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**REPORT ON:**

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIC PAINT RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

**THE CANON'S HOUSE MITCHAM**

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THE CANONS HLF PROJECT. LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**

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*Celebrating 35 years in Conservation*

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## BRIEF:

This research project was undertaken by Ian and Michael Crick-Smith. As part of a larger project that would ensure greater usage and versatility of the property The Canon's House, Mitcham, was being refurbished, redecorated and in many ways its presentation was being reappraised. This provided an ideal opportunity to undertake investigations into the historic appearance of selected interiors within the property, using paint analysis and historic interiors research.

Areas of decoration at the House had become quite tired, worn and required localised repairs and redecoration. In addition, none of the interiors presented their historic appearance or reflected their decorative history. In the early twentieth century the local authority had taken over the property, which they now still own and curate. They wished to understand the significance of the decorative history and the evidence for original and earliest historic finishes that survived beneath in order to inform their redecoration and by consequence, representation strategy.

This report records the earliest surviving decorative history within the selected interiors of The Canon's House, Mitcham.

The following section of this report is included to guide the reader in understanding both the process and the findings of the research. For many the discipline of architectural paint research or paint analysis in its developed form is a new discipline and a significant advancement on the traditional method known as 'paint scrapes'.

## ARCHITECTURAL PAINT RESEARCH:

### METHOD:

To fully examine the decorative schemes a combination of paint scrapes/uncovering and paint samples were employed. Uncovering helps to analyse the surface of each scheme, whilst paint samples mounted in cross section enable us to examine the decorative history of the room in the vertical plane.

The technique of paint uncovering involves scraping back layers of paint using a scalpel to reveal the decorative scheme below. This allows investigation of surface patterns that may be missed when analysing a paint sample and by physically revealing the historic surface allows colours to be accurately quantified. Paint sampling involves removing a sample from the wall to include the paint and substrate. The samples, including substrate, are mounted in polyester resin in cross-section and polished back to reveal the full stratigraphy of the paint layers applied to the building's interior throughout its history. The earliest paint layers appear at the bottom of the sample, with subsequent layers stacked above, as they would have been applied in real time.

The sample is then viewed through a microscope at various magnifications under simulated daylight to determine the distinct layers of paint applied and to reveal colours. The presence of dirt layers helps to determine the separate decorative schemes – a scheme can be made up of more than one layer, commonly a primer and topcoat or historically even three or four layers.



Ultra-violet illumination causes different types of paint and varnishes to fluoresce in a characteristic manner, helping to distinguish traditional oil paints (both lead and zinc based) from modern synthetic alkyds, distempers and varnish coatings.

## HOW TO READ THIS REPORT:

The architectural paint research findings within this report are presented in two formats:

1: Annotated photomicrographs    2: Discussion

A decorative scheme represents each time a room or building was either fully or part redecorated, and represents a snapshot in history. There are often multiple layers to a scheme. For instance, if a wall was being decorated, the decorator may have applied a layer of paint as a primer, and then a layer of cream paint to act as the final colour of the walls, a second coat to give an even finish, and a layer of varnish to protect the paint. Thus, this one scheme of decoration would have four layers.

Alternatively, if a room was redecorated, an area within that interior may have been left unpainted and thus straddle two schemes. For instance, a wall may be

cream but have coloured details. A decorator may re-paint the cream areas to freshen the room, but paint around the more expensively decorated areas. Thus, a paint sample from the cream area would show, say, five layers of paint, whereas the paint sample from the decorative area would only show four layers. However, the entire room has had two decorative schemes (the original design, and the re-decoration).

## TERMINOLOGY:

### Paint samples

A physical sample removed from a surface, ideally to include all paint layers and substrate. Similar in process to a medical biopsy. Though collected on site, investigation of paint samples commonly occurs off site in our laboratory. Samples are mounted in blocks of resin, and viewed in cross-section under the microscope to determine the build-up of paint layers. However, as only a small section is analysed, it can often miss patterning or polychrome schemes if examined in isolation.

### Numbering & Naming Convention

A number of samples are mounted within a resin block (typically, about eight to ten). The blocks are numbered in sequence, starting at 1, with the individual samples as a sub-section of the block. For example, a



sample numbered "2.7" corresponds to block number 2, sample 7. This convention is reflected consistently throughout the report and summarised in the **Sample Location List** (along with a descriptor), for example as 2.7: Column Capital waterleaf moulding

### Paint scrapes/uncovering

The in-situ removal of layers of paint from a surface. This is achieved through either mechanical (e.g. scalpel) or chemical means. It is used to reveal patterns and polychrome schemes that may be missed by single-point paint sampling.

