

Bute House Charlotte Square

Just before the Edinburgh International Book Festival takes over Charlotte Square for August, stop a while and have a look at the building on the north side of the square the is the First Minister's official residence.

Work to restore and repair 18th century Bute House was completed a couple of months ago and it is now available again both to the First Minister and the government.

The house is used by the First Minister when she is in Edinburgh and it is used as a government building for cabinet meetings.

Repairs were carried out to the ornate plaster ceiling in the drawing room and to strengthen the floors above at a cost of £504,216. Stonemasons from Historic Environment Scotland worked on the external wall and the interior wall at the stairwell to make pockets for new steel beams. Traditional skills were employed in retaining the ornate plaster decorations on the ceiling, cornice and frieze.



While the work was carried on the chandelier had to be removed

and the opportunity was taken to rewire it and clean it. All of the bathrooms in the building were replaced and modernised at a cost of around £96,000.

It was first discovered in October last year that immediate work would be required to fix the ceiling. In terms of the lease from National Trust for Scotland the government is responsible for all repairs and maintenance.

The First Minister was put up in accommodation nearby at a cost of £19,220 which includes the amount of rent (£11,008) paid for Bute House over the period when work was being carried out.

Fiona Hyslop Culture Secretary said : “Designed by Robert Adam, Bute House forms the centrepiece of Charlotte Square and is one of the finest architectural achievements of Georgian Edinburgh.

“These necessary repairs and refurbishments mean Bute House can continue to be available for official Scottish Government business, as well as being preserved as an important historical and cultural asset for the nation.

“My thanks go to Historic Environment Scotland and the skilled team of craftsmen and women who were part of what was a complex restoration project.”