining of the community and training room is complete, plastering is substantially under way and second fix electrics are in progress. The new wardrobe accommodation and fitting room have been plastered and the staircase is on site ready for installation. The Soundwave office has a new ceiling, has been partially replastered and a scratch coat has been applied to the external wall. The recording studio has been lined out and plastered. Rotten timbers to the Wilson Street basement have been replaced and fire protection installed. Contracts have been issued for the fabrication and installation of the curved bar and back fittings and refurbishment of the Wilson Street windows. This work will go to a local company, helping to maximise local economic benefits.

Total eligible spending still stands at £102,063 with £77,088 having been claimed back so far from the Big Lottery Fund and with £119,000 having been drawn down from other sources. The third valuation and principal contractor's next invoice is imminent.

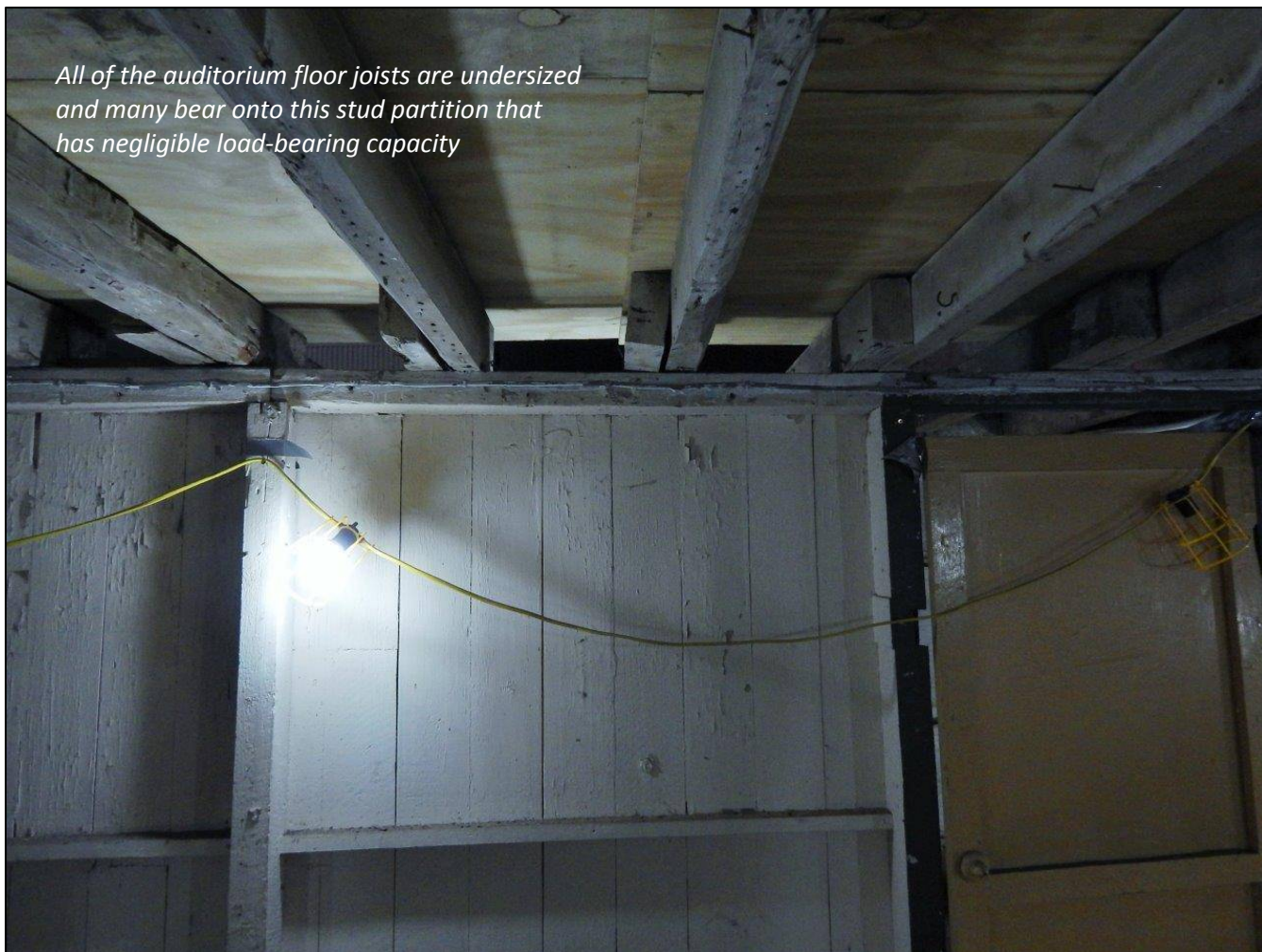
Now that the asbestos has been removed, it is possible to determine the extent of defects to the auditorium floor structure. This image shows how the floor joists to the front of the stage bear onto an unsupported timber.