A particular layer may be also targeted in order to obtain a colour reference. Although build-up of layers can be identified using this method, the difficulty of distinguishing between layers without high magnification means that the use of paint scrapes in isolation risks inaccurate and incomplete results. *Also known as: matrix uncovering, laddering, cratering.*

### Cross-section

A removed sample made by cuts through the painted surfaces perpendicular to the lay of the paint layers. This enables us to view the build-up of layers.

### Photomicrograph

A photo taken through the microscope.

### Paint Layer

A single application of paint

### (Decorative) Scheme

The applications of paint, wallpaper, gilding or varnish with the aim of refreshing or redecorating a surface or area. A decorative scheme may be formed from a single layer of paint etc. or from a set of layers. For instance, four layers: a primer, basecoat, topcoat and varnish, may be constitute a single decorative scheme.

### Substrate

The underlying material that the paint (or wallpaper etc.) is applied to, for instance the plaster on a wall, or the wood of a skirting board. It is important to obtain a paint sample complete with the substrate in order to determine if the earliest layer of paint is the earliest decorative



scheme. Damage to the substrate, or traces of another paint would indicate that the surface was stripped and so the earliest evidential paint layer is not the first that was applied. Similarly, dirt on the surface of the substrate may indicate that it was original left unpainted.

### Primer

A substance used as a preparatory coat on wood, metal, or canvas, especially to prevent the absorption of subsequent layers of paint or the development of corrosion.

### Sealing coat / builders or foundry finish

A size, distemper paint or other substance applied to a surface – lime, timber or metal as preparation for the first decorative scheme of paint. A builder's finish was often applied whilst the slow drying lime plaster cured – a process that could take up to a year. However, this was often deemed to be part of the plasterer's work and not necessarily as a decorative scheme.<sup>1</sup>

### Top-coat

The final paint layer applied in the desired final colour or finish.

### Varnish

Resin dissolved in a liquid for applying on wood, metal, or other materials to form a hard, clear, shiny surface when dry. Commonly used to protect a surface and improve its longevity, and provide a washable surface. The appearance of a varnish layer may indicate a special, complex or expensive decorative scheme, e.g. polychrome design, gilding, wood-graining etc.

### Dirt Layer

After decoration and throughout the lifetime of a decorative scheme, dirt, dust, debris and other particulates become deposited on the surface of the paint. When a new decorative scheme is applied, this build-up of deposits becomes sandwiched between the old and new layers and is visible under the microscope. Taking into account environmental factors, the size of the dirt layer corresponds to the length of time the paint layer

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, J (2006) Microscopy and archival research: interpreting results within the context of historical records and traditional practice. *Infocus: The Proceedings of the Royal Microscopical Society*, 3. 38.



it sits on was exposed to the air for. Thus, the heavier the dirt layer, the longer amount of time between decorative schemes. The lack of a layer of dirt deposits between two paint layers indicates that those paints were applied as part of the same decorative scheme e.g. the application of a basecoat and a topcoat.

## Paint

Paint is commonly made from four components: pigment for colour, binder to hold everything together, dryer to enable the drying or curing of the binder and an extender to bulk out the paint and require less pigment.

## Oilpaint

Paint made with a drying oil binder, e.g. linseed oil.

**Alkyd paint** uses a synthetic alkyd resin as a binder. Although available for retail in the UK in 1929, disruption to production due to WWII and a

distrust of new paint technologies meant that alkyd paint for decorative purposes was not in common use until at least 1949.<sup>2</sup>

**Zinc paint** uses zinc compounds to aid drying of the oil. Zinc paints for interior use were originally developed in the 1840's by a Frenchman, E. J. Leclaire, obtaining an American Patent in 1850, though patents for lead paint were granted in 1846 and 1849. The use of zinc in paint was revered for its ability to resist discolouration when exposed to sulphur gasses, a problem that occurred in lead-based oil paints, particularly lead white. Commercial production was underway by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup>

**Titanium dioxide paint** uses titanium dioxide to give a more brilliant, stable and opaque white when compared to lead or zinc. Although discovered in 1821, it was popularised and became the basis most white house paints from 1921 onwards.

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<sup>2</sup> Standeven, H. (2007) Cover the earth: a history of the manufacture of household gloss paints in Britain and the United states from the 1920's to the 1950's. pp.75-84. In: Learner, T. (2007) Modern Paints Uncovered: Proceedings from the Modern Paints Uncovered Symposium. Los Angeles: Getty Publications.

