

## PRIMROSE HILL SCHOOL - RAILINGS

Paint samples sent by Chroma Conservation

Examination. The fragments were examined under low magnification and then a selection of the pieces was mounted in cold-setting polyester resin to be cut and polished as cross-sections. The layers were compared, and key pigments were identified using a polarising light microscope. A chemical test for lead was carried out on representative cross-sections.

## RESULTS

The ironwork of the gates and railings has been partly stripped on more than one occasion.

### Original decoration

The iron was coated with a dark grey primer and then painted a reddish-brown, using paint based on pure iron oxides.

Between the 1860s and the beginning of the First World War, this colour was widely used for urban ironwork. The fashion started in London, but soon spread throughout the nation.

### Later decorations

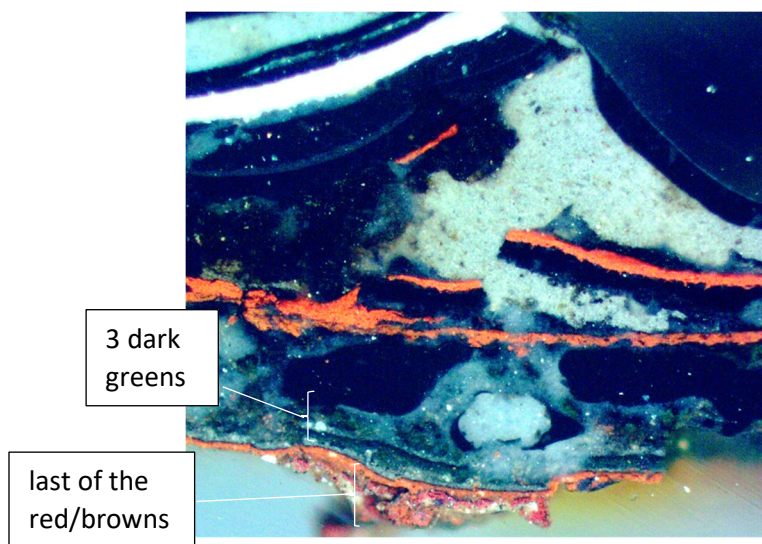
The railings were repainted with red/brown on at least another five occasions. Some of the later ones were a darker, cooler shade of brown, but the final one was a light yellowish brown. All were applied over grey undercoats.

After the light brown there was a change, and the railings were three times painted a dark green. These were the last paints based on lead white and so are likely to have been applied before the Second World War.

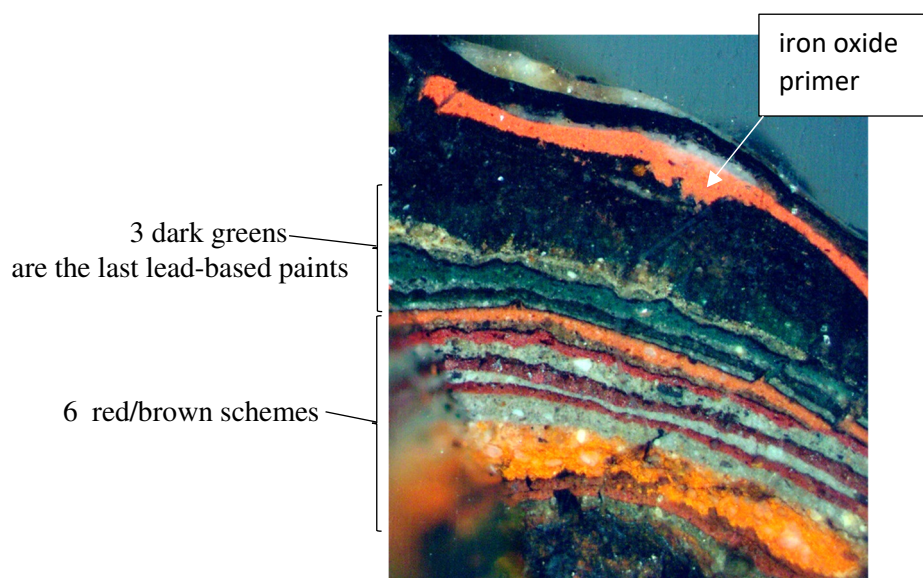
Since the Second World War the ironwork has been regularly painted black

**SAMPLE 1**

Showing the most recent black layers  
over early layers disturbed by the  
regular paint stripping

**SAMPLE 2**

From the gate

Detail of the early layers