

Custom House Update



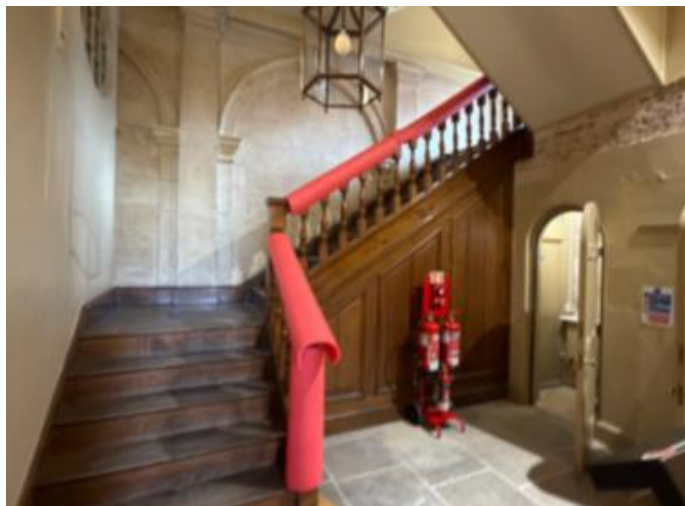
Conservation programme is underway at Custom House

We are pleased to share the latest update on the careful conservation of the Custom House, a much-loved King's Lynn landmark and an important part of the town's shared heritage. We know how much this listed building means to residents, local businesses and community partners, and its protection remains at the heart of the project.

You will notice scaffolding has been erected around the building to enable the conservation work to take place safely.

This is being done carefully so that essential work can take place safely while minimising any impact on the historic fabric.

Inside, furniture and fittings are being removed and important features, including the banisters and balustrades, are being protected before the next stage begins.



Protecting the Parliament Clock

Protecting the Custom House's historic Parliament Clock has been an important part of this early phase. As the clock has remained in place for many years and has rarely been moved, it was carefully removed from its casing in the Long Room and placed in secure storage, where it will remain protected throughout the works.

A specialist clock conservator appointed by the council supervised this delicate operation. The hands and main body were carefully dismantled, and every component was securely packed to safeguard it while in storage.

Parliament Clocks were large public timepieces, often displayed in busy meeting places such as coaching inns and taverns, helping local people keep track of time before personal watches and household clocks became widespread. In a working Custom House, a clock of this kind would also have helped record ships arriving at and leaving the port, linking it closely to King's Lynn's maritime story.

The Custom House clock is understood to have been made locally by Richard Newman around 1780. Its large dial and decorative details are characteristic of this type of clock. Its local origins and long association with the building make it a particularly valued part of King's Lynn's heritage.



Watch a video about the [Custom House Clock](#).

(The clock is on loan from Liverpool's Maritime Museum. Clock image and footage with kind permission of Border Collections at Liverpool's Maritime Museum.)

What you can expect to see next

Over the coming week, you will see the scaffolding and temporary roof enclosure being fully completed. These measures will provide a safe, weather-protected working area and allow the council's contractor, King & Company, to remove the roof tiles carefully, inspect the structure and complete necessary repairs to the roof timbers and cupola.

Inside, floorboards in the function room will be lifted and excavation will begin in the basement in preparation for the new lift. All this work will be managed carefully to protect the building and its historic features.

Meet the project team - Daniel Featherby, Project Manager, King & Company Norfolk

The conservation work is being led onsite by Daniel Featherby, who has more than 20 years' experience in the construction industry. He brings practical, technical and project management knowledge to the careful restoration of the Custom House.

Daniel began his career in carpentry and joinery before moving into project management. This combination gives him a strong understanding of traditional construction methods and the practical challenges of working sensitively within an historic building, alongside experience in planning, procurement and project delivery.

As Project Manager for King & Company Norfolk, Daniel is responsible for overseeing the work and helping to ensure it is completed safely, carefully and to the required standards. A key part of his role is balancing the building's future needs with the protection of its historic fabric and distinctive character.

His hands-on trade knowledge and project management experience provide reassurance that the Custom House is being cared for by a team that understands both its construction and its importance to the local community.



Your stories: My family's connection to the Custom House

Our exciting conservation work at the Custom House has caught the attention of Sue Higon, from North Staffordshire, who has a family connection to this special building and recently visited while on holiday in West Norfolk.

She said: "I've very recently discovered that my three-times great grandad, Peter Tait, was a Custom House Officer at King's Lynn in 1829. However, Peter was born in Kirckmichael in Ayrshire in 1780 and married Helen Andrew in 1823 in Dundonald.

"Their first three sons were born in Dundonald and Ayr but then in July 1829, their 4th son, my two-times great-grandad James, was born in Kirk Burton in Yorkshire. James was christened three weeks later in King's Lynn and so it seems that James was born whilst the family were enroute to Peter's new job!

"Even more remarkable is the fact that the railway hadn't arrived in King's Lynn by then so they must have travelled by coach, horse or even on foot – a journey of around 370 miles. Another son was born in King's Lynn in 1834 but by the time their daughter was born in 1836, the family had moved back to Greenock where Peter is listed as an 'excise man'.



"We really loved visiting King's Lynn and the Custom House in September. What a fantastic building, so excited to see the conservation work getting underway. I really enjoyed finding out more about the maritime history of the town and my family's little part in it. I'm sure we'll visit again."

If you have a personal or family connection to the Custom House, or own an old photo of the building you'd like to share, please email communications@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Keeping everyone up to date

This is the second edition of our Custom House newsletter. We are committed to keeping you updated as the project progresses over the coming year. You can follow our journey through these newsletters – published roughly every six weeks. You can also:

- Find key information about the Custom House project on our new dedicated webpage – www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/custom-house
- [Follow us on Facebook](#) and look out for the regular video updates

Thanks,

Custom House project team



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&
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