

Heritage Rochdale: Rochdale Town Hall



Project Overview

Rochdale Town Hall is a building of national importance, and one of the finest Victorian town halls in the UK. Designed by William Crossland, the Town Hall was opened in 1871 as a symbol of the town's industrial might. A century and a half later, the building is considered a masterpiece of gothic architecture.

Location

Rochdale Town Centre

The restoration project

A masterpiece it is, but one in need of some tender loving care. The building is showing its age, with a crumbling drainage system, leaking roof and darkened, dust-smeared windows and wooden panelling. A digital scan of the building carried out by the Archaeology Department at Salford University also revealed a treasure trove of forgotten rooms and obscured features.

The restoration project aims to restore the building to its original glory (2021 is the 150th anniversary of its original opening), and make it an open and accessible community space.

In January 2021 phase 1 of the project got underway, funded by Rochdale Borough Council. This will include all major infrastructure works, including removal of asbestos, strip out of old electrical system and the modernisation of the building's internal drainage. Structural works will be carried out to create openings for new lifts and access points.

Phase 2 of the project, beginning in summer 2021, includes replacing the roof, repairs to the external stonework, cleaning of the building and restoration of key historical rooms like the Great Hall and Grand Staircase. A new exhibition on the history of the Town Hall - featuring information panels at key points around the building - will be installed. Phase 2 is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The works will be completed by the end of 2023, and celebrated with a grand reopening event.

The Town Hall Square

Work to the Town Hall Square will begin during 2022 and will run in conjunction with the building restoration works, with all works completed by the end of 2023.

The Square will feature new paving, seating and landscaping, enhancing its value as an attractive and inviting public space. The regeneration will also improve the Square's links to other cultural and heritage buildings in the town centre, including Touchstones, the Pioneers Museum and the Drake Street **Heritage Action Zone**



Project Case study: Town Hall Regeneration



A Town Hall for everyone

Community involvement is at the heart of the Town Hall project. The RDA consulted the local population widely before formalising plans for the restoration, and integrated those findings into the restoration planning. The stated aim is to make the Town Hall a space for everyone.

A new glass entrance way will welcome visitors. Information panels and trained volunteers will guide them through the building's fascinating history. The target is to attract 150,000 visitors in the 12 months after reopening, compared to just 2,000 annually today.

The Town Hall will also welcome weddings, festivals and regular community events. Easier access and better facilities will ensure the building can be enjoyed by every member of the community.

If you would like to find out further information about the this project, or any of our other projects, please get in touch with The Regeneration Team:

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Community involvement

The regeneration of the Town Hall will be completed with the expert help of specialists from across the North of England. It will also involve members of the local community in a variety of ways.

- The RDA will appoint an apprentice for two years to support the project's delivery team.
- The RDA is working in partnership with Falinge Park High School and Class of Your Own to deliver the Design Engineer Construct (DEC) scheme to Year 10 and 11 students. The DEC qualification is an introduction to a professional career in construction.
- The project will offer local young people the unique opportunity to learn new skills in heritage conservation alongside professional specialists, from museum collection care to stained glass conservation.
- When it opens in 2023, volunteers from the local community will be invited to train as guides, and help bring the Town Hall to life.



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