<sup>3</sup> Channing Downs, Jr., A. (1976) Zinc for paint and Architectural use in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*. 8 (4). 80-99.





**Lead paint** uses lead compounds to aid the drying of the oil. Lead in linseed oil was the predominate paint base until a rapid decline the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to increasing concern over its toxicity. White lead in paints fell during 1900-45 from nearly 100% to less than 10%.<sup>4</sup>

### Distemper paint

**Soft distemper** is a permeable paint where the binder is an animal glue. Commonly used with large quantities of whiting (chalk dust) as an extender, optionally with pigments added to provide colour. Distempers are water soluble and usually, but not always, washed off before the application of a new scheme.

**Oil bound distemper** popularised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a distemper paint with the addition of oil with an emulsifier such as borax (sodium borate). Unlike soft distempers it is more durable and often washable.

### Wood-graining

The application of several layers of paint or glaze to replicate the appearance of wood, either naturalistic or fantastical. Wood-graining is a relatively common decorative finish, used in lieu of more expensive wood e.g. mahogany. However complex and high-quality wood-graining can be deemed a high status finish more desirable than the real timber.

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<sup>4</sup> World Health Organisation IARC (1989) Some Organic Solvents, Resin Monomers and Related Compounds, Pigments and Occupational Exposures in Paint Manufacture and Painting. IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Volume 47.

(The following list records the samples taken and their given reference number.)

## THE CANON'S MITCHAM, SELECTED INTERIORS

### SAMPLE LOCATION LIST CROSS-SECTION REFERENCES

Sample Location List Cross-section Reference

#### G01 Entrance Hall

##### TheCanons/ 1

- 1: Ceiling bed
- 2: Cornice
- 3:
- 4: Skirting
- 5: Door architrave
- 6: Entrance door
- 7: Panelled door revel to G02
- 8: Door to G02
- 9: Timber arch to G03

- 4: Window architrave
- 5: Door to entrance hall (2)
- 6: Wallface
- 7: Cornice level picture rail (2) plaster & wood

##### TheCanons/ 3

- 8: Cornice on ceiling bed
- 9: Ceiling bed outer frieze
- 10 Ceiling panel mouldings
- 11: Inner ceiling bed
- 12: Lower frame to window

#### G03 Stairs

#### G02 Drawing Room

- 1: Shutters
- 2: Skirting

##### TheCanons/ 2.

- 3: Door architrave

##### TheCanons/ 4

- 1: North wall face panel
- 2: Door to garden
- 3: Stair to basement
- 4: Stair string
- 5: Newel post
- 6: balusters





**TheCanons/ 5**

- 7: South wall face panels
- 8: South wall face skirting/string
- 9: First floor cornice
- 10: Ceiling bed
- 11: Ground floor upper wall face
- 12: Half landing, sash window

**TheCanons/ 6**

- 13: Half landing shutter back
- 14: Half landing window cill
- 15: Half landing corner post
- 16: Stair baluster hand rail
- 17: Landing arch opening to F02
- 18: Door architrave to F03
- 19: First floor later arch

5: Door to cupboard

6: Fire surround

7: Room F02 Upper wall face panel moulding

**TheCanons/ 8**

- 1: Basement ceiling beam
- 2: Basement wall face
- 3: Basement skirting

**F03 Office**

**TheCanons/ 7**

- 1: North wall face panelling (2)
- 2: Shutters
- 3: Cupboard interior
- 4: South wall face nm cooked



## HISTORY:

In 1680, John Odway, was granted a lease to rebuild the house, which is the house remaining at the centre of the estate today, listed at Grade II\*. Extensions and multiple alterations to the interior of the building were made by tenants and by the Cranmer family, which took the lease back between the 1760s and the 1840s.

The Canons remained in the ownership of the Cranmer family and their descendants the Simpsons until 1939. The family sold the estate to the Corporation of Mitcham for £25,093. Montague does not state a reason for the family selling, but in that period, increasing taxation on the wealthy made many give up large houses and estates. He notes that the Corporation's intention 'was to use the house as a community centre, developing the grounds for sport and athletic purposes.

With the advent of the Second World War from 1939, The Canons was made an air raid warden's control centre and a Home Guard post.

In the late 1950s, the Local Authority invested heavily, and made estate-wide changes in the 1960s. The house was altered internally, extended to the north, with the WCs and Madeira Hall, as a sports hall. There were many associated changes to the landscape. The final stage was the opening of The Canons leisure centre in the mid-1980s.