Here, the joists have been crudely joined



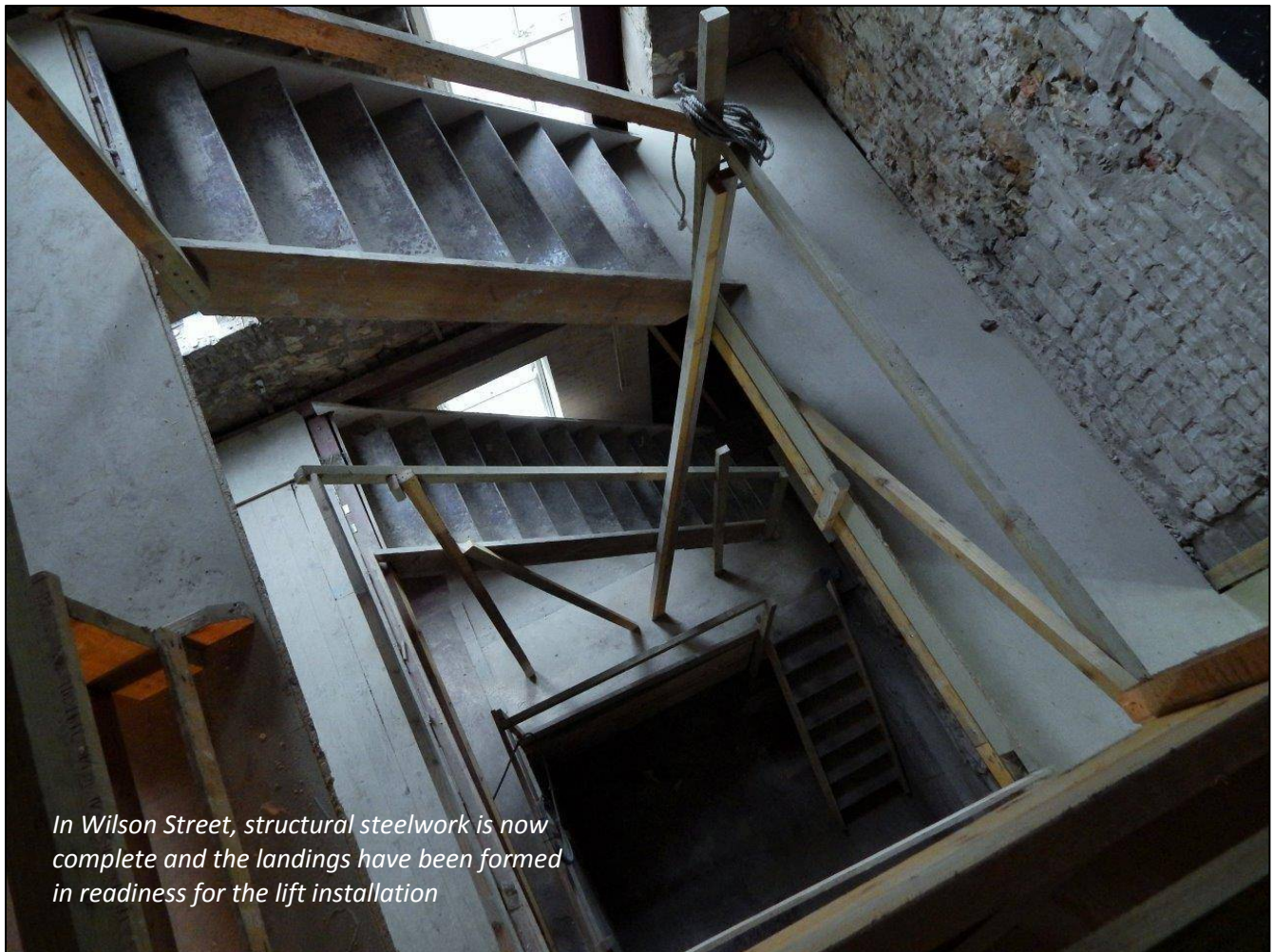
All of the auditorium floor joists are undersized and many bear onto this stud partition that has negligible load-bearing capacity



Many of the joist ends have rotted away, leaving them completely unsupported at one end







In Wilson Street, structural steelwork is now complete and the landings have been formed in readiness for the lift installation



