

KOKO THEATRE

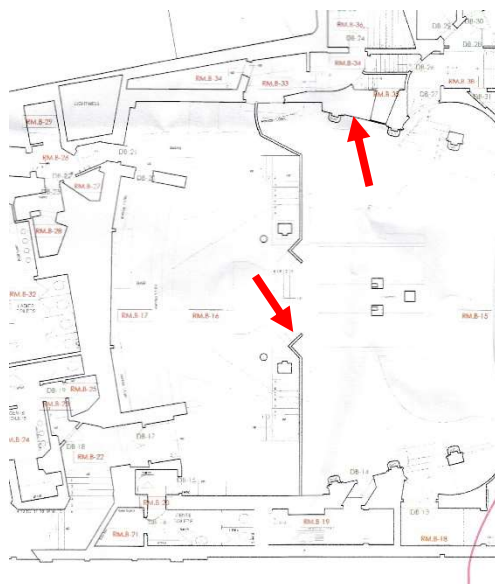
CAMDEN HIGH STREET

An examination of the paint in rooms at the west end of the building, below the Dome, to determine the types of paint used since 1900, to identify areas where lead paints have been used, and establish if early paint layers have survived

- p.2 **Basement**
 Dance Floor [B.16]
 SE Stairs [B.18]
 SW Stairs [B.22]
- p.6 **Ground floor**
 South small rooms [G.08, G.09]
 Balcony [G.10]
 Lobby [G.11]
 Entrance [G.12]
 North small room [G.20]
- p.14 **First Floor**
 South Stairs Landing [1.10]
 Balcony [1.11]
 Lobby [1.12]
 West Room [1.14]
- p.21 **Second Floor**
 Bar [2.16]
 South rooms [2.17, 2.18 & 2.19]
 North room [2.20 & 2.21]
- P.25 **Third floor**
 Projection room [3.13 & 3.12]
 South Stairs [3.10]
- p.31 **North Stairs** [G.20, 1.15 & 2.22]

Examination procedure Samples were taken with a scalpel to include underlying plaster or wood. The pieces were mounted in cold-setting polyester resin to be cut and polished as cross-sections. Material from key layers was dispersed on glass slides and the pigments identified using a polarising light microscope. A chemical test for lead was carried out on representative cross-sections. Basic solvent tests were carried out on the most recent paints.

BASEMENT AREA - ROOM B.16



Samples were taken from two areas as listed on next page.

This area was painted less often than the circulation areas.

Lead paint Found on the walls and the figures set against the walls.
Not found on the suspended ceiling above the stage or the figure in front of the stage.

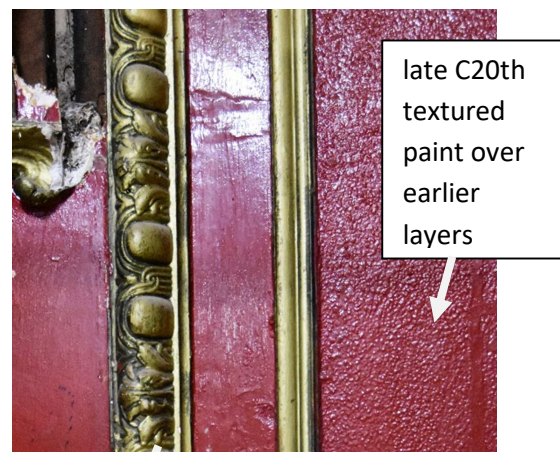
Original paint Cream oil paint was applied to the walls and figures in 1900.

Early C20th paints Three lots of oil paint based on lead white were used on the walls.

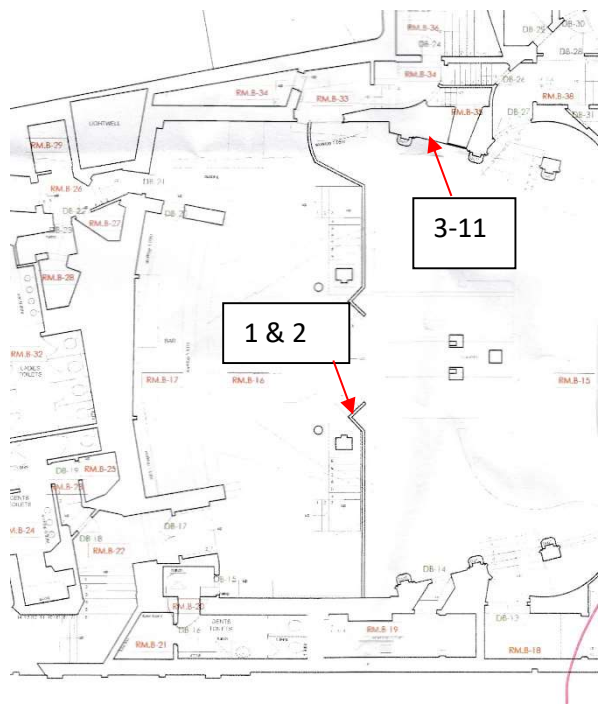
Later C20th paints Six lots of alkyd paints, some with varnishes, were used on the walls. 'Gold' paint, based on copper filings in a shellac medium, was used on the figures and wall mouldings.

Towards the end of the twentieth century a textured alkyd paint was applied to the centre of the wall panels.

Most recent red paint The red seen today on the walls is not a standard house paint. It is still flexible, with a rubbery texture and is unaffected by a range of solvents.



LOCATION OF SAMPLES



- 1 Figure in front of stage
 2 gold of figure
 3 background to figure



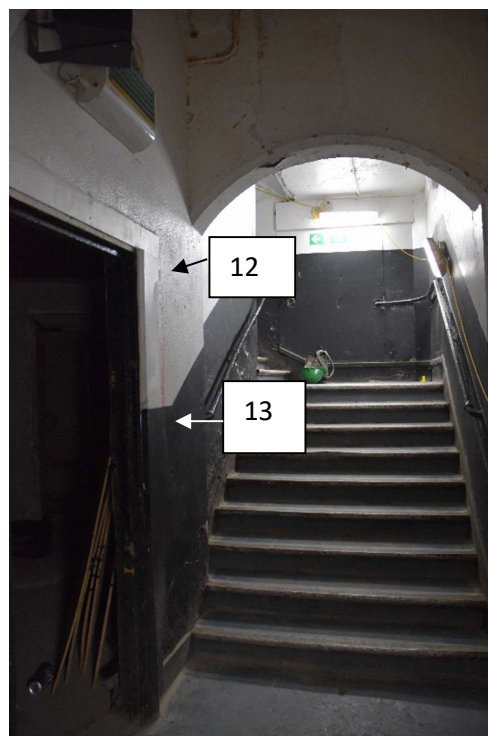
North wall, to left of doorway to B.35

- 3 smooth wall to left of figure
 4 wall panel with textured paint
 5 smooth wall around wall panel
 6 gold panel border

- Figure to right of doorway
 10 red torso
 11 gold drapery



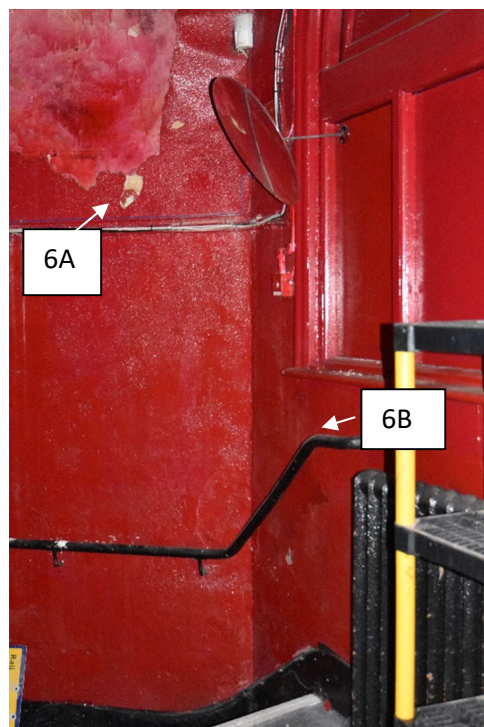
SOUTH STAIRS
BASEMENT TO GROUND FLOOR
B-18



Two samples were taken from the north wall: one above the painted dado and one on the painted dado

Lead paint	Present in both samples
Original paint	Red distemper.
Early C20th paints	Three lots of oil paint based on lead white .
Later C20th paints	Six lots of alkyd paint some based on lithopone white, some on titanium dioxide white.
Most recent paints	Two lots of emulsion paint

SOUTH STAIRS - BASEMENT TO GROUND FLOOR ROOM B.22



Only two samples were taken, one from the south wall, one from the west wall.

