

## The Sterling Memorial Library nave tunnel comes down at last



Beginning on the Tuesday evening, May 20, construction workers will start removing the pedestrian tunnel in the Sterling Memorial Library nave, following its yearlong restoration. The dismantling will occur at night when the Library is closed, and should be completed by Friday evening. It will reveal the incredible amount of restoration work accomplished over the last 12 months by Helpern Architects, Turner Construction Company and a small army of subcontractors.

Work will continue over the summer in the north aisle (adjacent to the Selin Courtyard), the south aisle (card catalog area), and the area behind the former circulation desk, with these areas continuing to be cordoned off by construction barriers. Because of this, tour groups are not allowed into the building this summer, but individuals are welcome to stop by to take a look.

Some of the highlights of the restored nave include:

1. The majority of the windows, which have been thoroughly cleaned and repaired, are not clear! Many of the panes are a light straw color, and all of the glass has flecks of black in it. The effect is to diffuse the light coming into the nave, and it can be a bit surprising if one expects to see glass that is as clear as in the Starr Reading Room.
2. New lighting has been installed on the mezzanine level. Although the lights are not yet fully positioned, they already showcase the ceilings and upper-level architectural details.
3. Many of the plaster ceilings have raised stars or crosses that includes gold leaf. The gold has faded over time, but with the new lighting, it will be possible to see parts of the plaster ceiling shimmer.
4. The stone cleaning has greatly highlighted the contrast in color and texture between the limestone and sandstone.
5. Alma Mater, the Eugene Savage mural behind the circulation desk, has been thoroughly restored, and the sculptured plaster pieces that had fallen off over the years have been refurbished.

Full library services in the nave are expected to be available in time for the beginning of fall classes on August 27.

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To see a full photographic journey of the progress from the beginning to the present:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sml-naverestoration/sets/> [1]

More details of the nave restoration can be found at: <http://guides.library.yale.edu/smlrenovation> [2]

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**External link:** [http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2014/05/the\\_sterling\\_memorial\\_library.ht...](http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2014/05/the_sterling_memorial_library.ht...) [4]

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