
Milnrow Carnegie Library and forecourt wall

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: II

List Entry Number: **1410713**

Date first listed: **21-Nov-2012**

List Entry Name: **Milnrow Carnegie Library and forecourt wall**

Statutory Address 1: **Milnrow Public Library, 55 Newhey Road, Milnrow, Rochdale, OL16 3PS**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

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Location

Statutory Address: **Milnrow Public Library, 55 Newhey Road, Milnrow, Rochdale, OL16 3PS**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SD9318212170**

Summary

Public library and forecourt wall. 1907 by architects' practice S Butterworth and WH Duncan of Rochdale.

Sandstone ashlar, red brick to secondary elevations, slate roofs.

Reasons for Designation

The Milnrow Carnegie Library and forecourt wall are listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Architectural Interest: local architects' practice of Butterworth and Duncan successfully combined an eclectic mix of Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau with a touch of Mannerism in the attenuated entrance gable to produce a well-balanced and pleasing composition, enhanced by the use of high-quality materials and craftsmanship in the relief lettering and intricate ornamentation, and the leaded and stained Art Nouveau glass. * Layout: the library retains its original distinctive plan form with a central, top-lit borrowers' hall and lending library from where the librarian could supervise the large interconnecting reading room and the open-fronted boys' room, as well as the more enclosed ladies' room, with a lecture hall on the first floor, originally shared with the adjacent town hall offices. * Interior: the entrance hall and library rooms retain their highly-glazed, coloured dado tiles, with the staircase balustrade and the majority of original library and lecture hall fixtures and fittings remaining, including doors, framing with leaded glazed overlights to wider openings, and fixed oak bookcases in the parquet-floored, barrel-vaulted reading room, all of which combine to give a period character to the building.

History

Milnrow Library was a Carnegie library, funded by a donation of £2,500 given in 1902 by the Scottish-American steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). Carnegie's name had become synonymous with the funding of public libraries, the first grant in England being in Keighley in 1899. Carnegie initially dealt with requests personally, as at Milnrow, but in 1913 he founded the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. By the time he

died in 1919 it was said that more than half the library authorities in Great Britain had received grants in aid. While his grants covered the building and furniture, the stocking and running of the library was the responsibility of the local authority. The Libraries Act of 1892 made it easier for urban authorities to raise funds and thenceforth libraries were built in unprecedented numbers.

The library was built in 1907 to designs by the well-regarded Rochdale architectural practice of S Butterworth & W H Duncan, who designed five other libraries in addition to Milnrow, including Littleborough, Wardle, and Clitheroe; the other two are unknown or may have been unrealised competition designs. It was formally opened on 4th July 1908. The local newspapers at the time described it as containing a central borrowers' hall and lending library, with general reading room to the right, and a ladies' room and a boys' room to the left, with a librarian's room beyond. The reading room contains original bookcases and therefore probably had a dual purpose as a reference room also. On the first floor was a lecture hall, which was shared with the adjoining Town Hall office.

Details

PLAN: an entrance and staircase hall opens into top-lit borrowers' hall and lending library, with a large reading room to the right (now used as part of the lending library), and a former ladies' room (now IT suite), boys' room (now children's room), and librarian's room (now staff room) to the left. On the first floor is a lecture hall, also originally interconnecting with the adjoining Town Hall office (doorway now blocked).

EXTERIOR: the front elevation is set back from the street to the rear of a forecourt. It is of two bays and two storeys, of sandstone ashlar. To the left it abuts the rear of the side elevation of the former Town Hall office, and to the right it abuts the rear of the side elevation of the former police station. On the left-hand side is a large Diocletion window on the ground floor with stone mullion and transoms, a giant keystone and a hoodmould over. Above, on the first floor, is a canted oriel window with stone mullion and transom windows. To its right is a relief carving of the Milnrow coat of arms, a fleece, set in a decorative frame of thistles and roses. The moulded eaves cornice also incorporates relief carvings of roses and thistles. On the right-hand side of the elevation is a slightly-projecting attenuated gable, which has flanking piers rising to columns above the roofline and clasping a triangular pediment. On the ground floor is the main entrance. The doorway and adjacent small casement window are slightly recessed in a flat-headed opening, which is set in a moulded frame with square shoulders and a central segmental arch, beneath which are giant interlocking voussoir stones. The frame incorporates rose and thistle relief carvings, and there is also a thistle between the door and window. Above, is a plaque with Art Nouveau relief lettering spelling CARNEGIE / LIBRARY / 1907. On the first floor is a six-light mullion and transom window with similar moulded cornice with rose and thistle detailing. The pediment has relief diaper work, and the pier columns have recessed panels. The oriel has a small pyramidal slate roof with a copper finial. The main