The Canons was set on fire in 1996. There was damage 'to the entrance hall and room above.

**Figure 1: House from the entrance drive C1900**

**Towards the end of the domestic occupation period**



Figure 2: Ground Floor showing the rooms selected for research

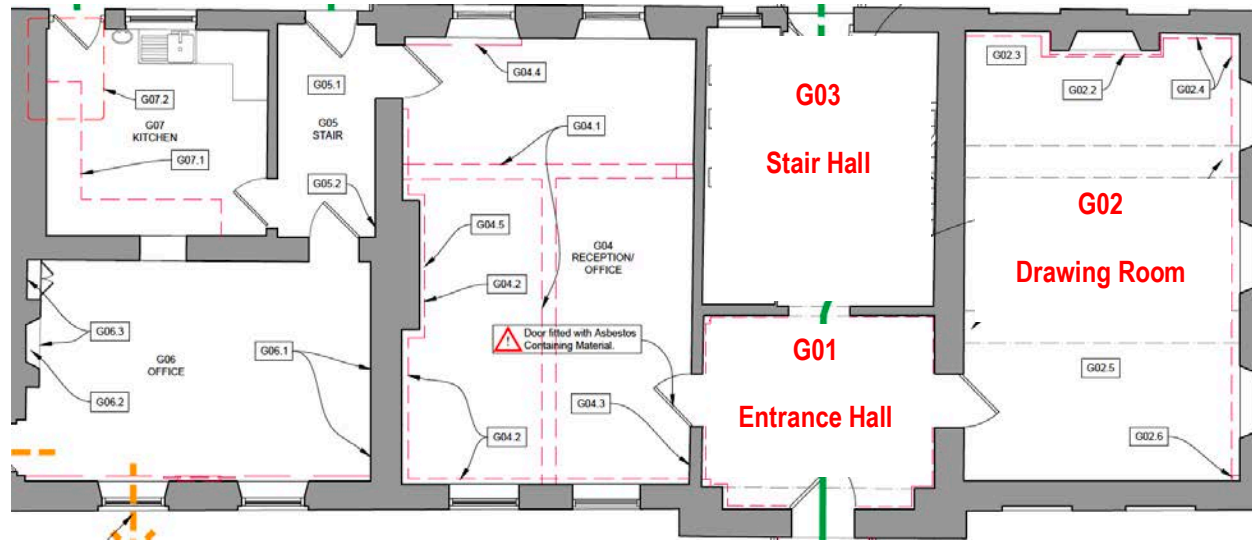
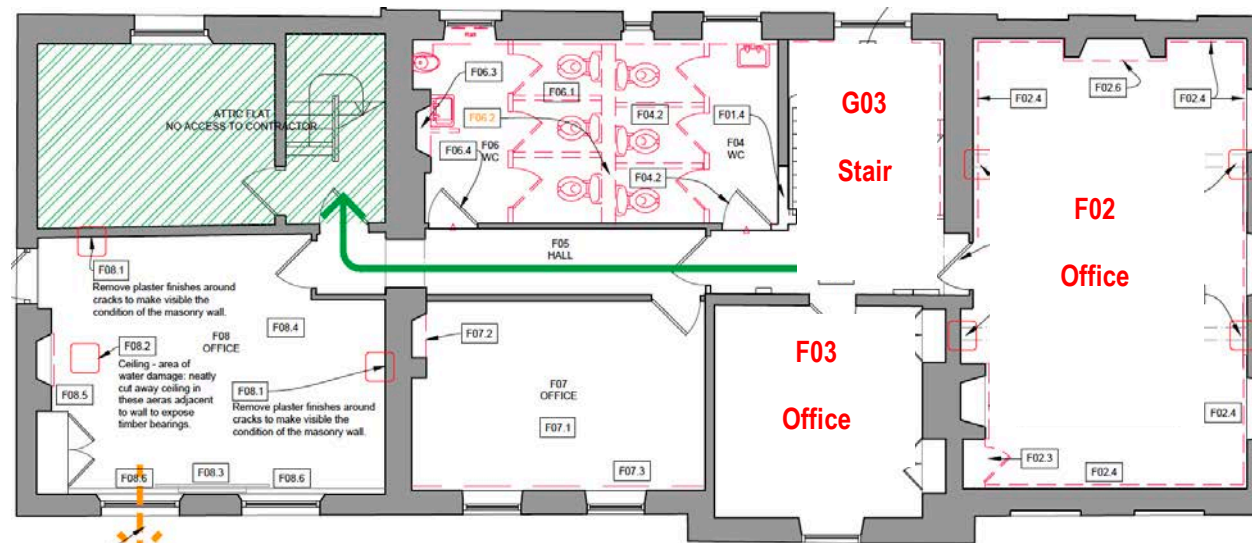


