

MOCK UP ROOMS FINISHES DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

ROOM 04-008 FINISHES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the documents OTH-PUR-TH-ZZ-DWG-A-9591 & OTH-PUR-TH-ZZ-DWG-A-9592 is to summarise the proposed finishes including the types and colours within the Mock Up Room 04-008. This document summarises the research undertaken and the philosophy that inform the proposed finishes. Document OTH-PUR-TH-ZZ-DWG-A-9591 shows a collage of the proposed finishes and includes a specification and colour or product type reference. Samples of the finishes are to be provided in addition to this document and to be reviewed by the conservation officer prior to installation.

RESEARCH - INTRUSIVE SURVEYS

A series of intrusive surveys were carried out between Oct 2018 and Feb 2019. These were commissioned to research the existing paint schemes within the Town Hall and to trial potential methods of removal to explore the feasibility of proposals and methodologies. The surveys also included lifting and removal of floor finishes which provided evidence regarding the historic finishes.

The aims of architectural paint research were:

- To understand the original design intention, where possible.
- To inform the development of a coherent colour palette for redecoration and fit out of the spaces.
- To inform the ongoing conservation and maintenance of the site.

The following documents relevant to paint schemes were commissioned as part of the intrusive surveys;

- Results of Architectural Paint Research to selected spaces within Manchester Town Hall (1.020) by Hirst Conservation.
- Manchester OTH, Report on steam paint removal (1.061) by Hirst Conservation.
- Intrusive Survey ‘Record of paint removal trials’ (1.031) by Hirst Conservation.

Prior to the decanting of MCC staff the room was used as an office space with the following finishes;

Ceiling - Green/Blue painted jack Arches with cornice and beam casings in white.

Walls - One pale blue colour to all walls with skirting boards painted a gloss white.

Floors - Brown / Beige modern carpet tiles on a thin board substrate tack fixed to the existing floor boards.

Detailing - Small section of plaster skirting within perimeter boxing with 1no. intact collar around the opening for pipework

at low level. The collar and skirting have the historic dark brown paint finishes exposed.

None of the above finishes described are original or historic finishes. The following text summarises the findings of the intrusive surveys in relation to this room.

Paint samples were taken and analysed from several locations on level 4 including the rooms - 04-002 (503), 04-017 (514), 04-016 (514A), 04-021 (521) & 04-024 (525). In summary it can be seen that there are an average of 14 decorative schemes with repeating original and historic schemes across the rooms sampled.

The original scheme is plain beige in oil distemper with a series of later historic schemes that vary slightly in colour reference, but have the same decorative appearance of a painted dado band (black) with a lower dark red / brown band and upper band of green. Fig 1.0 is taken from the Hirst report and shows an example of the uncovering and correlation of these historic schemes. Fig 1.1 shows a graphic representation of the variance (based on NCS colour reference) between two rooms of the different historic schemes.

The Hirst report makes the following statement:

‘The use of a painted dado was evident to all rooms sampled that retained earlier schemes. Again, these schemes were repeated although the exact height of the dado and use of colour varies slightly. The general appearance of rooms follows a pattern of a darker treatment to the lower walls with a darker painted stencil with lighter colour upper walls..... There was some attempt to consider if general offices were treated differently from offices of more senior staff, however as the types of rooms included in the scope of works varies considerably a meaningful comparison based on this approach was not possible.’

Joinery - The skirting boards and windows were found to have an early natural resin varnish finish, with subsequent painted finishes.

Floors - Documentary and physical evidence shows that this space historically had a solid sheet flooring, the earliest of which was a Boulinikon Floor cloth which is made from printed buffalo hide with later linoleum finishes still present within concealed boxing. There is an opportunity to use this precedent but with a modern and more sustainable equivalent.

PROPOSALS

This room is identified in the heritage impact assessment as being of high significance and the capacity for change plans categorise the room as ‘for repair’.

The proposed finishes must be suitable for the following;

- Be technically appropriate for application to the historic fabric and features.
- Be practical for the proposed office use.

- Be economical for the size and scale of building and future maintenance and redecoration.
- Colour scheme appropriate to contemporary use and heritage significance.
- Colour scheme and technical properties to be in line with current guidance for access and regulations.

The proposal is to remove the modern ‘plastic’ paints only and to retain the original lead and zinc oil paints. This will then provide a sound base to which a new low porosity and low surface tension new paint can be applied. The primary reason for this is to remove the conflicting surface tensions of the existing paint layers, allowing for a redecoration scheme with a more stable lifespan which will reduce the risk of future failure and be the start of a managed maintenance strategy that is appropriate to the ongoing care of a Grade I listed building. This approach also allows for the retention of the paint archaeology of the without compromising the currently proposed and ongoing future use of the building.

