European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards (2026)
1532-Conservation and Adaptive Reuse 1. Conservation & Adaptive Reuse

Rochdale Town Hall

LPEXDbBY

Entry details

General information

Main country of application	United Kingdom*
Name of the building, site or work of art	Rochdale Town Hall

Address of the building, site or work of art

> *Rochdale Town Hall, The Esplanade, Rochdale, United Kingdom, OL16 1AZ*

Type (select one type only, as applicable):	✓ Building

Brief description of the project

> *Rochdale Town Hall, one of the UK's most important 19th-century buildings, has been unlocked for 21st-century public use; transforming a tired civic building into one that imbues pride within the local community. Extensive repair and restoration has been undertaken and previously unseen spaces are accessible for the first time. Over 1194 volunteer, training and job opportunities were created and a heritage skills studio established. The public realm, once a car park, has been transformed into a multi-functional civic space. Rochdale Town Hall stands today as an example of how heritage-led regeneration can both bolster communities, and bring them together.*

Start date of the project	2021-01-22
Completion date of the project	2024-12-20
Website(s) of the project/nominee	https://www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk
Instagram page of the project, if any	@rochdaletownhall
Any other relevant social media	@insallarch

Does the site or heritage in question have national/regional/ local cultural heritage designation or protection status in its country?	Yes

If yes, please specify:

> *Grade I-listed*

Is the site or heritage in question included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, either as a single World Heritage Site or as part of one larger site? If so, please specify which one.

> No

Is the site or heritage in question designated as a European Heritage Label? If so, please specify which one.

> No

If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to the public?	Yes

What steps have been taken to ensure that the site / project is inclusive and accessible to as wide an audience as possible?

> *The building and town hall square now physically and intellectually accessible due to interventions including a new external terrace as well as internal lifts.*

Contact details

Name of the entrant	Ms Lucy House
Entrant's position	Marketing and Communications Coordinator
Organisation of the entrant	Donald Insall Associates (Head Office)
Address of the entrant	12 Devonshire Street, London, W1G 7AB
Email address of the entrant	Lucy.House@insall-architects.co.uk
Please confirm entrant's email	Lucy.House@insall-architects.co.uk

Additional email addresses

> Communications@insall-architects.co.uk

Telephone of the entrant (fixed line)	+12072459888
Website of the entrant	https://www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk/
Name of the owner	Ms Emma Birkett

Owner's position	Heritage Director
Organisation of the owner	Rochdale Development Agency
Email address of the owner	E.Birkett@investinrochdale.co.uk
Name of the project leader	Ms Rebecca Mills
Project leader's position	Associate Director – Architect
Organisation of the project leader	Donald Insall Associates
Email of the project leader	Rebecca.Mills@insall-architects.co.uk
Telephone of the project leader	+44161 359 4326

Other relevant participants

> *Project Team:*
> *Client: Rochdale Borough Council*
>
> *Technical and client-side project management: Rochdale Development Agency*
>
> *Lead consultant and conservation architect: Donald Insall Associates*
>
> *Landscape architect: Gillespies*
>
> *Main contractor: H.H. Smith & Sons*
>
> *Cost Manager: FWP Ltd*
>
> *M&E Engineer: Max Fordham*
>
> *Structural and civil engineer: Price & Myers*
>
> *Public realm civil engineers: Buro Happold*
>
> *Exhibition design: Redman Design*
>
> *Specialist conservation repairs: Hirst Conservation*
>
> *Specialist cleaning and restoration: Lancashire Conservation Studios*
>
> *Stained glass cleaning and repairs: The York Glaziers Trust*

Concise summary

Concise summary

> ***Context***
>
> *Grade I-listed Rochdale Town Hall closed for works in 2020. The building fabric had become compromised and deemed unfit for the changing needs of Rochdale Borough Council and the community.*

Rochdale Town Hall is located in Rochdale, Manchester. A report published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government into deprivation found that 11 of the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Rochdale are in the top 3% most deprived nationally and 59 are in the top 20%.

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), a design team was appointed in 2017 to carry out repair and conservation of the fabric, and a series of design interventions to unlock the building as a key cultural facility for the town.

Aims and results

The revitalised Town Hall was pivotal in Rochdale Borough Council's vision of heritage regeneration of the whole borough: rooting itself as a place of community pride and ownership, used by diverse community groups, visited by people from many places and backgrounds, and establishing Rochdale as a quality visitor destination.

This has been achieved. The restoration secures the building's future, once again making it relevant to the people of Rochdale, who are already enjoying their reborn town hall. From Jan-July 2025, there were over 28,000 visitors.

Inappropriate modern interventions have been stripped away to reveal original fabric. Bold new interventions and sustainable upgrades are sensitively integrated with the existing fabric to form a building fit for 21st century use. Throughout 1194 volunteer, job and training opportunities were created. Access has been improved to all areas, and community spaces established. The public realm has been transformed from a car park into a vibrant multi-functional civic space.