Figure 3: First Floor showing the rooms selected for research



## RESEARCH FINDINGS:

The following pages record the evidence identified and investigated during this research exercise within the selected interiors of the Canon's House. There is clear evidence for schemes that are possibly the original and the earliest decorative schemes. Unfortunately, over the years the House has undergone extensive repair and upgrading, which although this has secured the survival of the building, it has resulted in loss of information within certain area.

Where evidence of early schemes survive that are appropriate to the years of domestic occupancy, these do provide evidence that can be carried through into adjacent and related interiors.

The most significant paint cross-sections are included with a photograph of the interior and are sampled, each of the samples is annotated with the scheme details. The cross-sections included are for reference only and are representative for each interior. It is important to record that the colours within these cross-section serves only as a general indication of the original finish colour and should not be seen as a close rendition of the original colour.

When viewed in cross-section at high magnification the colour does not typically portray its true appearance when viewed without magnification as a paint finish applied to a surface. As such, the names given to the colours in the annotations are kept as generic as possible, it is an error made by some to colour reference from that unreliable source. True colour references can only be provided by taking a small fragment of accumulated paint, exposing the required surface and allow for colour correction under UV illumination for those paints that are oil based and will have yellowed over time. This UV exposure is a tried, tested and proven method of colour correcting the yellowing to a closer match of the original . Colour references can then be taken from the surface by calibrated spectrophotometer using the Natural Colour System.

The Natural Colour Scheme\* also called the NCS\* range, is a recognised industry standard for colour notation adopted by almost all architectural paint researchers, as it provides a greater range of colour matches than BS, RAL or Munsell and can be matched by all major and most other paint manufacturers. Reference can be supplied once decisions on redecoration have been made by the client and project team.

(\*NCS-Natural Colour System property of and used on licence from NCS Colour AB, Stockholm 2015. References to NCS in this publication are used with permission from the NCS Colour AB. The colours might not exactly match original NCS colour samples. Please refer to [www.ncscolour.co.uk](http://www.ncscolour.co.uk) for accurate samples.)