The ceiling was not examined

Lead paint	Present on the walls, sealed under the later plaster skim coat.
Original paint	Coat of distemper which may have been a temporary scheme, followed by pink, lead-based oil paint on the walls. Treatment of ceiling unknown
Early C20th paints	Two lots of oil paint based on lead white.
Later C20th Paints	Four lots of alkyd paint , including one with a textured finish.
Later C20th re-plastering	A skim coat of gypsum plaster was applied over early paint layers at some point in the late C20th. Since then the area has been painted twice.

GROUND FLOOR – SOUTH ROOMS G08 & G09

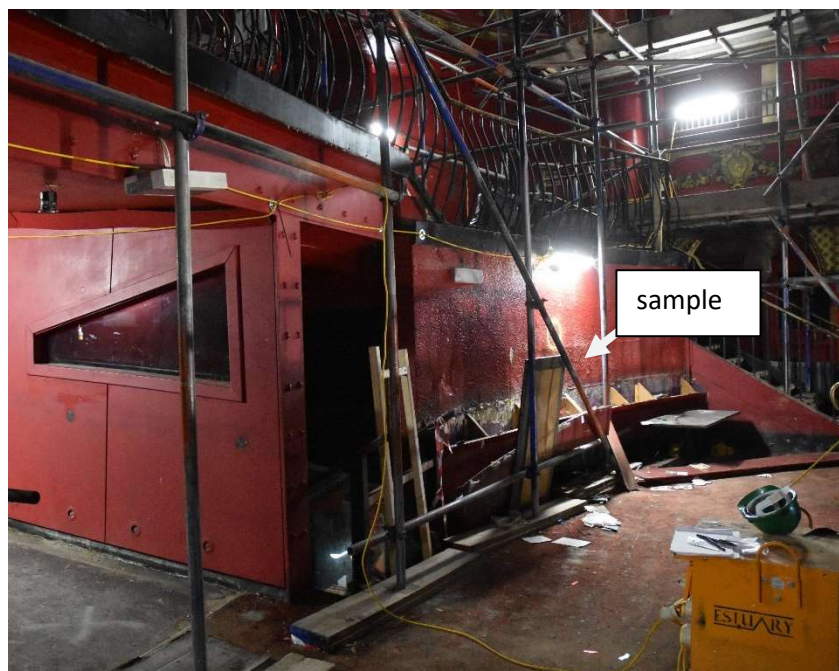


Samples were taken from the north wall of both rooms



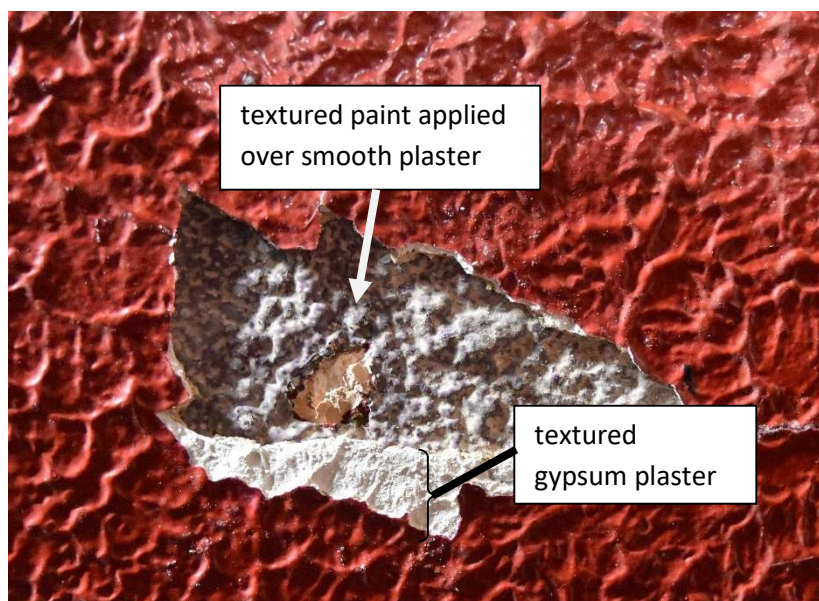
Lead paint	Present on the walls of both rooms
Original paint	Cream coloured oil paint based on lead white
Early C20th schemes	Two more lead-based oil paints
Later C20th schemes	Alkyd paints based on titanium white, including the textured paint used throughout Koko
Most recent paints	Three lots of emulsion paint

GROUND FLOOR BALCONY G10



The walls in this area have all been recently re-plastered, or faced with hardboard, so no early paints have survived.

One sample was taken from the west wall, where the wall has a textured finish. Underneath the most recent paints, which were applied over textured plaster, is an earlier textured alkyd paint applied over smooth gypsum plaster.



Lead paint

No lead paint in G10

GROUND FLOOR – LOBBY BETWEEN ENTRANCE & AUDITORIUM ROOM G.11



Samples were taken from west and east walls, as listed on the next page. The ceiling was not examined.

No original paint was found in the samples from the walls and it is likely that lining paper was used, and that when this was removed in the later C20th the early paints were all lost.

Lead paint

Present only in samples taken from gold arched tops of the niches. None on the walls or arches.



Original paint

No longer present on the plaster walls.

Early C20th paints

No longer present

Later C20th paints

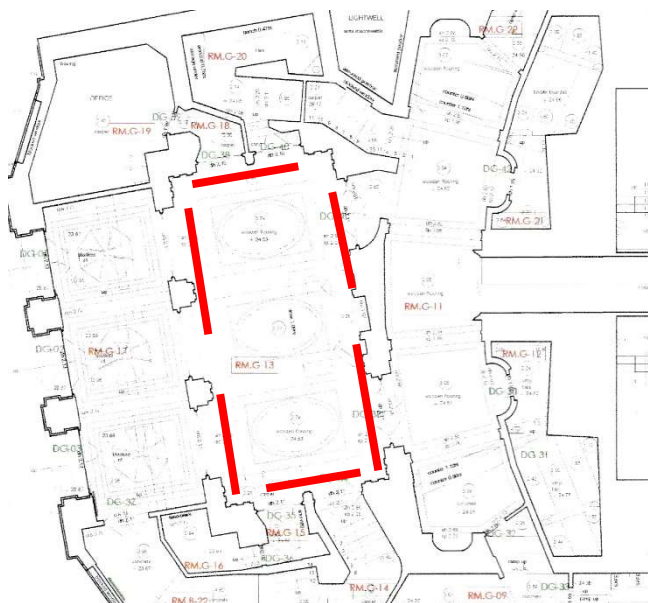
Lining paper was applied to the walls, followed by alkyd paints

Most recent paint.

The red seen today on the walls is not a standard house paint. It is still flexible, with a rubbery texture and is unaffected by a range of solvents



GROUND FLOOR MAIN ENTRANCE ROOM G.13



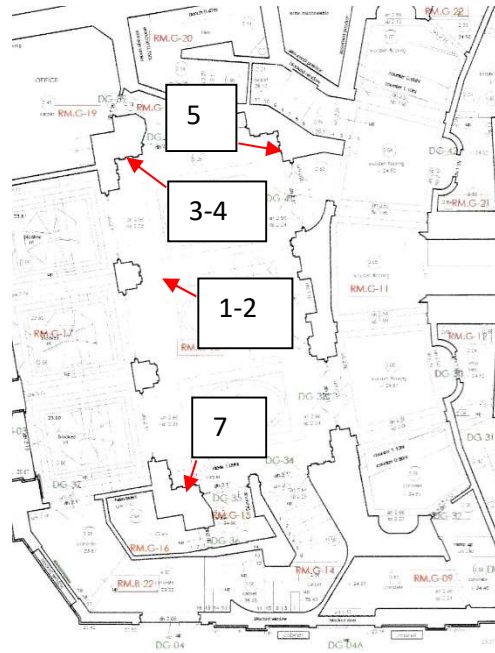
Samples were taken as listed on next page

This room has never been stripped or re-plastered, and the early paint schemes are present on all surfaces.

The room has been painted eight times since 1900.

