

Internal Wall Finishes

Rochdale Town Hall, Phase 3

Overview of Decoration Scheme

Rochdale Town Hall is a Gothic Revival style building, with Arts & Crafts inspired interiors. The Architect, William Henry Crossland, is known to have employed many decorators to complete the interior of the building, which has resulted in rich and bold designs throughout. Our proposed colour scheme makes reference to the original colour palette of the Town Hall, whilst enhancing the new spaces we have created/revealed

As part of Phase 2, thorough paint analysis has been carried out across the building by specialist conservators Lancashire Conservation Studio to ascertain the original colour palette in the different rooms using paint scrapes and colour key references. We have also drawn upon information contained within previous reports detailing paint colours produced by Cricksmiths and drawn inspiration from the rooms where original colour schemes remain in-tact. From this we have worked with Crown Paints to establish a colour palette for the project based on the original colours used, which primarily consists of a selection of red, green and cream colours with some charcoal and gold accents. This process is described in the document provided in response to the Discharge of Condition 9 attached to Listed Building Consent Reference: 20-00616-LBC.

Phase 3 areas will receive a paint scheme utilising the already established philosophy, colour pallet and specifications from Phase 2, aside from the new Mayor's Parlour, as described below.

New Mayor's Parlour

The New Mayors Parlour walls were covered in woodchip wallpaper and painted a single plain colour of beige. However, recent research at Rochdale Town Hall by the volunteer group has suggested that this room may once have been decorated with an embossed covering showing a floral/leaf pattern with pomegranates. This information was obtained through documentary research into archive material.

In the 1860s there was a revival in leather wall coverings for mansions and public buildings. To meet this demand 'oil leather papers' were produced these were essentially gilt leather papers made from paper, pressed into a mould, gilded and often embossed.

The existing woodchip wallpaper was considered of low significance and of late 20th century in origin, and sampling in various locations showed no physical evidence of an earlier embossed wall finish existed on site. Given the high significance of the room the beige woodchip detracted from the overall highly decorated aesthetic of the room, and there was opportunity to reintroduce lost character. Further research suggested that many imitation gilt leather papers were coming to market around the mid-late 19th C, and Lincrusta was found to be one of the closest matching products still in manufacture today. Created using a linseed mixture between two layers of embossed paper, Lincrusta is manufactured using traditional techniques in Morecombe in the UK. Furthermore Lincrusta is available in a floral leaf pattern with pomegranates.

It was therefore proposed to use this to reintroduce an appropriate decorative scheme within the New Mayors Parlor. Samples of the Lincrusta were then decorated using the colour pallet established during Phase 2 based on analysis of William Crossland's original colour pallet, and this was undertaken by trained volunteers. With reference to the description of embossed leather showing a floral/leaf pattern with pomegranates, a finalised scheme was developed. The woodchip was carefully removed and Lincrusta was installed by a specialist (G B Decorating) and decorated by Hist Conservation. Lost character has been reintroduced to the Mayor's Parlour, enhancing the quality of the room.



Sample of the finalised scheme.