Outstanding qualities

The project has breathed life back into this once-crumbling town hall, giving it back to the community whilst ensuring that one of the UK's most important 19th-century buildings is protected for generations.

This project is a vital case study showcasing how a heritage-led regeneration can also prioritise community benefit and sustainability and a catalyst for regeneration in the surrounding area. Not only is the historic fabric restored, the building is now energy efficient, and a space for all, with designated community space, a Changing Places facility, lifts to previously inaccessible areas and a heritage skills hub.

Cost

This multimillion-pound project was mainly funded by Rochdale Borough Council with support from NLHF (£8.3 million grant), Salix and Towns Fund.

Historical background

Historical background with dates

Plans for a town hall in Rochdale were first raised in 1858 and a site by the River Roch was purchased in 1859. In 1864 a competition was announced to build a town hall, won by William Henry Crossland, and Rochdale Town Hall opened to the public in 1871.

The Town Hall originally featured a very tall tower with a wooden spire, 240ft high, but in April 1883 the tower was destroyed by a fire. By this time, Crossland had moved on to other projects so the replacement was designed by Alfred Waterhouse, architect of Manchester Town Hall, in about 1885-87.

The architecture of Rochdale Town Hall has long been admired across Europe. It has been suggested by some that the building came to the attention of Adolf Hitler, who admired it so much he ordered the Nazi air force to avoid damaging it in raids in WWII.

Value and significance in its local/regional/national context

Rochdale Town Hall stands today as one of the most historically significant buildings in the UK, and it is internationally significant for its contribution to development of Gothic architecture within Europe, combining English, French and Flemish influence; an important early departure from High Victorian heaviness.

A Grade I-listed building, its dramatic Gothic exterior and jewel-like interior are harmonious and exemplify the apex of High Victorian design. An outstanding example of the Gothic Revival, it also includes early examples of Aesthetic Movement design, then a very new movement in art.

The Great Hall is arguably the most important room in the town hall. The rich internal decoration includes Henry Haliday's mural depicting King John signing the Magna Carta. The stained glass is by Heaton Butler and Bayne. Sixteen timber hammer beams form the main roof structure, with the ceiling between formed of 330 painted lath and plaster panels.

Former and new use of the building/site, if applicable

Rochdale Town Hall has stood at the heart of the town centre and local democratic traditions since its construction.

Remaining in municipal use for most of the 20th century, by the early 21st century it was deemed unfit for council uses and most functions moved out.

All council functions have now been restored, but the Town Hall today offers much more. It is a visitor attraction, community space, events venue, gallery and home to a heritage skills hub. The surrounding public realm, once a car park, is now the largest pedestrianised town square in the country.

State of conservation of the building/site/work of art before the project commenced

By the 2010s, Rochdale's historic town centre, and the Town Hall, were degraded; years of under investment, poor maintenance and ill-informed alteration accelerated the spiral of decline, leading to a loss of civic pride.

Highly significant interiors were deteriorating due to leaking roofs. The rich internal decoration was dulled by layers of soiling that completely concealed the original stencilling. Subdivision of spaces compromised access and circulation, resulting in poor fire escape and limited occupancy levels; electrics were dangerous and heating ineffective.

A culture of poor treatment of the building developed, resulting in a building no longer fit for purpose.

Conservation work undertaken

Aims and objectives of the project.

The overarching aim was to revitalise Rochdale Town Hall as a symbol of civic pride and ownership throughout Rochdale: used by diverse community groups, visited by people from many backgrounds, and helping to establish Rochdale as a quality visitor destination.

The building began life as a showpiece - internally the surviving rooms with intact schemes are probably unmatched as examples of Victorian polychrome decorated interiors, with one of the most elaborate examples of pictorial and heraldic decoration of this era. A socially and culturally radical building, the interior decoration illustrating the careful balance between radical politics, its role in international world trade and business through which Rochdale's entrepreneurs and politicians sought to identify the town on the world stage.

The 'Cathedral of Commerce' project aimed to transform Rochdale Town Hall into a community asset which celebrates the building's extraordinary design and craftsmanship, fully opening it up for public use.

The project brief was developed through close engagement with the community. Specific objectives were:

- *To repair and preserve the Grade I-listed fabric, which was in poor condition*
- *Enhance both physical and intellectual accessibility*
- *Modernise infrastructure and create new flexible community spaces*
- *Promote heritage education and training*

- *Reduce the building's carbon footprint and improve the internal environment*

Historical and technical research undertaken for the project.

The design approach was informed by an in-depth research into and an understanding of the building's significance and condition, alongside a thorough engagement process. An update of the former Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was undertaken, alongside a full condition survey of the building, from which the issues and opportunities were more clearly understood.

