One of Birmingham’s best-known modern landmarks — the silver disc-covered Selfridges store — will soon be back to its recognisable self, with the giant wrapper that has covered it while the exterior is restored starting to come down.

The store was wrapped up in a giant canvas designed by Osman Yousefzada 18 months ago with the canvas also being reproduced on products such as tote bags, blankets and vegan leathergoods.

Its aim was to hide the work going on to replace some of the 15,000 silver discs that covered the exterior and that had come off.

Now one section of the canvas opposite Moor Street Station has been taken down (although scaffolding remains to obscure the full view) with the rest to follow in stages. It’s unclear how long this will take but it needs to be complete by July.

The exterior had originally been designed to last for 30 years but by late 2018 — just 15 years after opening — a growing number of the discs were missing.

With Selfridges having reopened post-pandemic and Birmingham set to host the Commonwealth games this July and August, it was seen as crucial to restore the building, especially as events including beach volleyball and basketball will feature Selfridges as a backdrop.
The Birmingham Mail reported that the renewed exterior also ties in with the growing awareness of the need to save energy and should deliver a 50% improvement in U-Values (which is the rate of transfer of heat through a building).

By Sandra Halliday

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