Lead paint	Present on the ceiling and on the plaster walls. At least five layers of lead paint.
Original paint	Cream oil paint on ceiling, buff oil paint on walls, and mouldings picked out in gold leaf, using an oil size.
Early C20th paints	Four lots of oil paint based on lead white . The original oil gilding now covered with 'gold' paint in a shellac medium.
Later C20th paints	Three lots of alkyd paint based on titanium dioxide white. 'Gold' paint in a shellac medium used on mouldings

LOCATION OF SAMPLES



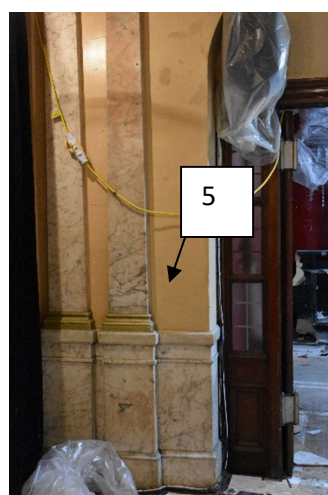
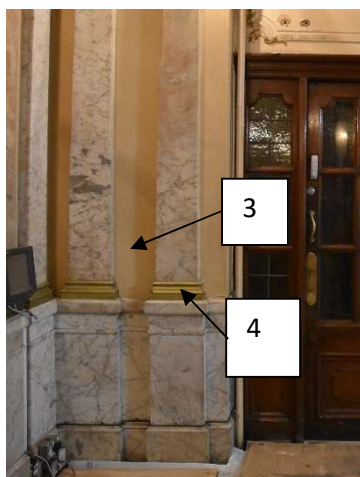
- Ceiling
- 1 cream on flat area
 - 2 gold moulding



North wall

East wall

South wall



GROUND FLOOR – G20



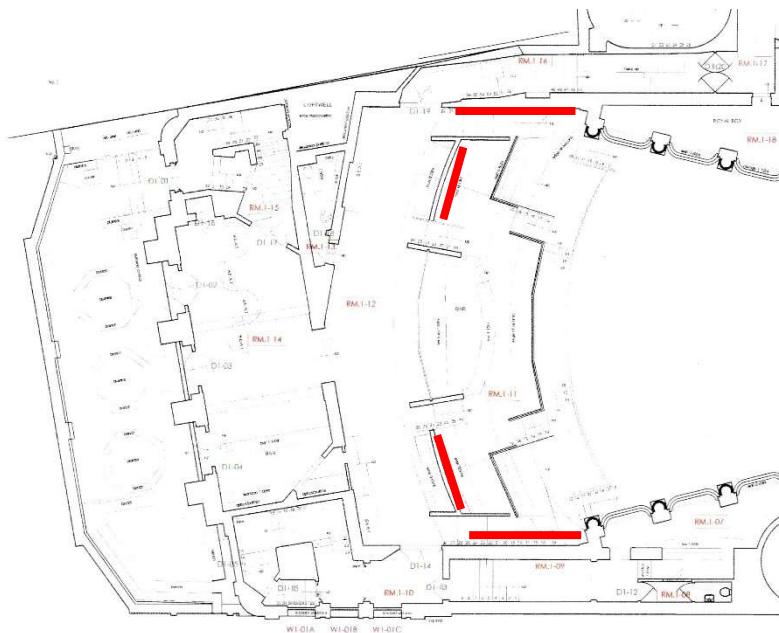
Samples were taken from three of the walls

The room appears to have been re-plastered at some point in the later C20th and no early paints were found.

Lead paints	none present
Original scheme	no longer present
Early C20th schemes	no longer present
Later C20th schemes	alkyd paints based on titanium white
Most recent paint	white emulsion

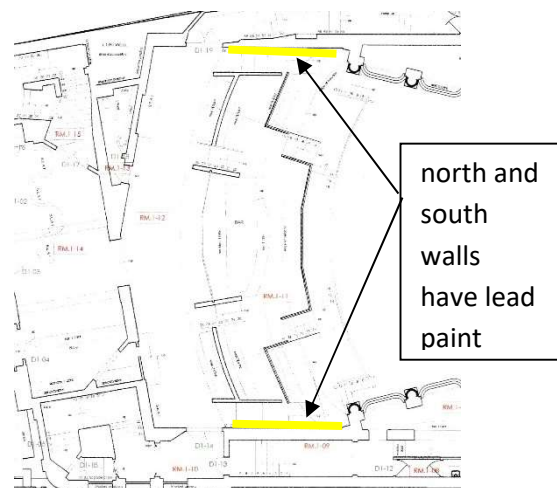
FIRST FLOOR BALCONY ROOM 1.11

Samples were taken from the walls and from the front of the second floor balcony.



Lead paint

This is only present on the front of the second floor balcony and on the north and south walls



Original decoration

N & S walls painted with red distemper
Balcony front painted with cream oil paint topped with a yellow glaze.

Early C20th schemes

Four lots of lead-based oil paint found on the balcony front and north and south walls

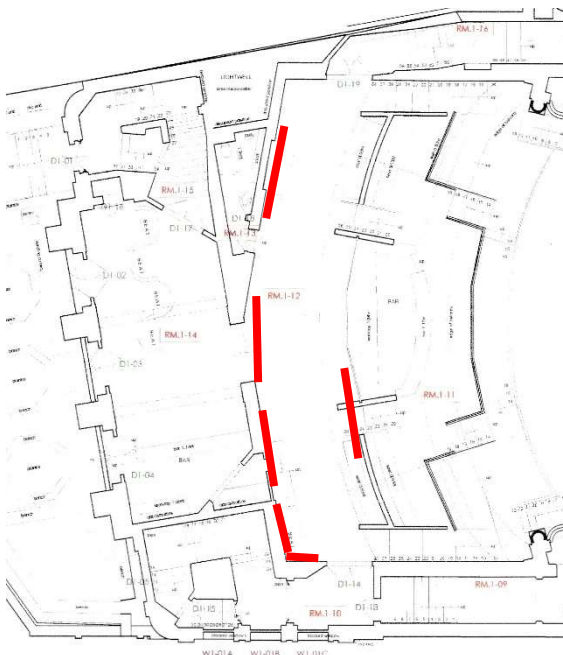
Later C20th schemes

Extensive re-plastering took place after the Second World War, followed by four lots of alkyd paints, some with a gloss finish.

Most recent scheme

The red seen today is not a standard house paint. It is still flexible, with a rubbery texture, and is unaffected by a range of solvents

FIRST FLOOR – LOBBY AT BACK OF AUDITORIUM ROOM 1.12



Samples were taken from the east wall, cornice and ceiling as listed on p.17

Lead paint	Present in all samples from walls and ceilings.
Original paint	A cream coloured oil paint with red and yellow oil glazes on the surface.
Early C20th paints	Two lots of oil paint, one with a glazed surface.
Later C20th paints	Four lots of alkyd paint. On the last two occasions the mouldings have been picked out in 'gold' paint consisting of copper filings in a shellac medium.
Most recent scheme	The red seen today on walls, ceiling and joinery is not a standard house paint. It is still flexible, with a rubbery texture, and is unaffected by a range of solvents

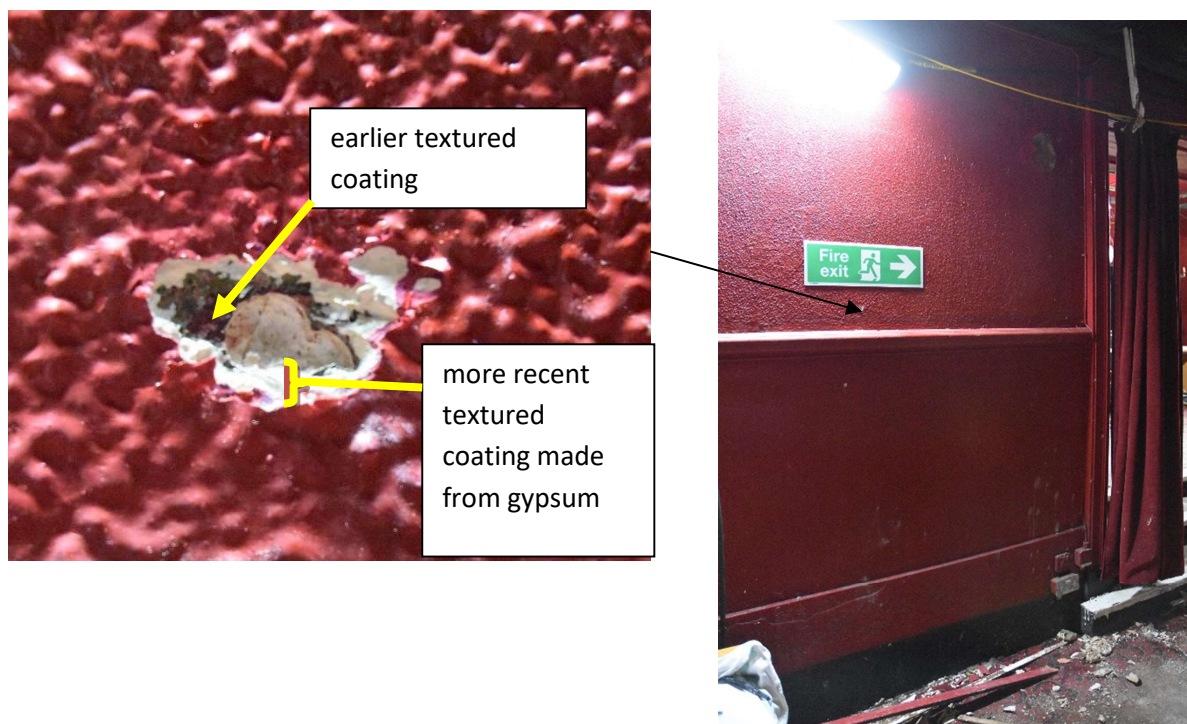
The only feature which did not have original paint layers was the moulding between the cove and the ceiling



Like many rooms in Koko, the walls have been given a textured finish in the later C20th, but in this room two lots of textured coating were applied.

