

DESIGN

LEEDS TOWN HALL

LEEDS





DESIGN OVERVIEW

Leeds City Council commissioned Norse Consulting to design and project manage a sympathetic major, £4.8 million, roof repair scheme to address issues and defects identified in a condition survey of the roof of Leeds Town Hall, an important Grade I Listed landmark heritage asset.

“ *Helping to preserve the building for future generations is a great privilege. Once the works are complete the community will be able to use this building for years to come for weddings, celebrations and community events. This makes me feel that this is a very worthwhile and fulfilling project to be involved with, not only for myself, but also for all the companies involved and Norse Consulting.* ”

DAVID EADE
PROJECT LEAD
SENIOR BUILDING SURVEYOR



PROJECT

LEEDS TOWN HALL

Designed by Cuthbert Brodrick FRIBA (1821 to 1905) and opened by Queen Victoria in 1858, Leeds Town Hall is a nationally important Grade I listed heritage asset and a major landmark building within the city centre.

In recent years, however, its roofs had started to leak, with slates slipping and breaking; lead was beginning to corrode, and the glazed roofs were in such poor condition that glazing bars were also corroding and splitting. Internal lead rainwater downpipes were leaking; pigeons were getting into the roof voids and nesting, creating a health hazard; bird netting around the clock tower and ventilation towers was ripped and flapping in the wind.

Water damage was evident in the timber roof structure and the roof was in such bad condition that it would have started to deteriorate at an increasing rate. Internal plasterwork had areas of water damage due to the roof and downpipe defects.

Norse Consulting carried out a condition survey of the roof and numerous issues and defects such as these were identified. The company was then commissioned by Leeds City Council to design and project manage a sympathetic major roof repair scheme, through services including heritage research and advice, building surveying, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, quantity surveying, project management, structural engineering and CAD.

Within the project brief, the client also included preservation and acoustic improvement works to the Victoria Hall windows; preservation and improvement works to the lighting in Victoria Hall; improvement works to the access walkways and thermal improvement works. They also added works to upgrade the rainwater goods, the ventilation to Victoria Hall and the lightning protection, as well as bird deterrents to prevent entry to the roof void and nesting on the clock tower.

The design had to take into account the historic nature of the building, while preserving and enhancing its historic significance and value. To ensure this occurred, numerous meetings with the local authority conservation officer and a representative from Historic England were arranged from an early stage of the design.

The design process then followed the RIBA plan of work which ensured that the design was fully discussed with the client, end-users and stakeholders at the end of each stage.

If this preservation and restoration work had not been carried out, the nationally important internal fabric of the building would have been lost due to water damage.

KEY BENEFITS

Design commenced in April 2016, with works on site beginning October 2018. The original commissioned works were completed in September 2021.

More recently, the client has extended the contract to incorporate stone repairs to the ornate stone parapet walls. This is to address issues with the original iron ties and pins that are corroding and damaging the historically significant stonework and to address issues with previous repairs. This stone repair work is due to be completed by March 2022.

The project to repair the roof of Leeds Town Hall will ensure the survival of this heritage asset for the enjoyment of the people of Leeds and all those who visit the city.

Steps taken to eliminate water penetration into the building will also be instrumental in arresting the process of decay and thus ensuring “a sound building” for future generations to come.

Some interesting, historic discoveries have been made since work began. For example, an original seating balcony within the northeast corner room, blocked off since the 1950s, has been revealed. Workers also found a plaque 1881 on the clock tower lead dome roof, which was when this roof was last repaired.

The building has undergone many alterations over its life but has retained the majority of its original features.



LEEDS TOWN HALL INTERIOR



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