Work is progressing well in the recording studio, with acoustic walls complete and most of the plastering done. UPVC windows and acoustic shutters are still to be installed



The new community and training room is taking shape, with plastering complete and second fix electrics under way

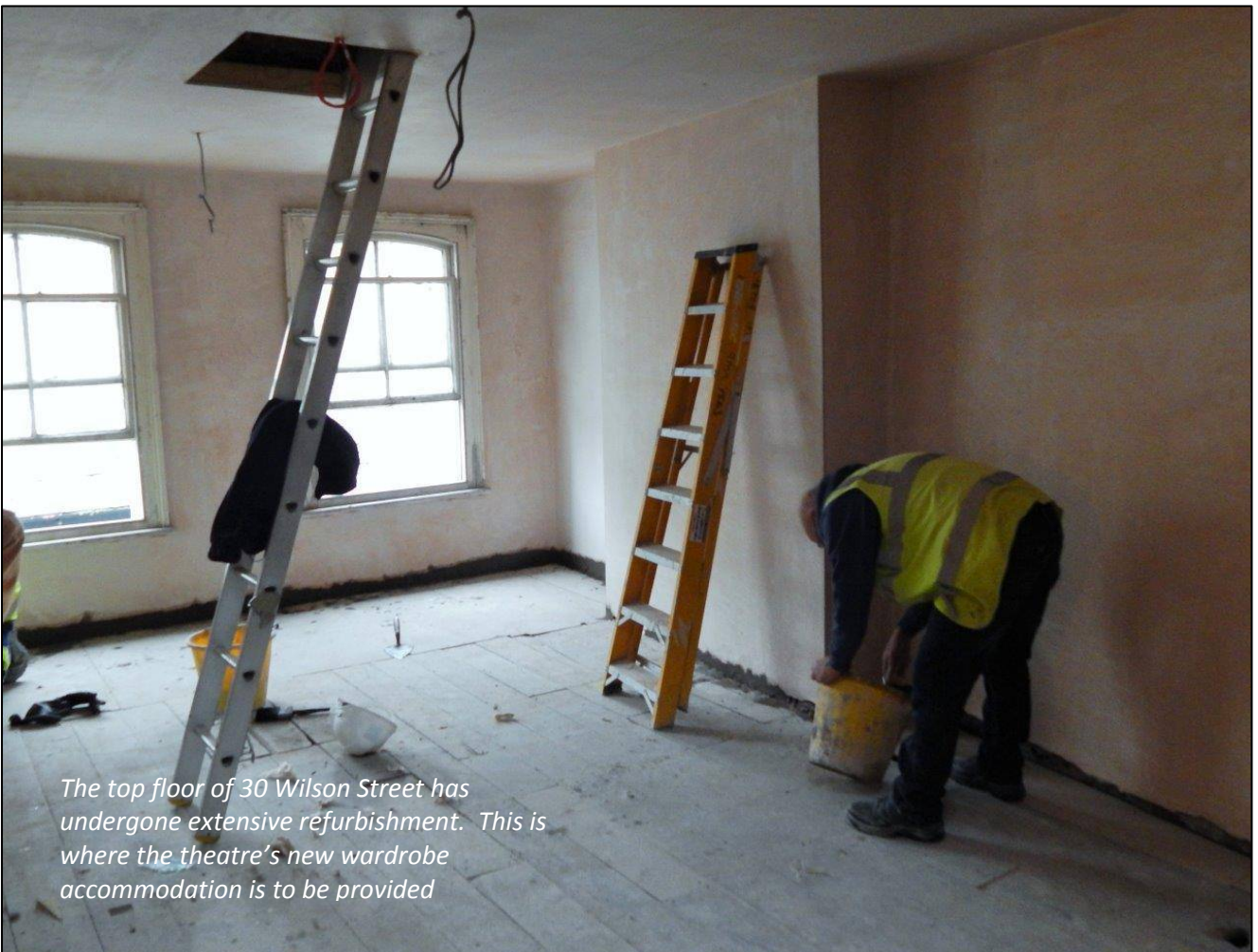


This cable tray carries the new incoming supply for the Wilson Street buildings

The Soundwave office has a new ceiling, the exterior wall has been scratch-coated and the electrics are in. The windows are awaiting refurbishment



The top floor of 30 Wilson Street has undergone extensive refurbishment. This is where the theatre's new wardrobe accommodation is to be provided





The new female WC on the first floor of 30 Wilson Street



The new lobby to the Youth Reception on the ground floor of 30 Wilson Street