The first textured coating was the one applied throughout the building, involving a paint mixed with small granules.

The second textured coating, which was only applied in this room and in G.10 on the floor below, followed structural work. The texture was created with gypsum plaster

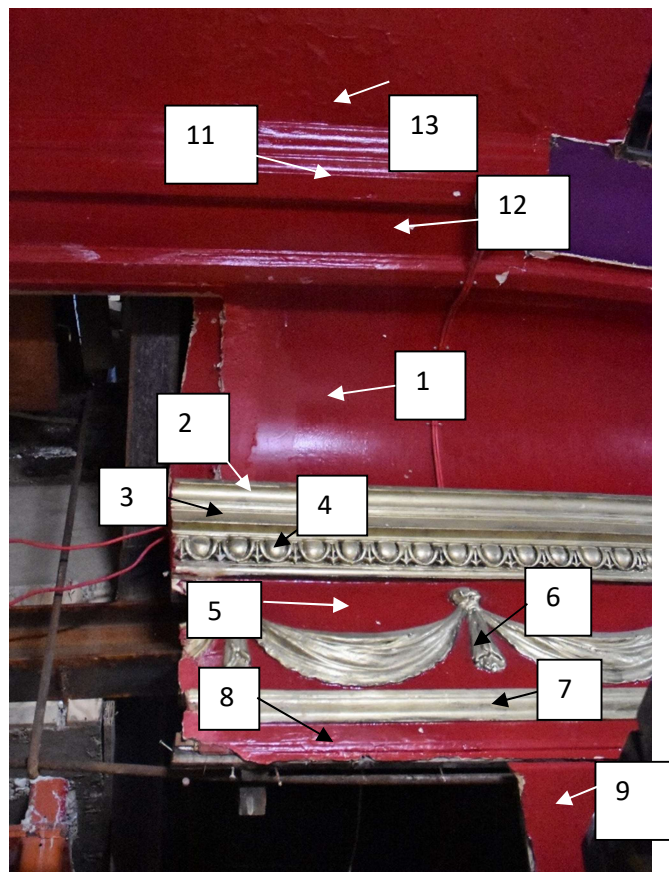


LOCATION OF SAMPLES

- East wall, south end
- 1 cove
 - 2 top of cornice
 - 3 middle of cornice
 - 4 egg & dart on cornice
 - 5 background to frieze
 - 6 swag on frieze
 - 7 moulding at base of frieze
 - 8 below frieze

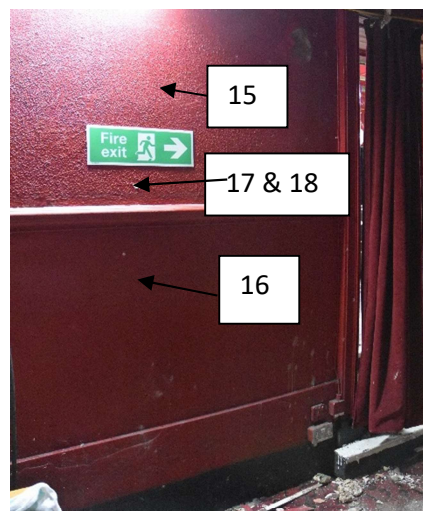
- 9 sloping section

- 11 moulding on ceiling
- 12 between mouldings
- 13 centre of ceiling



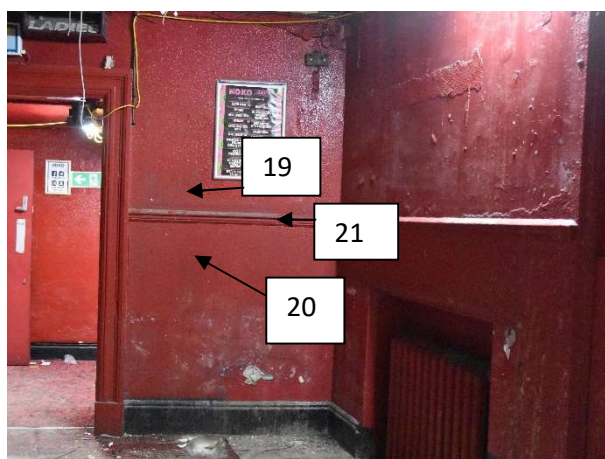
- 14 west wall at north end, head level

- West wall, south end
- 15 above dado rail
 - 16 below dado rail
 - 17 example of textured surface
 - 18 layers below textured surface



South wall

- 19 above rail
- 20 below rail
- 21 rail



FIRST FLOOR – ROOM 1.14



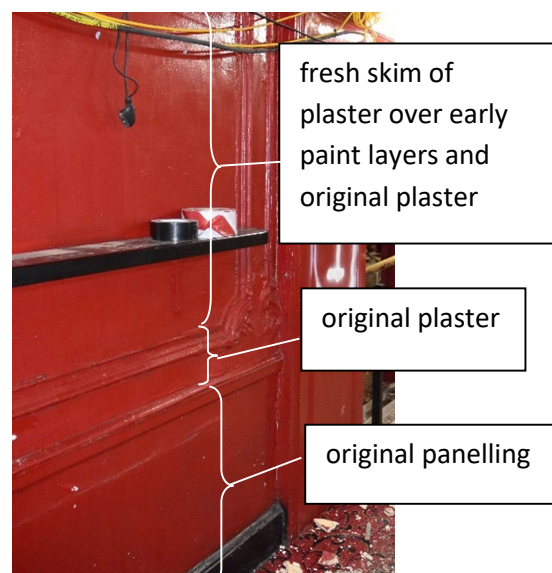
Samples were taken from walls, ceiling and woodwork as listed on next page.

Lead paint	Present on all surfaces – walls, ceiling and joinery.
Original paint	The original paint scheme is still present on all surfaces under layer layers. The 1900 decoration involved cream coloured oil paint on the plaster walls and ceilings. Brown varnish was used on all the joinery.
Early C20th paints	Five lots of oil paint based on lead white
Later C20th paints	Six lots of alkyd paint most based on titanium dioxide white.
Most recent paint	The red seen today on walls, ceiling and joinery is not a standard house paint. It is still flexible, with a rubbery texture and is unaffected by a range of solvents.

Partial re-plastering in the late C20th

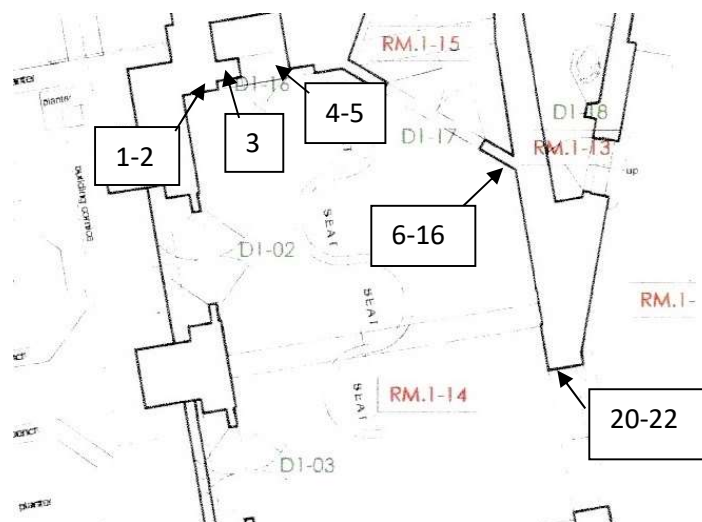
The wall panels above the dado were given a fresh coat of gypsum plaster. This sealed in all the earlier paint layers.

On top of that fresh plaster are just sets of paint layers.