## GO2 DRAWING ROOM (later office):

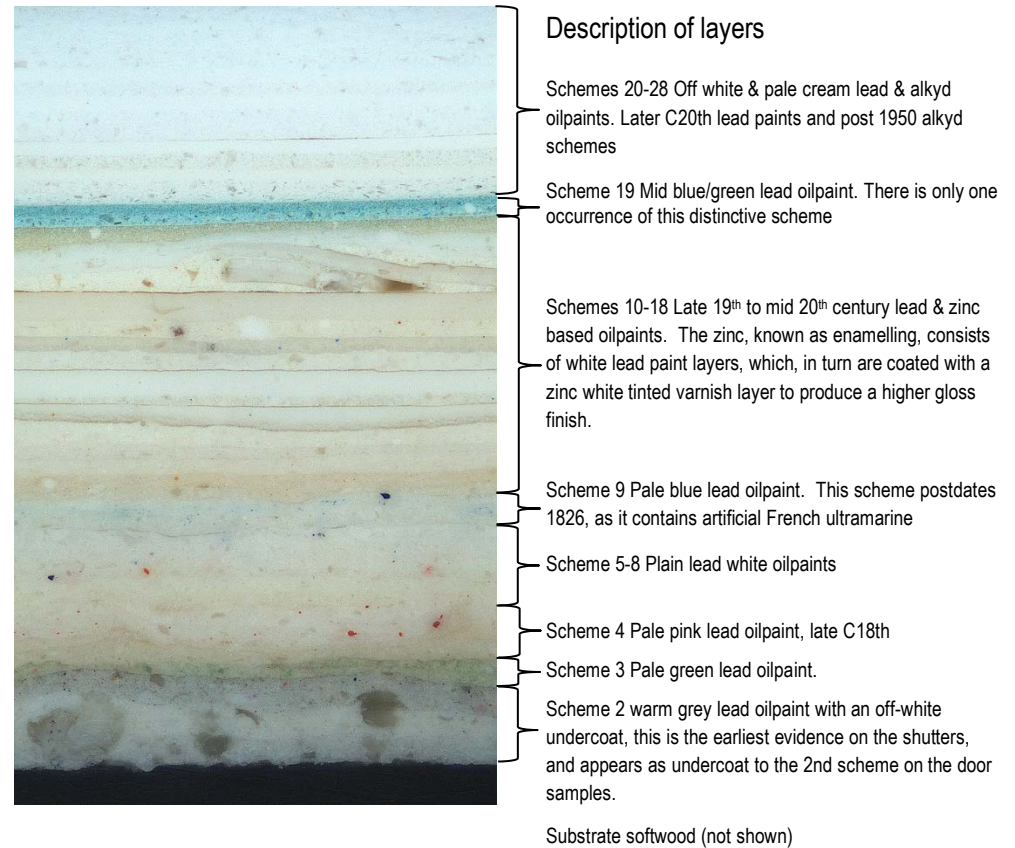
Figure 4: G02 Drawing Room



Within this interior the earliest schemes are found on the skirting and shutters, which appear to date from the second phase of alterations in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

It has been possible to approximately date many of the layers from pigment content and paint type/colours. Scheme two is a typical eighteenth-century warm grey. Also, the eighteenth-century schemes are neatly capped by scheme nine, which has to date from after 1826, as the French ultramarine pigment only became available after that date. A popular C19<sup>th</sup> pigment, particularly in distempers.

Figure 5: Sample: TheCanons/ 1.1 Window Shutters



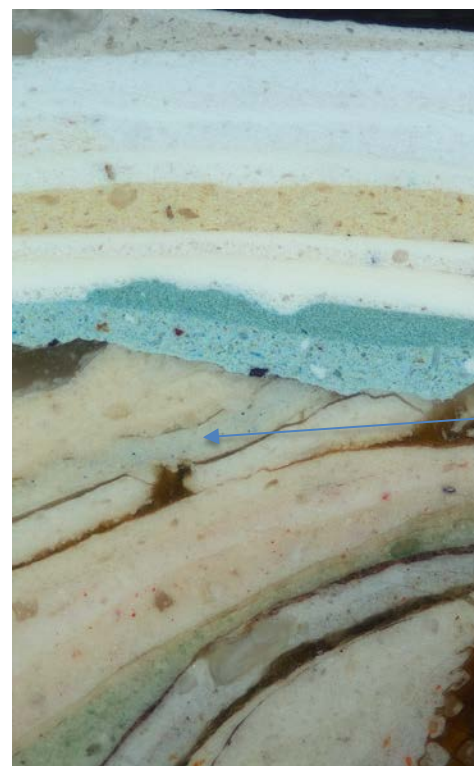
The sample above, taken from the window shutters exhibits a very clear and complete chronology of schemes from the eighteenth century to the present day. Interestingly the schemes on the shutters and skirting do not show the first scheme of lead white found on the doors, suggesting an early alteration or perhaps re-use of the virtually new door.

**Figure 6: Door to Entrance Hall**



Although the evidence on the door has been compromised by the stripping prior to scheme 19, the evidence is extremely clear and ties in perfectly with the shutter sample in figure 3.

**Figure 7: Sample: TheCanons/ 2.5 Door to Entrance Hall**



#### Description of layers

Later modern decorations from scheme 19. These are as found on the shutters and skirting, with the exception of a single scheme 22, in a warm cream colour. Scheme 19 is the mid blue/green oil paint as seen in figure 3. Surfaces of the previous schemes 5 to 18 are damaged by cleaning back prior to scheme 19.

The pale blue seen here is the distinctive scheme 9, containing artificial French ultramarine (post 1826)

Scheme 4 Pale pink lead oilpaint

Scheme 3 Pale green lead oilpaint

Scheme 2 Dark grey/brown lead oilpaint, over the warm grey finish coat of the shutters

Scheme 1 Lead white oilpaint (predates shutters and skirting)

Substrate softwood

This sample has clear evidence of an initial lead white scheme predating the shutters and skirting. In addition, the warm grey finish coat of the shutters is used as an undercoat for scheme two on the door, where it is coated over by a dark brown oil paint finish. This is a typical eighteenth-century joinery colour, known as 'mahogany colour', widely used on doors and sometime also on skirtings and shutters (although not here).