Our philosophy was to thoroughly understand the building, and identify opportunities for change to address poor vertical circulation, accessibility and make the building fit for purpose. Understanding the intention of the architect, Henry Crossland, and considering what he may have done had he been set the current challenges, helped inform our design.

3D laser scanning technology was used to measure the building and capture the fabric detail, aligned to Rochdale Town Hall's real-world coordinates. The scans were processed to create a high-resolution 3D representation of the building before being used as a backdrop for creating accurate and enriched measured survey drawings that informed all aspects of the project from inception to completion.

A research group embarked on a journey to unveil the layers of history previously forgotten. Through the in-depth exploration of the Town Hall's artefacts, combined with those found in the Local Studies Centre, the group were able to unearth a more complete picture of the Town Hall's role within the local community. This research is currently being translated into an exhibition that will feature in the Welcome Gallery.

The team led a series of workshops with user groups to understand their needs and operational requirements, to inform design proposals for the transformation of Rochdale Town Hall into a cultural venue rooted in community cohesion. Further workshops enabled user groups to feedback into the emerging design proposals.

Stages of implementation of the project.

The transformation was undertaken through three phases of work:

- *Phase 1, 2021 enabling works: this involved strip out, protection, and difficult structural works. This was undertaken to stabilise the building and develop scope, costs and reduce risk profile for future phases.*
- *Phase 2, NLHF funded restoration of the external fabric and central and east wing alongside major public realm works. 2021-2023, this phase involved the restoration of the areas of highest historical significance. These works enabled the site to be reopened to the public after 4 years.*
- *Phase 3, west wing and public realm: including the restoration of the Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour, alongside the completion of the new landscape setting.*

Externally fabric repair works included re-roofing, masonry repairs, stained glass conservation, restoration of the timber fleche, and improved maintenance access.

Internally works included careful conservation of the highly significant interiors, extensive conservation cleaning and restoration, stabilisation of ceilings and extensive joinery repairs. MEP services were renewed.

New interventions included glazing of the Porte Cochere, formation of a terrace to the building perimeter, installation of a new lift and staircase in the clock tower, and installation of exhibition spaces.

We engaged early with the Conservation Officer, Historic England and statutory consultees to share ideas and steer design development, and obtain statutory consent for the changes. Importantly, we worked with the building, not fighting it, so that interventions sat comfortably as a new layer within the Victorian composition. Bolder interventions, such as glazing of the Porte Cochere, the new external terrace and the new clocktower circulation, were detailed to a high level early on to ensure that impact was fully considered.

Design quality had to match the excellence found in the existing building; all new interventions are of the highest quality and most robust materials.

Description of the design and conservation work undertaken, including the rationale behind key decisions made during the process.

> *Extensive repair and restoration work has been carried out to the historically significant areas including the Great Hall, the Council Chamber and the Mayor's suite of rooms. Previously unseen spaces are now accessible to the public.*
>
> ***Reclaiming the Bright Hall:***
>
> *In the Bright Hall, unsympathetic 20th-century subdivisions were removed to reveal a double-height space, original carved angels, and a hidden window allowing views into the Great Hall.*
>
> *A 1970s lift shaft had cut straight through a main truss end and its carved stone corbel. Through careful sequencing, temporary supports were designed to allow the shaft to be demolished and to hold up the roof while a new carved truss end and corbel could be reinstated.*
>
> *The hall is now available for events and community use, featuring permanent artwork co-created with the local community.*
>
> ***Works to the Roof & Fleche:***
>
> *The works to the Fleche were carefully planned, starting with a complex scaffold design and installation, where access was created via a series of 'saddles' constructed on top of the South elevation of the Great Hall roof with a slender walkway along the ridge.*
>
> *Works commenced with stripping away existing paint finishes and removing the original leadwork, uncovering the extent of deterioration and loss of structure.*
>
> *Various methods were considered for the restoration, ranging from local in-situ repairs to unconventional suggestions such as removing the Fleche in its entirety and lifting it to ground. After consideration and specialist input, a hybrid approach was undertaken with key structural elements repaired in-situ whilst other sections were deconstructed and taken to the workshop. Through minor amendments to the design, the team were able to improve the octagonal gutter arrangement and reduce the likelihood of future water ingress – which had adversely affected the Fleche over the previous 140 years.*
>
> *On completion of the timber repairs, the leadwork was relaid and, following paint analysis, the timberwork was redecorated in the original much brighter and vibrant colour scheme.*
>
> ***Enhancing access and the entrance:***
>
> *New interventions include a series of internal and external adaptations to improve circulation and unlock public access to previously inaccessible areas of the building. This includes new terracing that wraps around the building to give level access for all an innovative solution overcoming the difference between external ground level and the internal floor level.*
>
> *The Porte Cochère is now fully glazed with increased levels of lighting to entice visitors into the building, responding to feedback from the local community that the entrance felt 'unwelcoming'.*
>
> *Within the Alfred Waterhouse-designed clock tower, a glass lift and a wrap around timber staircase have been installed, creating a new exciting way of accessing the building, and enabling the Town Hall to host more than one event simultaneously.*

Problems encountered and justification for the decisions taken to overcome these problems, both before and during the project.