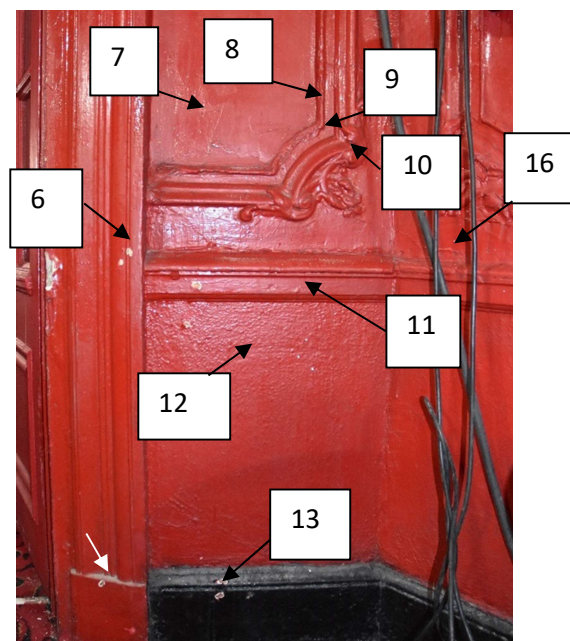


LOCATION OF SAMPLES

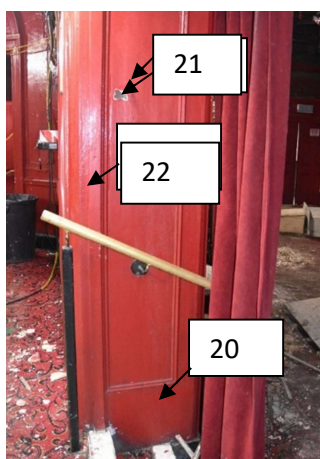
- North wall – west end
- 1 Flat of wall above dado rail
 - 2 panel border above dado rail
 - 3 wall next to door
 - 4 architrave of door D1.16
 - 5 door D1.16



- North wall, east end
- 6 architrave of door
 - 7 panel on wall above dado
 - 8 inner panel border on wall above dado
 - 9 flat between panel borders
 - 10 outer panel border
 - 11 dado rail
 - 12 below dado rail
 - 13 skirting moulding
 - 16 flat of upper wall between dado rail and panel border

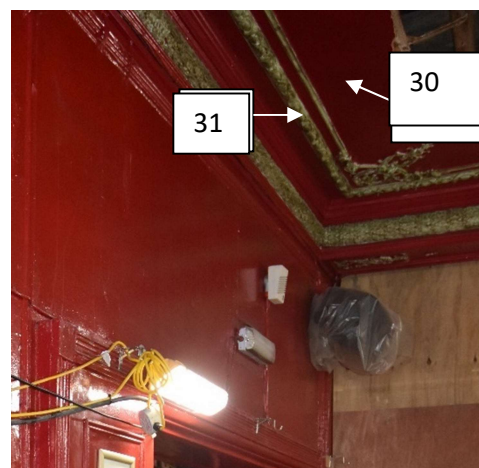


- East wall – entrance to Room 1.12
- Panelled wooden reveal of opening
- 20 base of reveal
 - 21 panel on reveal
 - 22 moulding around panel



Ceiling – SE corner

- 30 flat panel
- 31 - gold moulding



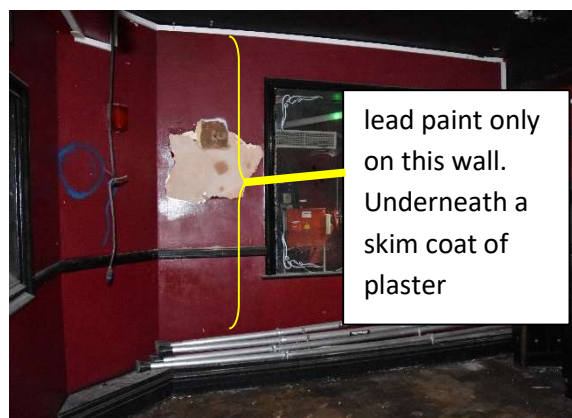
SECOND FLOOR BAR ROOM 2.16



Samples were taken walls and ceiling as listed on next page.

Lead paint

Present only on the west wall, at the south end. There is no lead paint on the ceiling which has been re-plastered, or on the woodwork, which has been recently stripped.



Original paint

White distemper, followed by cream-coloured oil paint on the walls.

Early C20th paints

Wallpaper or lining was used at some point in the early years. The paper has gone, but a thick layer of glue was found over the first oil paint. The paper was later removed and the repainted with oil paints.

Later C20th paints

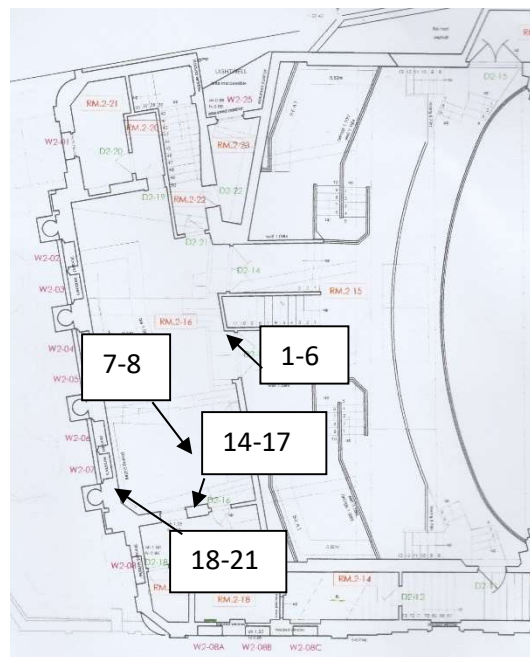
Four lots of alkyd paints.

Most recent scheme

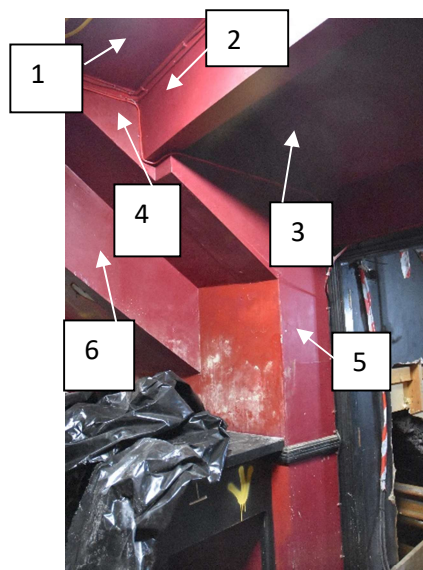
The red seen today on the walls is not a standard house paint. It is still flexible, with a rubbery texture, and is unaffected by a range of solvents

At some point in the recent past the whole room was almost completely re-plastered. A small patch of original plaster survived on the west wall, as shown above. This patch was covered over with a skim coat of the new plaster.

LOCATION OF SAMPLES



1-6 Side of opening to Auditorium

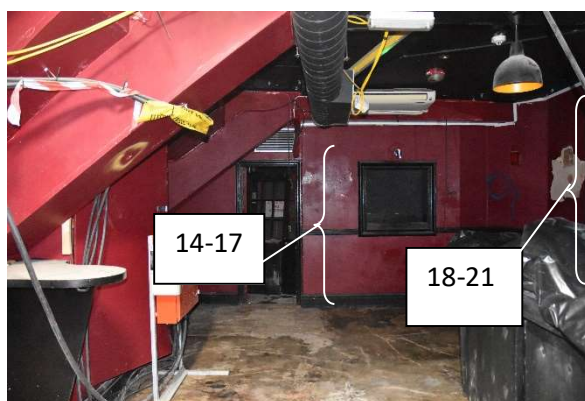


Ceiling
7 flat of ceiling
8 side of 'beam'

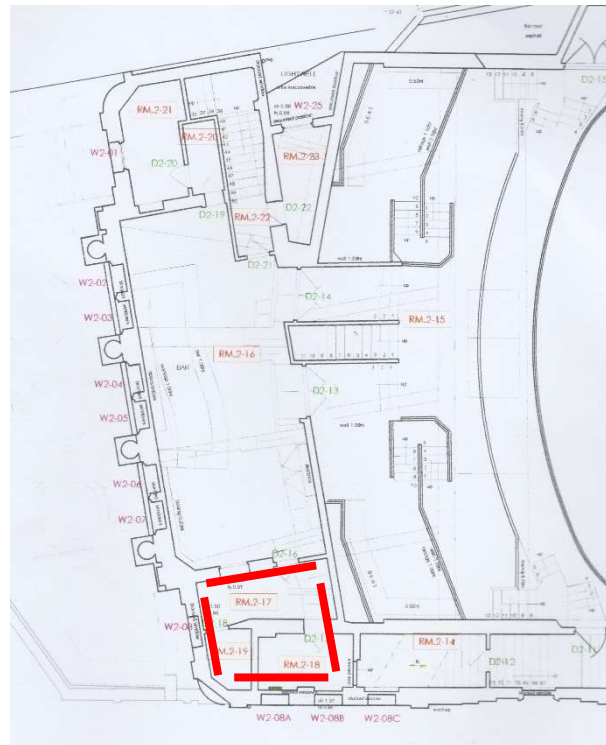
South wall
14 above dado rail
15 dado rail
16 below dado rail
17 skirting

