

Approved Minutes, Meeting of the Conservation Committee
Michaelmas Term, 18 October 2022
1.00 – 2.30
Godwin Room, Clare College

Present: Prof. Tim Chesters (Acting Chair), Ms Lizzy Conder, Dr Patricia Fara, Dr Tamara Follini, (Chair) Mr Donald Hearn, Ms Deborah Hoy, Mr Haley Huang, Rev. Peter Judd, Mr Graham Ross, Dr Anne Stillman, Dr Jo Costin (in attendance).

1. Apologies and Welcome to New Member: the new MCR representative, Ms Samantha Mason, did not attend.
2. Declarations of Interest: There were none.
3. Minutes of Last Meeting (03.05.2022): These were approved.
4. Matters Arising and for Report:
 - a. Search for an Interior Designer/Finder: Donald Hearn had reported to the Chair that the designer the Committee had formerly used appeared to be no longer in business. Discussion of the basis on which such a person might be employed (formerly this was on a project basis); Deborah Hoy had one proposal of a suitable person and will make further enquiries.
 - b. Lanterns for Screen Hall (entryway to Great Hall): Following a Joint meeting of Conservation and the Old Court Working Party, when it was decided that the proposed lighting fixtures were not appropriate, we are still awaiting new designs. Tamara Follini mentioned the modern fixtures that had been used in the historic interior of the Royal Academy and will supply photographs.
5. Progress on Great Hall Renovation and Finances: Chair, Deborah Hoy and Bursar to report
 - a. Ceiling design and Execution: The Bursar reported that the final design for the ceiling had still not been received, despite reminders sent by Deborah Hoy and the fact that fifty percent of the fee had already been paid. She also clarified that we cannot afford to go beyond the amount budgeted for the ceiling and may have to resort to Plan B: to have the ceiling cleaned and repainted in its present colours. Plans were put in place to ask for the final design and execution costs by Monday, 24th at the latest, and the question was raised as to whether extra funding could be found if required; the Bursar reported that Development believe this is no longer possible. There was a general feeling that the need to adopt Plan B was deeply regrettable.

[On Friday, 21 October, Lizzy Conder reported the results of her meeting with Tim Dolby, the ceiling designer; as his estimate of the cost of painting the ceiling to his design was a minimum of £300,00 and would need fifteen weeks of work the project is no longer feasible in terms of cost and our project timeline (returning the Great Hall for use for graduation 2023). Planning will therefore go ahead for restoring the ceiling on a white and gold decoration basis.]
 - b. Chairs; colour and shape: The photo received from Luke Hughes for Great Hall chairs did not match our request for a chair with a curved back, but the cost of such a model would raise the overall price of the chairs by a minimum of £20,000 owing to the extra labour and rising price of oak. It was agreed, therefore, to adopt the model he had supplied.
6. Fellows' Library, Progress: Chair and Deborah Hoy to report.
 - a. Painting, Lighting, Treatment of Floor: The Chair brought the Committee up to date on the successful completion of these elements of redecoration; thanks were expressed for the helpful collaboration of the College decorators, to Tim Chesters, and to Deborah Hoy for allowing extra time to bring the project to this stage. Discussion was held as to whether the wood nearest the windows needed treatment; Deborah Hoy will pursue.
 - b. Blinds and Heating Mats: It was agreed that it would be desirable to match the blinds to those in the SCR; some samples of shades of green had been received but more were being requested; the point was also made that good quality blinds with appropriate cords (not white plastic) would be appropriate. It was also reported that heating mats will be contingent on furnishings. We also require more information on the amount of weight that can be placed on the mats.
 - c. Furnishings: Table from Great Hall; possible chairs: It was reported that a long table that formerly

was used on the Great Hall dais, as well as the Fellows' dining chairs, could be used *on a temporary basis only*, and until such time as a more appropriate solution to furnishing could be found. Deborah Hoy reported that it may be possible to move the table into the Hall before the end of the year.

7. Discussions with Art Committee: Chair to report
 - a. Thirkill Room; Appropriate works of art: The Committee agreed that the Thirkill Room be preserved as a place for appreciation of the College art collection and that portraits of College figures (with the exception of the Sassoon portrait) should not be hung there.
 - b. Priority List; Rehang and Restoration Costs: It was stressed that this list is provisional and recognised that the College needs a proper asset database, that would be properly detailed. It was also mentioned that one school of thought is that any artworks owned by the College should be displayed, not stored. It was also agreed that it might be appropriate to hang portraits of recent Masters in the Riley auditorium, especially as they would be more visible there to undergraduates. Discussion initiated various comments on the hanging of the female College fellows' portraits, currently in the lobby of the Forbes-Mellon library: it was felt these were too high and should be repositioned with perhaps some of the portraits being hung in the Small Hall.
 - c. A proposed donation and a Clare 'Four Plinth': A space dedicated to works of art by staff, students and fellows was enthusiastically supported.

The Chair will report back to the Art Committee on all of the above; it was noted that consultation between Art and Conservation on these matters was very welcome.

8. Forward Planning: Our proposed 'Four Year Plan': The Bursar reported that the Old Court budget was utilized until 2025-26 and suggested that our proposed plan (devoted to the College's public rooms) and meant to coincide with the College's 700 years celebrations, might be rolled into a ten-year capital plan, particularly as the College is still short of the funding required to finish the Old Court renovation project. It was also noted that when a particular public room is refurbished needs to be co-ordinated with ongoing renovations of Old Court. Yet several members also commented on the College's obligation to care for its historic interiors and to maintain pressure on resolving issues concerning various rooms, especially the Domus. It was also observed that the anniversary celebrations could be used as a fund-raising opportunity for such projects.
9. AOB: There was no other business. It was suggested in an informal discussion at the end of the meeting that the Bursar continue to attend our meetings. [Following the meeting, the Chair asked members to confirm that it would be desirable to ask the Bursar to become a member of the Committee; this was enthusiastically supported.]
10. Date of Lent Term, 2023 Meeting: Tuesday, 24 January.