> *Improving access and circulation was of the most significant problems encountered throughout the project.*
>
> *The key to unlocking the potential of the building was addressing poor horizontal and vertical circulation as well as unsatisfactory fire escape. These issues compromised the way in which the building could be used, restricting occupancy. A new lift and staircase was proposed, allowing the east end of the building to be accessed separately from the main*

entrance, enabling two separate events to be held at once, helping to increase the revenue-earning potential of the building.

Analysis showed that the significance of the clocktower by Alfred Waterhouse related to its external appearance, leading to a successful consent for the major intervention.

Constructing the new lift and stair core was one of the most technically challenging elements of the project. A new door opening was required, created by cutting through the 1.4m thick walls at the base of the 53m high brick and stone tower. The location of the opening was based on the original unrealised plans of Waterhouse from his redesign of the tower following the 1883 fire, with the new opening now in the location originally intended. A reinforced concrete frame was designed to surround the new opening, following testing using a finite element model of the entire tower. The frame is laterally stiff and able to carry the huge dead weight of masonry above, transmit it around the opening, and take it back to the original footing below, without overstressing the stonework around it.

Description of the building and conservation techniques and principles applied, materials employed and any traditional crafts and skills used.

The repair and restoration of the Great Hall ceiling were one of the most noteworthy challenges of the project, requiring a myriad of both contemporary and traditional conservation techniques. A detailed examination of the ceiling identified a combination of issues including cohesive failure, which led to serious concerns regarding its stability.

Following extensive trials, deep consolidation of both nibs and underlying plaster using an aqueous colloidal silica was implemented. This method of stabilisation was combined with the installation of a series of pads, suspended from above to not add additional weight to the panels. Non-functioning laths were carefully removed, and small holes were carefully drilled to allow the consolidant and plaster to penetrate the panels below. The area was cleaned, and the surface treated, then pads formed from a build-up of Quadaxial fabric, rib lath and a plaster of Paris mix were applied before being mechanically fixed by a stainless-steel tie attached to a stainless-steel band spanning across the joists. This innovative method of consolidation employs techniques never used before and was developed through close collaboration between the design team and the specialist conservators. It was a requirement of the building insurers that netting was placed beneath the panels to protect against future failure and extensive trials were undertaken to ensure it was virtually invisible. The netting also had to be tested to ensure that it could hold a panel in the event of failure and a 1:1 test rig was set up on site to ensure the netting would be capable of holding a 7kg fallen panel.

Alongside this, the highly decorative internal surfaces were cleaned. A total of seven layers of impervious varnish had been applied over the years to both the plaster panels and the timber beams. These commercially prepared varnishes, commonly applied to decorative surfaces in the mid-20th century, harden by oxidation and become more insoluble and yellow as they age.

Firstly, all loose dirt was removed with dry brushes, and a vacuum cleaner. The varnish was surface treated with ammonium hydroxide solution and the upper layers of varnish were carefully scraped back by hand using a scalpel blade. Acetone: Benzyl alcohol 4:1 in a gel with appropriate dwell time was then used to remove lower levels of varnish with cotton swabs.

A careful and selective touching up of the original panels was carried out before the final application of a modern conservation-grade varnish.

European significance

European significance of the project/initiative/nominee.

Rochdale Town Hall is one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture, with international significance. It serves as an example of how a civic building no longer fit for purpose can be re-born to serve its original purpose in an inclusive way, through improved access, circulation, interpretation, intelligent intervention and thermal upgrade.

Europe's heritage is a rich and diverse mosaic ranging from ancient ruins to world heritage sites. The heritage-led regeneration of this town hall showcases the potential of heritage internationally, and how it can be used to create thriving places and people.

Globally, countries are facing various levels of deprivation and hardship. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, a study into deprivation by the UK government found that Rochdale was in the top 20 most deprived boroughs in the UK. The building now stands as an accessible community asset that is continuously in use by locals.

Results and impact

Summary of the main results achieved and knowledge that has been gained. List the ways that the project/initiative contributes to the preservation and/or enhancement of the historical, cultural, environmental, educational and/or social values of the heritage in question. Mention the project's impact on conservation policy and practice, if any.

Rochdale Town Hall is once again relevant to the people of Rochdale, who are enjoying their reborn town hall. Between January and April 2025, there have been over 28,000 visitors.