West wall – south end
18 above dado rail
19 dado rail
20 below dado rail
21 skirting

50 East wall, south end



ROOMS SOUTH OF THE BAR
ROOMS 2.17, 2.18 & 2.19

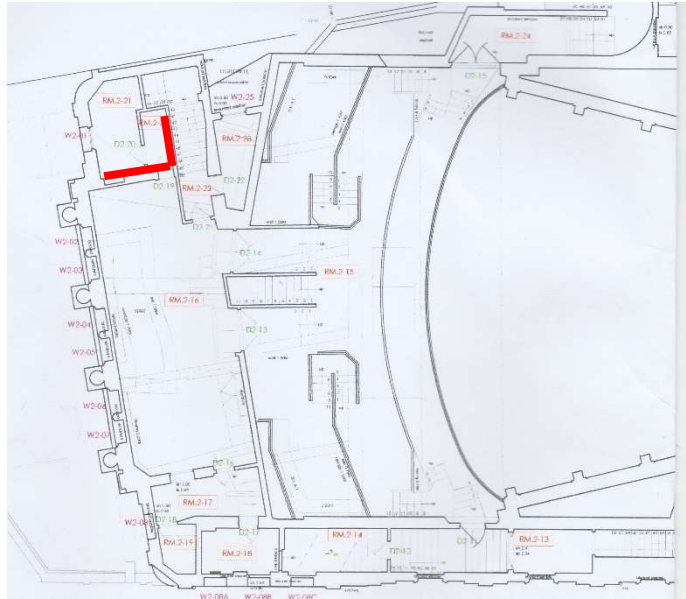


Two samples were taken from the walls of each of these small rooms



Lead paint	Present on the walls of 2.17 and 2.19 Not present in 2.18
Original scheme	dark brown oil paint on all surfaces
Early C20th schemes	four lots of oil paint
Late C20th schemes	Three lots of emulsion paints followed by alkyd paints with a gloss finish.

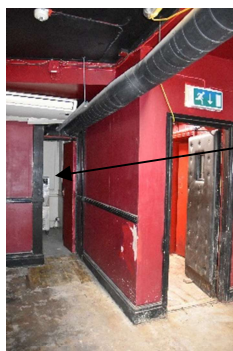
ROOMS NORTH OF THE BAR ROOMS 2.20 & 2.21



Samples were taken from the partition
and from the south and east walls

This area was probably originally a single room. The NS partition which divides it dates to the later C20th.

The walls of the room are lined with the original
wood panelling.



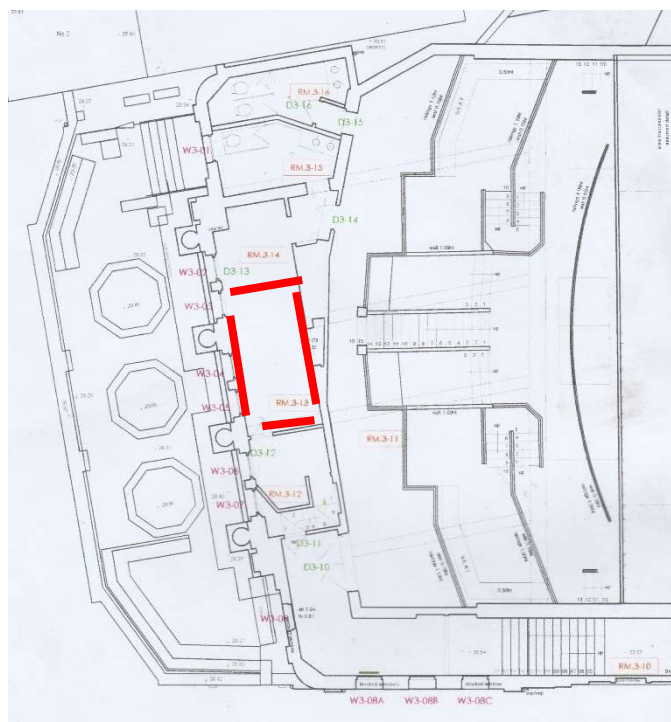
wood
panelling



The room has been painted very infrequently compared to other rooms in Koko.

Lead paint	Present on the panelled walls
Original decoration	white, lead-based oil paint. This remained in place until the middle of the century.
Later decorations	In the later C20th the room was painted four times with alkyd paints

THIRD FLOOR – PROJECTION ROOM ROOM 3.13

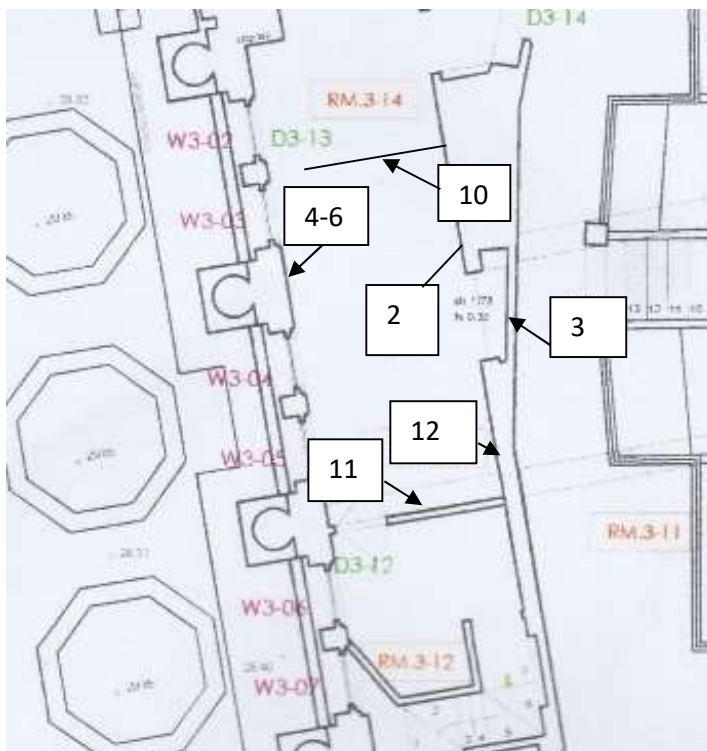


Samples taken from all four walls and from the ceiling, as listed on p.

Original lime plaster and earliest paint layers were found only on the west and east walls. The north and south partitions, which are coated in gypsum plaster, must have been built when the theatre became a cinema,

Lead paint	Present on the west, north and east walls, and on the ceiling, but not on the south wall or any of the woodwork.
Original paint	Red distemper on the walls, white distemper on the ceiling. Original paint found only on the west and east walls.
Early C20th paints	Painted with black oil paint in 1913 when the room became a projection room, then the walls and the ceiling were painted a further six times with lead based oil paints . One of these oil paint schemes was varnished.
Later C20th paints	Wall and ceiling painted twice with alkyd paints.
Most recent paint	Pale green emulsion paint on the walls, and white emulsion paint on the ceiling.