Within this room, the proposal is not to restore the historic paint scheme, but rather to build upon the character of the original design intent with a contemporary colour scheme using heritage and economically appropriate products.

For the walls the proposal is for a new paint scheme with a black painted dado (35mm) with a darker lower panel and lighter upper panel. The paint colours are to be such that their light reflectance value (LRV) provides an acceptable level of contrast between adjacent surfaces as to improve access. The type of paint is to be economical, but also of low surface tension as to be sensitive to the historic fabric. Paint of this nature has a lighter and more subtle tone compared with Victorian oil paints which here are typically dark. This proposal follows the narrative of the building and offers an interpretation of the original character while providing a colour scheme that is more functional to the contemporary office needs.

The ceiling, cornices and beam casings are to be a neutral white colour to aid with light reflectance with a higher grade paint on decorative plasterwork.

It is proposed to paint the skirting boards. As a room for repair and not restoration, it is not proposed to reinstate a varnish finish as this would require extensive work to the boards and potentially removal and re-fixing of boards to sufficiently remove all existing paint for redecoration.

A marmoleum floor finish is proposed to replace the existing carpet tiles. This is a solid sheet floor finish and is a modern version of linoleum which, historically, was present. This material has properties suitable for an office environment and also reflects the narrative of the building. Provision of a sub floor will reduce impact of installation on the existing floorboards and also help with sound transfer and impact noise.

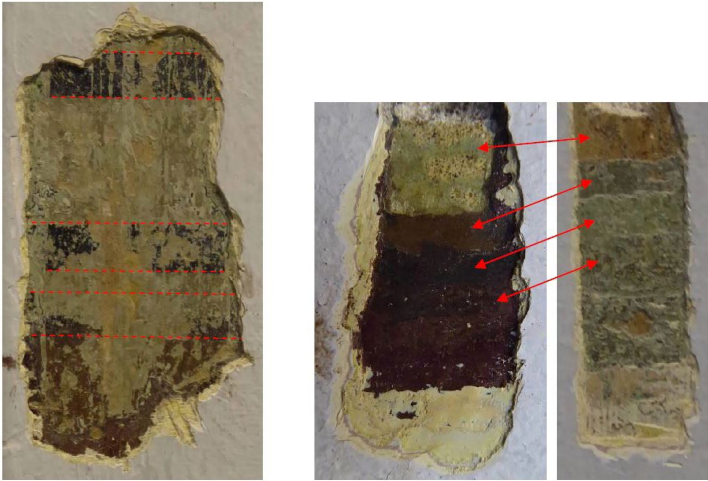


Fig 1.0 Images of historic paint uncovering in room 514. Here the repeating green and brown schemes with varying height of the painted dado can be seen

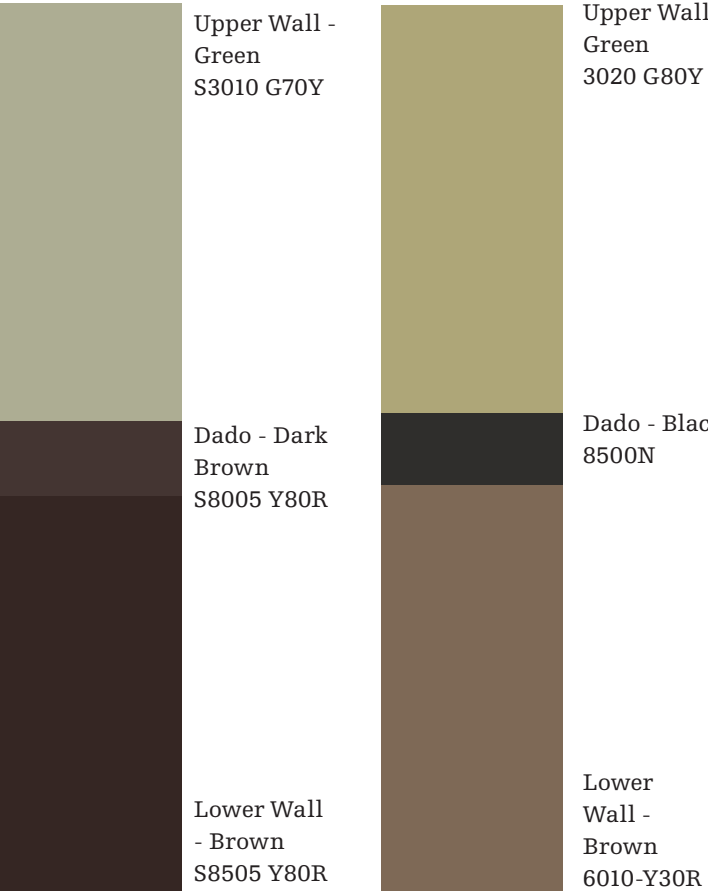


Fig 1.1 Historic colour scheme room 04-017 (514) and 04-024 (525), respectively

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