For the first time in four years this Grade I-listed architectural wonder—one of the most significant building's in the UK—is open to the public. Historically significant areas have undergone restoration, accessibility is improved throughout with previously unseen spaces open to the public for the first time and new spaces including the Welcome Gallery and the Martlet restaurant.

First-class conservation has been carefully balanced alongside bold interventions that have unlocked the site for contemporary use, drastically improving physical and intellectual access.

The regeneration of Rochdale Town Hall marks an important step in the wider regeneration of Rochdale. The project team collaborated with Rochdale Borough Council to realise their vision for their Town Hall; the building stands today as a place of community pride and ownership, used by diverse groups, visited by people from different backgrounds and is a major step in establishing Rochdale as a quality visitor destination.

The project has resulted in the following achievements:

Social:

- *Community and events space provided throughout.*
- *Universal access throughout, via external terracing and three new lifts.*
- *New exhibition spaces and interpretation panels allow local people to engage with their history.*

Economic and education:

The project has provided employment and learning opportunities for local people:

- *Heritage skills studio established with three permanent conservators.*
- *Multiple educational course facilities.*
- *Over 30 paid job opportunities within the project team provided.*
- *Overall 1194 volunteer, training and job opportunities were created.*

Environmental:

- *A pair of Salix PSDS grant-funded Air Source Heat Pumps reduce carbon emissions by approximately 90 tonnes annually.*
- *Salix-funded roof insulation reduces carbon emissions by approximately 100 tonnes annually.*

Refer also to the independent Evaluation Report.

Aspects of the project that can be considered innovative within its area or field.

Innovative restoration

An unprecedented restoration method was developed to secure the Great Hall decorative ceiling panels. Deep consolidation used an aqueous colloidal silica, with a series of pads formed from a build-up of Quadaxial fabric, rib lath and a plaster of Paris mix; this was applied before being mechanically fixed by a stainless-steel tie attached to a stainless-steel band spanning across the joists.

Alongside this, thermal performance was improved through adding modern breathable materials, that insulate without raising the roof profile or impacting the ceiling panels.

Innovative procurement and collaboration

Existing frameworks were unable to provide contractors with relevant heritage experience so a bespoke two-stage tender process was developed, and the project was split into manageable phases to reduce risk.

The project finished in line with its original 2018 master programme and the budget set by the client, despite facing external challenges such as impacts from Covid, and hyper-inflation.

Steps taken to reach people who have not previously interacted with the site/project. This might include youth, local communities, non-traditional audiences, people with disabilities, etc.

Youth

Young people gained first-hand experience of this once-in-a-generation project. In total the contractors recruited 12 apprentices, and the project manager recruited two, and the architect appointed an architectural apprentice, who went on to qualify.

Community

The team led a series of workshops with the wider community to understand their needs , to inform design proposals.

"As external evaluators, we have been impressed at the work the team has put into involving local people, families and schoolchildren in the project wherever they have been able to—including the conservation programme, new artworks and a new volunteering programme." –Anna Cullum Associates.

The success of the project is reflected by the use of the building by community groups, including school and dance groups.

Council strategy manager, Caroline Storr: "The great thing in this work is that it has changed the town hall into a place where everyone can see themselves represented."

Project's interaction with the surrounding community and landscape.

Once a car park, the transformation of the surrounding public realm has created a multi-functional civic space at the heart of Rochdale, designed to foster a dynamic environment for cultural and social activity.

With surrounding roads removed, the space has been reclaimed for people, offering a distinctive gathering place that reflects the building's significance while inviting everyone to engage with its history. This space can now accommodate events, markets, and daily life.

At the heart of the square is The Rochdale Carpet, a natural stone pattern celebrating the town's proud textile heritage. The square is further enriched by etched paving artwork from local artist Doodhler, featuring symbols like cotton plants and the Lancashire Rose—drawn from the Town Hall's historic interiors. These elements extend Rochdale's story, making its heritage more visible and accessible.

Restoration of the historic Broadfield Park, which forms a backdrop to the building, is now underway.

Environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the project (e.g. contribution to climate action and environmental protection; measures to ensure long-term financial sustainability or future viability; benefits for people and communities, where relevant).

Social

As an NLHF-funded project, it was a requirement that social value outputs were quantifiable and deliverable, resulting in the following achievements:

- *Supported a Design, Engineer and Construct (DEC) programme, facilitating 54 students in completing the course and gaining qualifications.*
- *A heritage skills studio has been set up, where three specialist conservators have been employed to work out of a dedicated space that will also host volunteer training and workshops.*
- *Community archaeological digs attended by over 2000 people.*
- *12-week heritage skills training focusing on restoration of historic fabric was delivered to 54 participants ranging from age 17 to mid-60s.*
- *Overall the project team provided over 30 paid job opportunities. This included apprenticeships and work placements. Many of the apprentices worked for the duration of the project, all gaining invaluable experience. Some have secured permanent jobs, including the project manager apprentice.*
- *Community and events space has been provided throughout featuring co-created artwork. Over 280 local people were involved in the community co-created artworks, resulting in 10 pieces of artwork.*
- *Over 41 public construction tours delivered, exceeding the target of 36.*
- *Overall 1194 volunteer, training and job opportunities were created.*
- *Universal access has been provided throughout, with external terracing and a lift within the clocktower.*
- *New exhibition spaces and information panels throughout the building, featuring a range of audio, visual and tactile resources, help visitors engage with its rich history, catering to diverse learning styles.*
- *In total the project engaged with over 3600 people..*