**Figure 8: Detail of ceiling cornice**

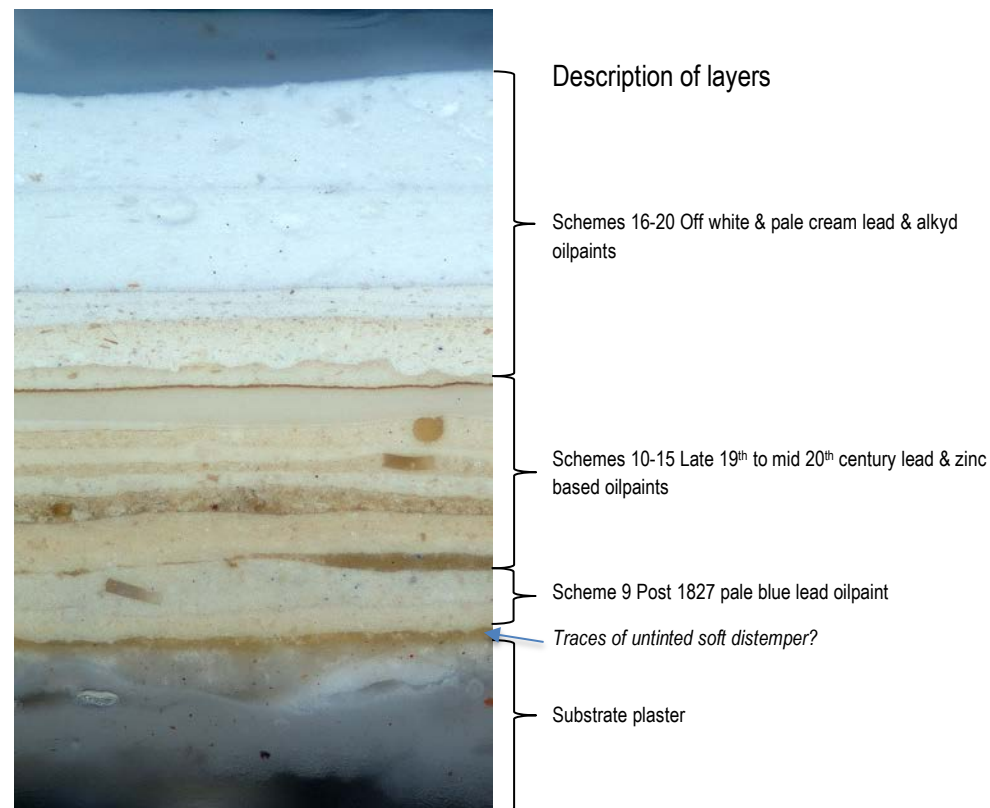


No evidence was found on the ceiling and cornice prior to scheme 9, which as discussed dates it to after 1826.

In addition, the embossed pressed ceiling paper, possibly an Anaglypta, Tynecastle or similar type, dates from the very late 19<sup>th</sup> or possibly 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is very much in the 'Adam revival' style, popular from the 1890s to the 1920s.

It is therefore entirely possible that all previous schemes applied to the cornice were in soft distemper and these were thoroughly washed off prior to any redecoration, and certainly before the scheme of pale blue lead oil paint was applied. There are small traces of a distemper like material beneath the blue lead paint, which possibly confirms this.

**Figure 9: Sample: TheCanons/ 3.8 ceiling bed cornice**



The cornice sample seen above commences with the post 1826 blue lead oil paint scheme. Beneath this the thin trace, possibly of distemper, can be seen.



## Summary for G02 Drawing Room:

The earliest evidence in G02 the Drawing Room was found on the door and consisted of lead white oil paint. Over this an eighteenth century 'Mahogany Colour' was applied for scheme two. This has a distinctive warm grey undercoat beneath it, which was also used as the finish coat for the shutters and skirting. The second scheme of a warm grey

This combination of dark brown with soft grey is one of a few known eighteenth century preferred options for joinery treatments, in the style known as Palladian.

Unfortunately, the wall faces do not carry any evidence for these earliest finishes. Through the interiors at scheme nine a blue tinted scheme was applied. Pigmented by Artificial French Ultramarine, this post-dates 1826, when the pigment first became widely available.

the recreation of the eighteenth-century interior would require some removal of later elements, such as the ceiling paper. However, there is sufficient evidence to design a suitable scheme using the identified paints and colours with informed introduced paint colours and finishes for the main wall faces.