SAMPLE LOCATIONS



1 ceiling at north end

East wall

2 wall at north end

3 iron shutter

12 wall at south end

West wall

4 above head height

5 shoulder height

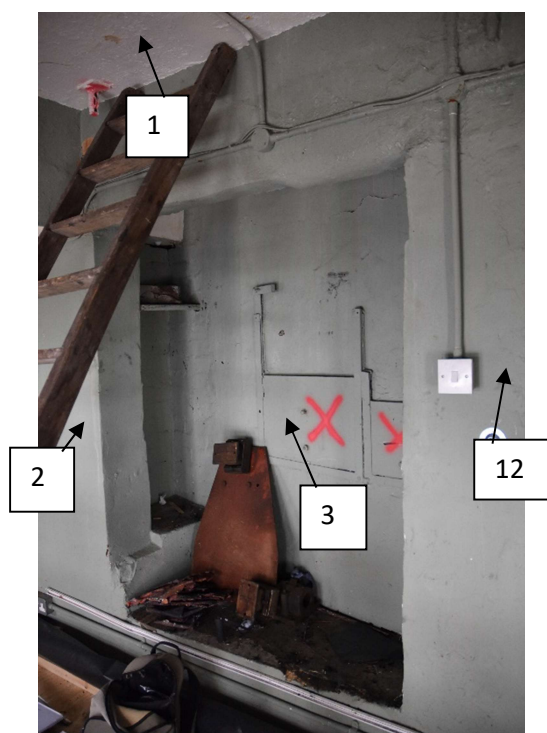
5 low down

North partition wall

7 door

10 partition wall

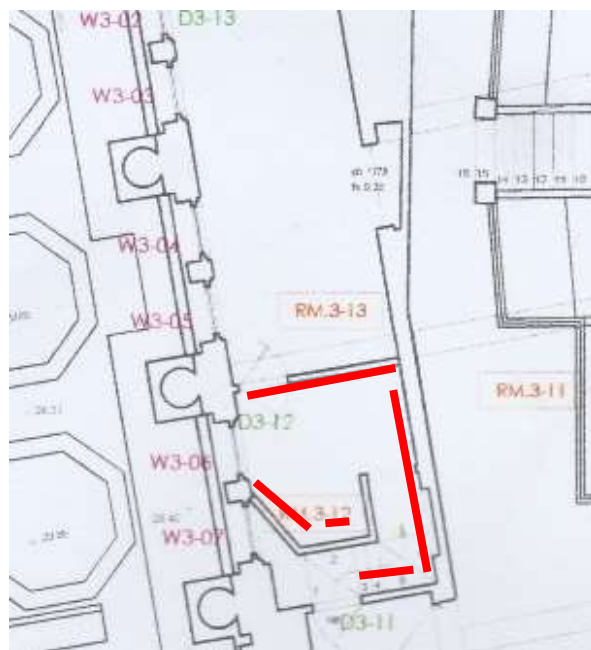
11 South partition wall



THIRD FLOOR LOBBY SOUTH OF PROJECTION ROOM - ROOM 3.12

Samples were taken from the lobby walls, and from the walls of stairs leading down as listed on p.

The ceiling was not examined.



Lead paint Found only on the south and east walls of the lobby and on a patch of older plaster on the south wall of the stairs.

Original paint Red distemper on the walls.

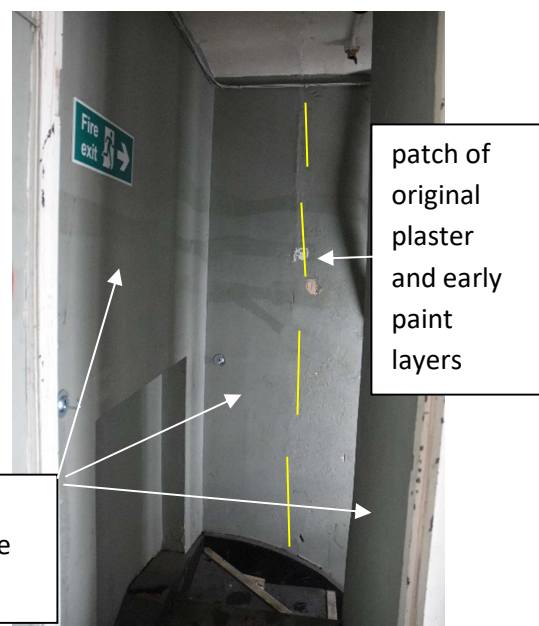
Early C20th paints Two lots of lead-based oil paint

Later C20th paints Fours lot of alkyd paint. The most recent ones applied over a skim of grey gypsum plaster.

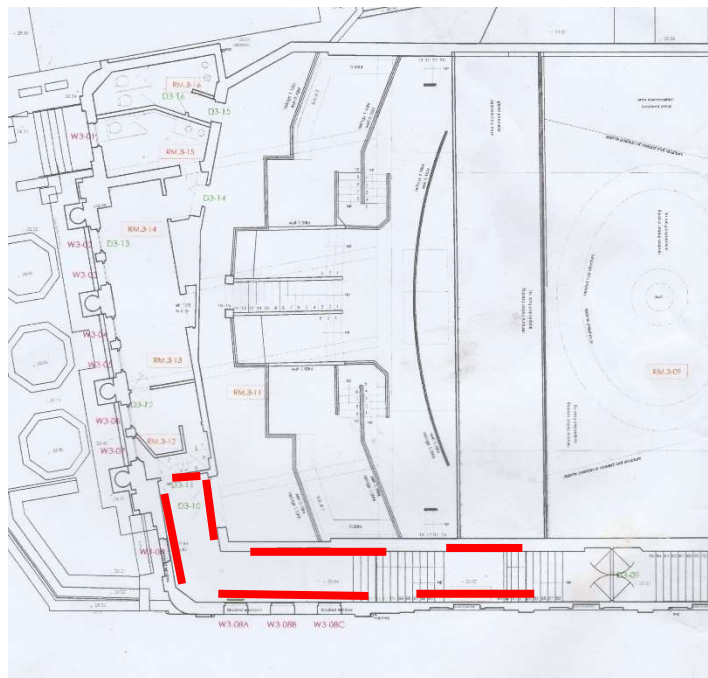
Most recent paint Emulsion paint.

Late C20th plastering The north wall of the Lobby and the south walls of the Lobby and Stairs have been recently re-plastered.

On the south wall of the Stairs this plaster was applied over a patch of original plaster and early paints.



SOUTH STAIRS – THIRD FLOOR ROOM 3.10

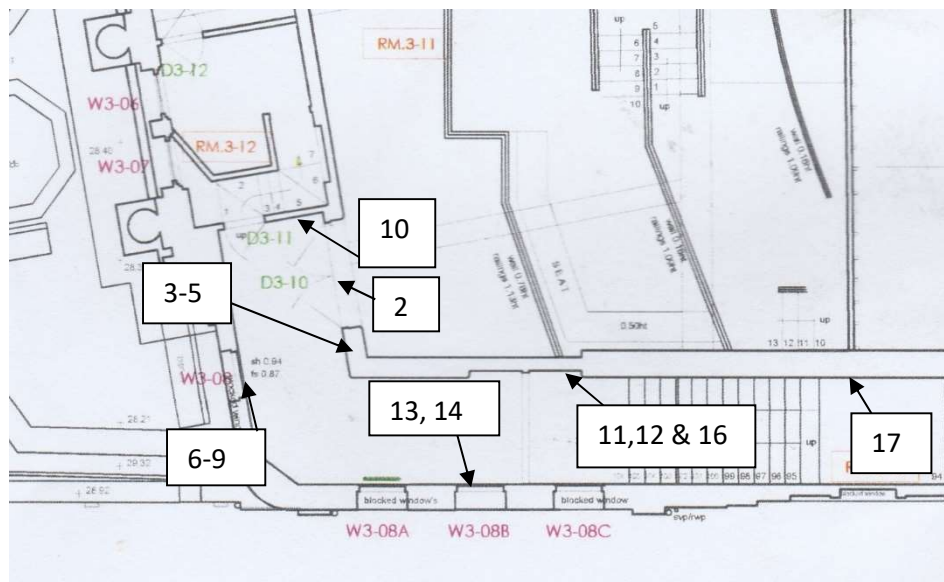


Samples were taken from the third floor landing and from the flight leading down to the second floor. The samples are listed on p.20

The paints that were used on the landing were also used on the stairs.

Lead paint	Present in all samples from walls and woodwork. Not present on the ceilings which have been recently been re-plastered.
Original paint	A red soft distemper was used from floor to ceiling on the walls. The paint was applied directly to the bricks. Brown oil paints were used on the woodwork and iron window grilles
Early C20th paints	Distempers initially continued to be used, but then there was a switch to oil paints, and up to six lots of oil paint were used on the walls.
Later C20th paints	Three lots of alkyd paint and one emulsion paint
Most recent paint	Emulsion paint

LOCATION OF SAMPLES



10 north partition wall

East wall

2 door to auditorium [D3.10]

3 wall high level

4 wall just above black

5 wall low level

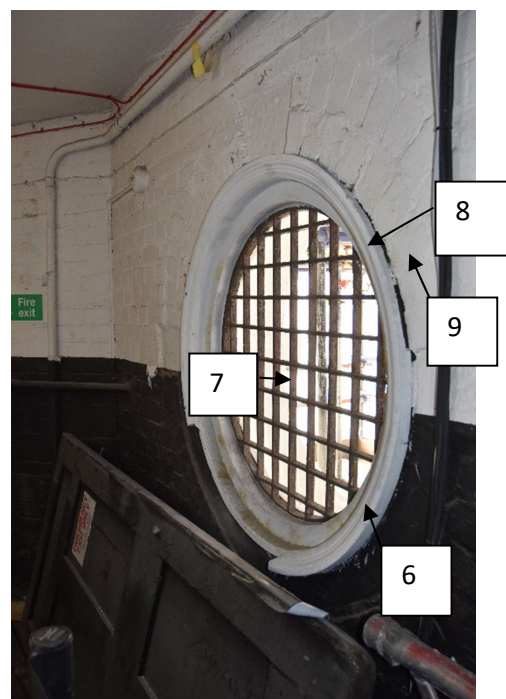
West window [W3.08]