Environmental

Sustainability was a key driver, with the following implementations reducing operational and embodied carbon:

- *A new heating system installed throughout, zoned and controllable, with pipework concealed in voids.*
- *A pair of Salix PSDS grant-funded Air Source Heat Pumps work in tandem with the existing boilers reducing carbon emissions by approximately 90 tonnes yearly.*
- *Salix-funded roof insulation will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 100 tonnes per year.*
- *A new substation futureproofs the building allowing for a complete switch to heat pump based heating when the gas boilers reach the end of their life.*
- *External windows replaced with appropriately designed double-glazed units that have minimal visual impact.*
- *Openable windows have been installed throughout providing natural ventilation.*

Post-occupancy analysis allows the heating system to run at a much lower temperature to improve efficiency and thermal comfort, coupled with an intelligent heating zoning control strategy that works with the changes in conditions (solar gain and occupancy).

Measures adopted to ensure the longer term maintenance of the site.

The approach was to make the spaces as flexible as possible and adaptable to future needs. New interventions were designed to be reversible – in the Porte Cochère the structural glass floats in the openings with minimal contact with the stonework.

New roof leadwork and rainwater disposal was designed to be able to cope with increasing storm conditions due to climate change. Access for maintenance of the complex roof was improved, with discretely installed access hatches and mansafe fall-arrest systems.

All new design intervention re high quality and made of robust materials for longevity. Cracked and damaged drainage was renewed to give a 100 year service life.

Heritage skills studio

A heritage skills studio has been established in the basement, providing a dedicated space for the maintenance team to use, securing the future of the site. Three permanent conservators have been employed including a stained glass conservator, a painted surfaces conservator and a furniture restorer. This means that the maintenance team include staff with the specialist skills needed to care for the building going forward, allowing for a continuous and ongoing programme of restoration. The skills studio is also used as a space for volunteer training and workshops.

Dissemination of the project's results and knowledge gained and any outreach or educational activities.

Heritage engagement and volunteering

- *Over 41 public construction tours delivered.*
- *Community archaeological digs attended by over 2000 people.*
- *Overall 1086 volunteers were involved from inception to completion.*
- *Within the basement, a heritage skills studio has been set up, where three specialist conservators have been employed to work out of a dedicated space that will also host volunteer training and workshops. This will allow heritage engagement to continue following project completion.*

Employment and training

All members of the project team offered employment and training opportunities. Overall, the project team provided over 30 paid job opportunities. This included a project management apprentice (now appointed permanently) and a stained-glass trainee.

The project facilitated a Design, Engineer and Construct programme for local schools. Over 50 students completed the course, gaining qualifications.

A 12-week heritage skills training focusing on restoration of historic fabric was delivered to 18 participants ranging from age 17 to mid-60s.

Transferability of the initiative to other contexts and its scalability potential.

This project is a unique example of a largescale heritage-led regeneration. Integrating the community from the offset and recognising the asset as belonging to the community was a strength that can inform heritage regeneration internationally.

The education and training programmes, resulting in 108 opportunities, is a model that can be applied widely. The heritage skills studio is a unique addition to a municipal building and showcases how this initiative can be replicated even when it doesn't initially seem possible.

The regeneration of Rochdale Town Hall is already having an impact on other areas throughout Rochdale. The project to revitalise Broadfield Slopes, the public park lying behind the Town Hall is applying the same project philosophy.

"Heritage has the power to further a sense of pride in place for communities and this project is certainly something for local people to be proud of." – Helen Featherstone, The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Any related work that still needs to be completed, if applicable.

The revitalised Town Hall marks an important step in Rochdale Borough Council's vision of heritage-led regeneration of the whole borough. Following work to the Town Hall and Town Hall Square, works are now focusing on transforming the historic park that lies behind Rochdale Town Hall known as Broadfield Slopes. The slopes are regarded as a historically significant part of Rochdale town centre, linking back to its medieval origins

Following an NLHF grant the underused and deteriorating park and garden will be brought back into public use. Rochdale Council's public consultation found that people think the area is unsafe—regeneration plans are aiming to change that. Better lighting and an expanded CCTV network are also included to deter crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

> *The project will also include restoration of the Grade II-listed Georgian Packer Spout fountain, which will be brought back into use as a water feature.*

Interim or Final Evaluation Report

PDF	RTH_Interim Evaluation Re... (4.8 MiB download)

Costs of the project/initiative

Costs of the project (in euro), financial and management arrangements, funding partners and/or the type of funding.

