

Historic buildings get facelift



TEAMWORK: From left, contractors manager Mike Sloman, architect Martin Sturley and site manager Ross Smith. Photo: 1005-190-02

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A TEAM of local architects is hoping to complete a £120,000 restoration project on an historic Barnstaple building by July.

Barnstaple firm Jonathan Rhind Conservation Architects has spent the past two months restoring the grade two listed 19th century Bridge Buildings on the Square.

The building is one of four owned by the Bridge Trust charity which lets out parts of the buildings to business and domestic tenants.

The charity also owns the Bridge Chambers on the Square, a row of properties in the High Street which includes Daymans and [HSBC](#), and a block on Boutport Street which includes a doctor's surgery and Devon Healthcare Trust offices.

Martin Sturley, who is overseeing the work for Jonathan Rhind Architects, said: "The buildings were put up in two sections, those facing the Square in 1844 then the section down the Strand, including the Brewer Harding & Rowe offices, in 1888.

"The older section of the building has deteriorated over the years and the plaster has become cracked and loose.

"As a result we have been replacing the flat sections of plaster, repairing structural cracks and defects to the stone, bricks and mouldings around the windows and doors.

"The front of the building was last decorated six years ago so as well as maintaining the structure, we will also be repainting it as well."

Martin said that although the building is surrounded by scaffolding, all the businesses remain open.

Christopher Bartlett, chief executive of the Bridge Trust, said: "The trust's main income is property and rent so it's important we keep the buildings well-maintained.

"People care about these buildings, the Bridge buildings in particular, as it provides such a nice entrance to the town over the old bridge.

"The contract is on schedule and I have no doubt that the building will look pristine once the scaffolding is removed in July."

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