6 frame – lower part

7 iron grille

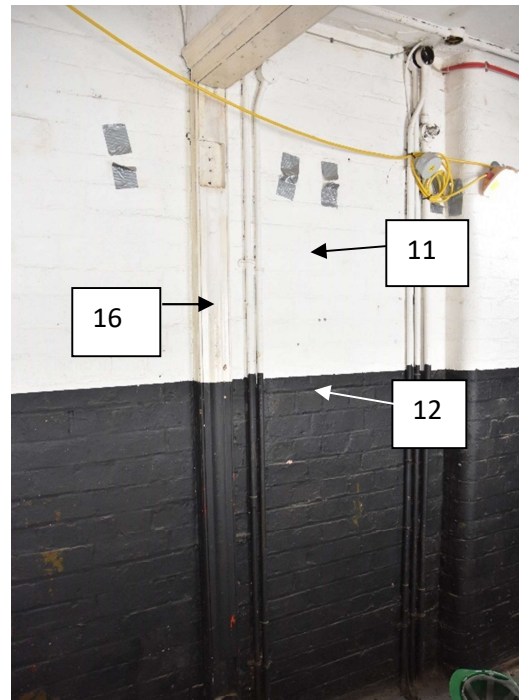
8 bricks around window

9 frame – upper part



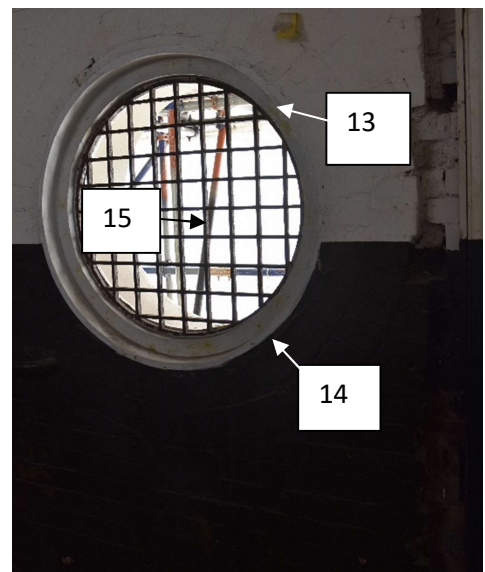
North wall of Stairs to right of removed door

- 11 high level
- 12 low level
- 16 architrave
- 17 high level next to first flight down



Window in south wall [W3.08B]

- 13 upper part of frame
- 14 lower part of frame
- 15 grille



- 18 ceiling



NORTH STAIRS

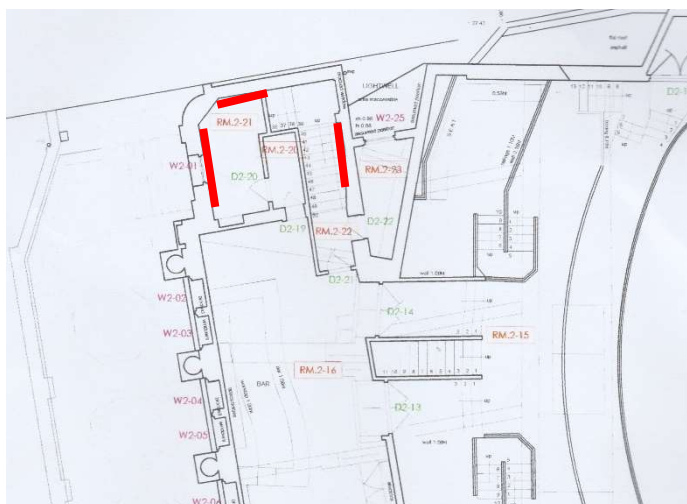
GROUND FLOOR – G.20



FIRST FLOOR – 1.15



SECOND FLOOR – 2.22



Samples were taken from stairs between ground and first floor, and between first and second floor as listed on p.32

Original paint on the plaster was only found in two samples and the walls of this staircase have been partly stripped and partly re-plastered on more than one occasion.

Lead paint Found in samples from the ceiling of the second floor landing and in a few samples taken from the walls between ground and first and between first and second.

Original paint white distemper on the ceiling, and red distemper on the walls

Early C20th paints Embossed wallpaper with cream-coloured oil paint on the surface was used for the walls below the dado rail. Some has survived, at ground floor level, but elsewhere it appears to have all been removed.



The paper was re-painted twice with lead-based oil paints

Later C20th paints At least eight lots of alkyd paint. During this period the walls were partly stripped, and at ground floor level fresh lining paper applied.

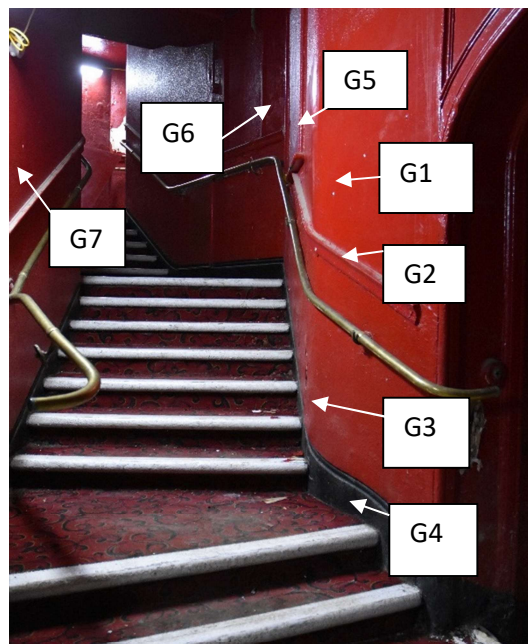
One of the alkyd paints has a textured finish and this rough texture can be seen on many parts of the stairs.

Recent re-plastering Prior to the most recent decoration extensive repairs were carried out, including applying a fresh plaster skim to parts of the upper wall particularly between the first and second floor.

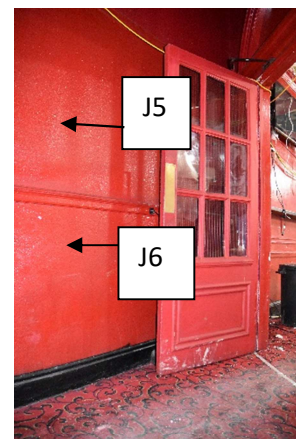
Most recent paint This paint is still flexible and has a rubbery texture. It is insoluble in acetone and is not a standard alkyd. Instrumental organic analysis would have to be carried out to identify the binder.

LOCATION OF SAMPLES

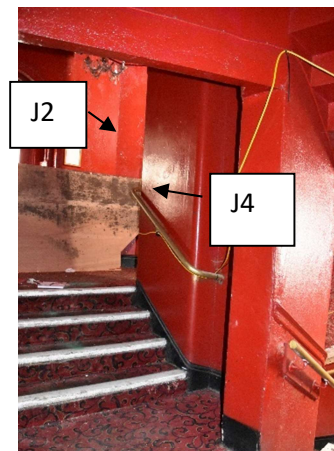
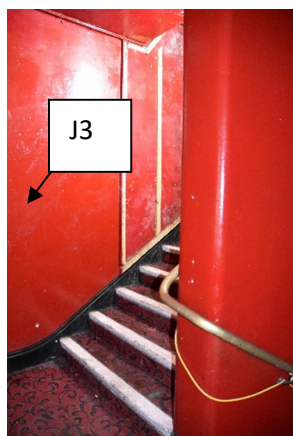
- G1 Ground floor first flight up – north wall
smooth plaster above dado rail
- G2 dado rail
- G3 below dado rail
- G4 skirting
- G5 frame of blocked window
- G7 Ground floor first flight up, south wall,
above dado rail
- G6 First flight up – half landing
north wall, textured paint above dado rail



- J5 First floor landing
east wall – above dado rail
- J6 east wall – below dado rail



- J1 First floor to second floor
south wall of stairs going up
- J2 west wall of stairs going up
- J3 north wall of second flight to second floor
- J4 centre wall of stairs



- B9 Second floor landing
flat of ceiling of second floor landing
- B10 beam above second floor landing – side
- B11 beam above second floor landing