> *This multimillion-pound project was mainly funded by Rochdale Borough Council with support from NLHF (£8.3 million grant), Salix and Towns Fund. The project was undertaken at a difficult time for Local Authorities, and every works package underwent an unusually detailed level of financial scrutiny to ensure value for money. The project finished in line with its original 2018 master programme and within the budget parameters set by the client, despite facing challenges such as Covid and hyper-inflation.*

Funding provided by the European Union or the EEA/Norway Grants (including programme, year and amount of the Grant), if any.

> *None.*

Additional information

How would winning the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award benefit you, your project and/or your organisation?

> *In a period of both economic and political unrest, this project winning the Europa Nostra would not only be a recognition of the success of this heritage-led regeneration but also a recognition of the power that heritage has to bolster communities and draw them together.*
>
> *It would also be a recognition of the long-term efforts of the whole project team, who collectively ensured that the community remained always at the heart of this project.*

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, what will the monetary award be used for?

> *N/A. This project is not eligible for the Grand Prix award.*

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, who will be the recipient of the monetary award?

> *N/A. This project is not eligible for the Grand Prix award.*

How did you find out about the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Word of mouth
Is this the first time that this entry has been submitted to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Yes

On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with this online submission form?	✓ 9
By submitting your data, photographs and other material to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards you agree to the processing and sharing of your data in accordance with Europa Nostra's Privacy Policy. Please check the box to indicate you agree with the Privacy Policy.	✓

Log in to european-heritage.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