building has a hipped slate roof with red ridge tiles, and a tall copper ventilator at the left-hand end of the ridge, ventilating the lecture hall. The windows all have leaded lights, and, with the exception of the small casement window, have sinuous and geometric Art Nouveau patterning using stained glass incorporated mainly into the upper lights. The doorway has double timber doors, painted green, each with a four-light window with a continuous free-style Art Nouveau leaded pattern. Beneath each window is a projecting sill with blocky, stylised rose corbels.

INTERIOR: the entrance doorway opens into a small lobby with a red-tiled floor, moulded cornice, and inner double timber doors, each with a fielded lower panel and an upper oval window, with an Art Nouveau brass door plate and handle. The oval windows are divided into six lights by timber mullion and transoms, with a continuous free-style Art Nouveau leaded pattern with green stained-glass side panels. The entrance and staircase hall has a tiled dado of orange-brown brick tiles with narrow green tile lines and a dark brown skirting and dado rail. The staircase is on the right-hand side, with the foot of the stairs beyond a semi-circular ceiling arch with decorative corbels. The open-well staircase has concrete steps and a handrail with an iron geometric balustrade of diagonally-quartered circles with a swept timber handrail. Beneath the staircase is a wc with a tiled dado; the doorway has a wide, plain timber architrave and a door with three horizontal panels with a brass doorknob. The entrance hall originally opened directly into the borrowers hall, but is now separated by an inserted partition wall with a wide glazed door, side light, and overlights.

The borrowers' hall has a coffered ceiling with two central skylights and a single square column, which is panelled at dado level. To the left rear is a small partitioned office with timber panelled walls incorporating glazed upper lights. Immediately in front is a modern issuing counter in the location of the original issuing desk. To the front left of the borrowers' hall is the former ladies' room entered through an original timber door with rectangular leaded window and a lower panel with fielded diamond, and a plain timber architrave. The room, which is lit by the Diocletion window and a mullion and transom side window, has a coffered ceiling, similar tiled dado to the entrance and staircase hall, and picture rail. In the north corner is a small store cupboard (originally a wc) with a narrow three-panelled door and plain timber architrave. Adjacent is the boys' room, which is open into the borrowers' hall. The wide opening has a timber frame with a rectangular leaded glazed overlight. There is a leaded glazed window between this room and the adjacent former librarian's room. The room has a tiled dado of green brick tiles with a dark brown skirting and dado rail. The former librarian's room has an original panelled door with rectangular leaded window and leaded glazed overlight. On the right-hand side of the borrowers' hall are two wide openings into the reading room, which have similar timber frames to the boy's room with rectangular leaded glazed overlights; the left-hand screen has carved brackets. The reading room has a barrel-vaulted ceiling, green-tiled dado, original oak bookshelves located against the walls and projecting out into the room, and wooden parquet flooring.

The first-floor lecture hall has a barrel-vaulted ceiling and is lit by the oriel window and a segmental arched mullion and transom window to the rear elevation. Double doors open off the stair landing with lower panels and upper cross windows with leaded glazing, and plain timber architrave. Adjacent to the doorway is a store with a three-panelled door and plain timber architrave.

SUBSIDIARY ITEMS: the forecourt is enclosed by walls of rock-faced coursed sandstone with ashlar coping. A wide central gateway is flanked by tall, square ashlar gate piers with chamfered corners, recessed panels and moulded copings. The walls are topped by reinstated iron railings incorporating a diamond motif (c2000 from photographic evidence of the original ironwork removed as part of the war effort). The gateway has a reinstated iron arch with a large central lamp springing from the gate piers, and the iron gates have also been reinstated.

Sources

Other

Rochdale MBC, Historic Building Record Sheet: Milnrow Carnegie Library, Undated,

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

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