

The image shows the interior of the Arkwright Building, a grand Victorian-style structure with a high vaulted ceiling, ornate arches, and classical columns. A hand is visible in the bottom right corner, holding a paintbrush and applying white paint to a ledge. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Ian Williams
on behalf of
Nottingham
Trent University:
Arkwright Building

Project: Arkwright Building



Task: Internal decorations and repairs

Products used:

- Dulux Trade Eggshell (walls and ceilings)
- Dulux Trade Eggshell Goosewing Grey (detailing)
- Dulux Trade Gloss
- Dulux Trade Satinwood (woodwork)
- Dulux Trade Quick dry varnish gloss (handrails)
- Zinsser Stain Block
- British Gypsum Gyproc Easi-Fill

Client: Nottingham Trent University

Background

A Grade II Listed Building built in the 1870s, the Arkwright Building is one of Nottingham's best-known landmarks. Originally home to University College Nottingham as well as the city library and a natural history museum, it has played an important role in shaping the educational, cultural and social life of the city. Today it belongs to Nottingham Trent University and houses various lecture theatres and classrooms.

Project Details:

Ian Williams undertook a 2-week internal redecoration project at the Arkwright Building in June. Works included a large number of pre-paint repairs and decorations to walls, ceilings, balustrades, cornices, handrails, windowsills, doors and frames.

Careful planning and programming was key to the success of this project. The building remained fully operational throughout the works and examinations were being sat by students at the same time on campus. This required a detailed programme with out-of-hours working which presented a number of challenges to overcome.

Having not been decorated for over 10 years, the building was in a state of disrepair. This required a high-level of preparation works including damp proofing and scraping down due to the number of paint layers.

Once all repair works were completed, our team began redecoration works, ensuring they followed our detailed programme carefully to mitigate disruption to the university. Works required a high-level of skills, knowledge and experience to ensure a quality finish. For example, there were intricate features on the cornices and balustrades requiring the use of a variety of techniques and patience.

All works were undertaken by our experienced, local direct delivery team who have since been awarded further works in the building's canteen; a true credit to their ability.



The Challenges...

Key challenges in this project included:

- **Access:** as the ceilings were high (5 metres in corridors and 12 metres in the lobby), we knew access equipment would be required. Our preferred method would have been a Mobile Elevated Work Platform, however, prior to commencement on site, we ascertained this would not be suitable, due to the heights of the entrance doors combined with the angle of the stairs
We therefore worked with our local subcontract partners, Altrad, to develop a bespoke birdcage scaffold which enabled operatives to access the main lobby ceiling whilst maintaining the walkway for building users below. We then used mobile towers to carry out works to all other ceilings
- **Out-of-hours working:** as the building remained fully operational throughout the works and the University was in the middle of its summer examination period, we undertook night working (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.) to mitigate disruption during the day
- **Open days and evenings:** there were three open events (one day and two evening) planned whilst we were undertaking this project during which works, equipment, materials and operatives had to be completely removed from the view of potential students. This included:
 - Programming corridors which could be sectioned off during open days
 - Liaising with our specialist access sub-contract partner, Altrad, to erect a birdcage scaffold structure at the weekend to enable decorations to be installed Monday night and completed on Tuesday to allow the scaffold to be dismantled on the Wednesday
 - Starting at 11p.m. on days when open evenings were taking place

Apprentices/ Trainees:

None



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