30_Rochdale To... 887 KiB



01_Rochdale To... 2.6 MiB



02_Rochdale To... 4.8 MiB



03_Rochdale To... 1.8 MiB



04_Rochdale To... 3.5 MiB



05_Rochdale To... 1.2 MiB



06_ Rochdale T... 3.8 MiB



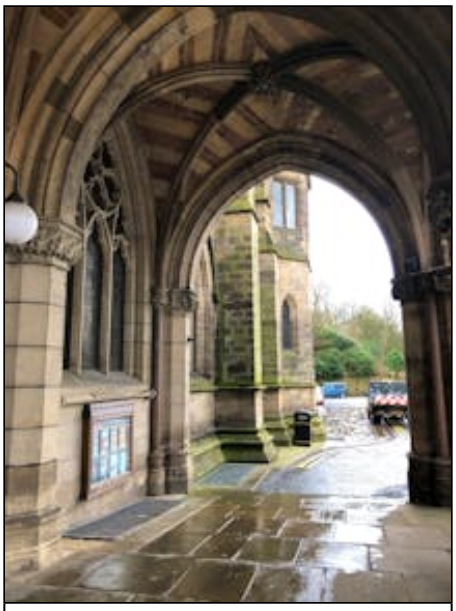
07_Rochdale To... 934 KiB



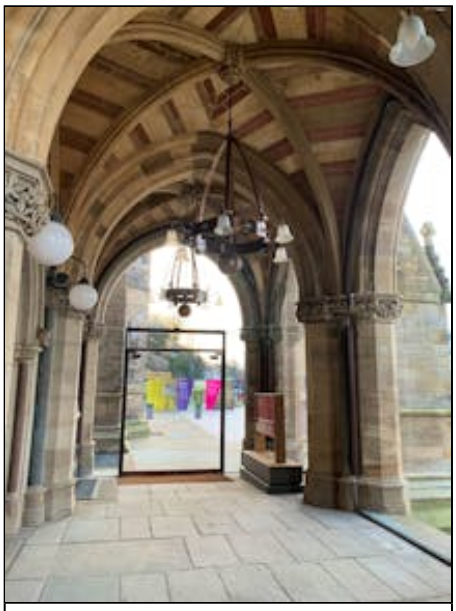
08_Rochdale To... 4.6 MiB



09_Rochdale To... 2.5 MiB



10_Rochdale To... 919 KiB



11_Rochdale To... 2.5 MiB



12_Rochdale To... 3.7 MiB



13_Rochdale T... 1.6 MiB



14_Rochdale To... 1.4 MiB



15_Rochdale To... 1.7 MiB



16_Rochdale To... 3.5 MiB



17_Rochdale To... 1.7 MiB



18_Rochdale To... 2.8 MiB



19_Rochdale To... 3.8 MiB



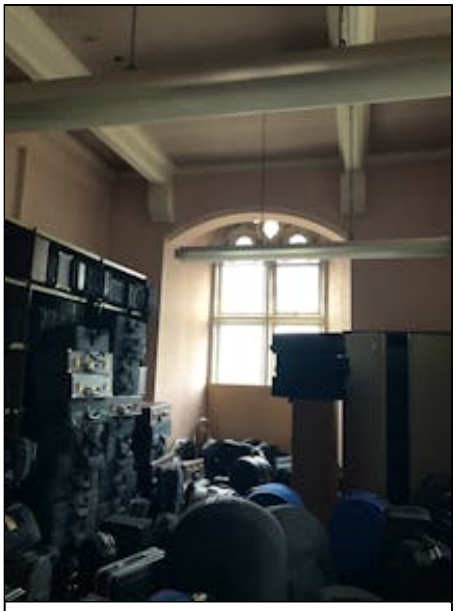
20_Rochdale To... 3.5 MiB



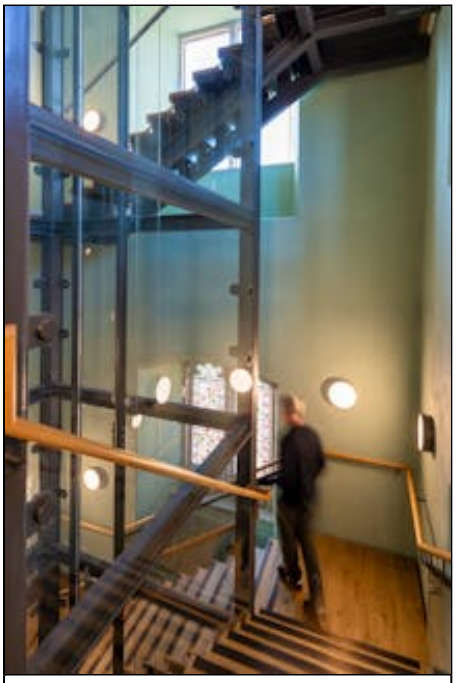
21_Rochdale To... 3.9 MiB



22_Rochdale To... 2.2 MiB



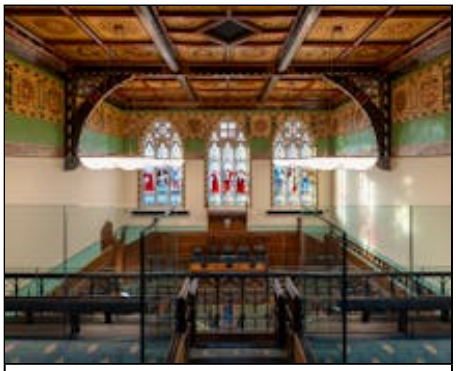
23_Rochdale To... 585 KiB



24_Rochdale To... 1.9 MiB



25_Rochdale To... 4.7 MiB



26_Rochdale To... 3.8 MiB



27_Rochdale To... 3.1 MiB



28_Rochdale To... 428 KiB



29_Rochdale To... 2.8 MiB

DOCX

Europa Nostra ... 15 KiB

PDF

1. Strip Out and... 1.9 MiB

PDF

2. As Proposed ... 2.4 MiB

PDF

3. Detail Drawin... 3.8 MiB

PDF

4. Landscaping ... 4.7 MiB

PDF

Rochdale Town ... 4.7 MiB

PDF

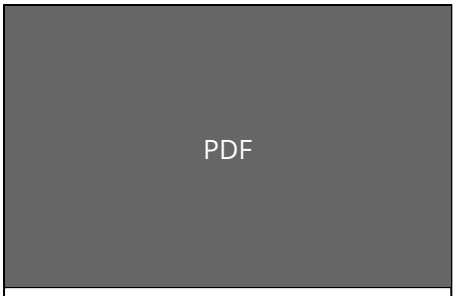
April 2025 - SPA... 789 KiB

PDF

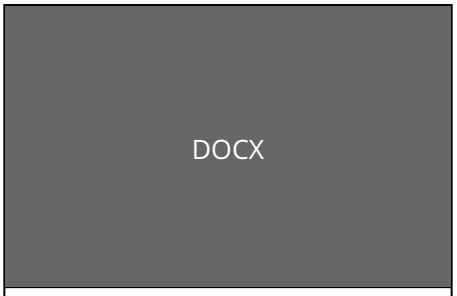
November 2024... 18.8 MiB

PDF

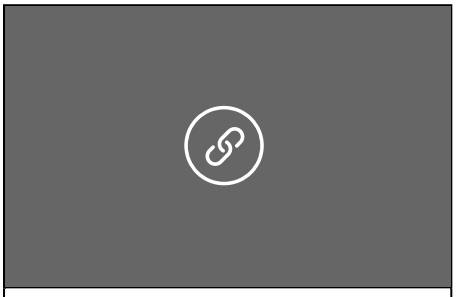
Rochdale Town ... 7.1 MiB



October 2024 - ... 797 KiB



HA2026 Entrant... 1.8 MiB



Attachment name

https://donaldinsallasso...