Figure 10: Sample: TheCanons/ 2.6 Drawing Room wall face

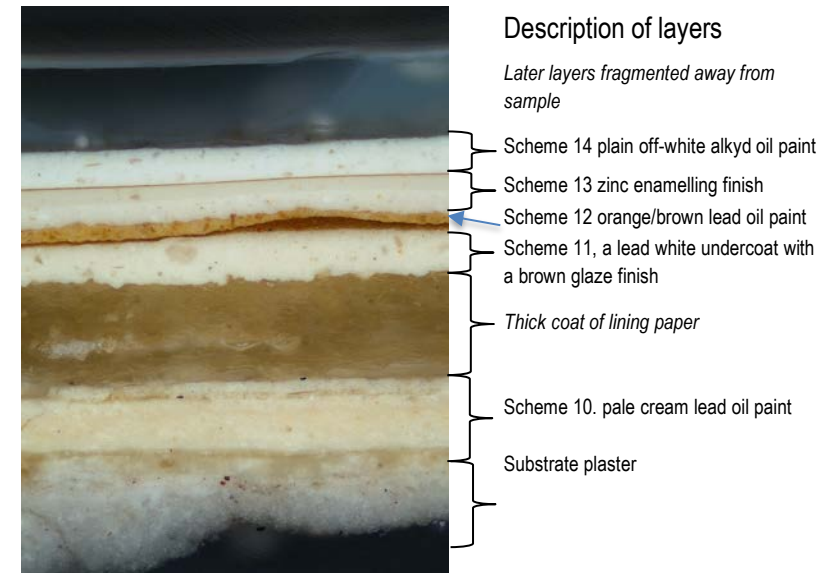


Figure 10 above, shows how the wall face evidence has been lost prior to scheme 10. The later schemes survive and could be retained beneath any recreated historic scheme.



## G01 ENTRANCE HALL:

Figure 11: G01 Entrance Hall



Figure 12: Sample: TheCanons/ 1.4 Skirting



### Description of layers

*Later layers not shown*

Schemes 13-17  
various modern alkyd oil paints, post 1950

Scheme 13, final zinc enamelling scheme

Scheme 12 orange/brown lead oil paint  
1920s?

Schemes 8-11 off-white zinc based oilpaints as  
enamelled finishes. dating from the first 20  
years of the C20th

Schemes 5-7 [ale cream and lead white  
oilpaints dating from the second half of the  
C19th

Schemes 2-4 Mid oak woodgraining, dating  
from. c.1820 and in the Regency style

Scheme 1 Very dark black/brown lead oilpaint  
with a varnish over. 'Mahogany Colour'  
Typically, C18th

Substrate softwood

The skirting within the Entrance Hall retains a complete decorative history and ties into the eighteenth-century finishes found in G02 the Drawing Room.

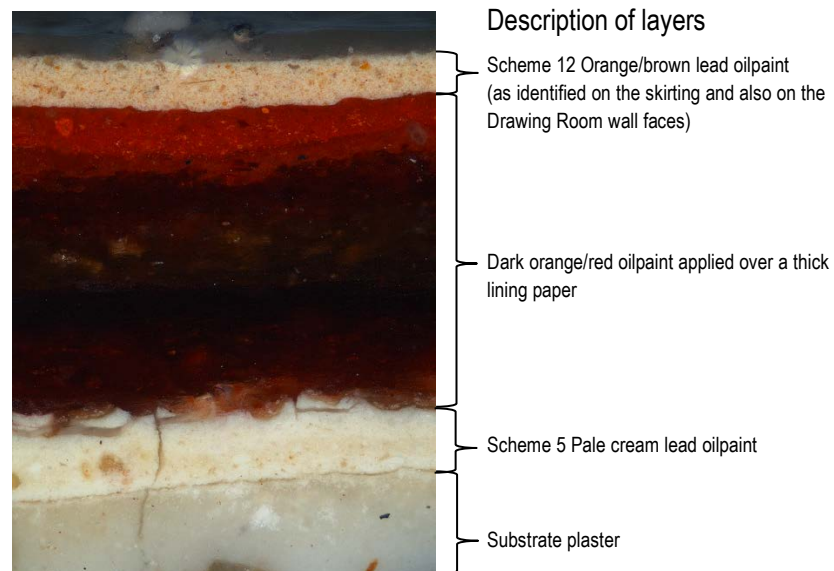
**Figure 13: Entrance Hall wall face**



The wall face sampling was restricted due to the extensive use of 20<sup>th</sup> century pine cladding, however an area of plaster wall face was identified to the left side of the main entrance door

The earliest evidence on the walls is a pale cream lead oil paint that occurs as scheme number 5 on the skirting sample. This provides a date of later nineteenth century for this finish. Overlying this the thick lining paper and orange/red scheme applied to it could be

**Figure 14: Sample: TheCanons/ 1.3 uncovered wall face**



very late nineteenth century. In cross-section the exact nature of the finish is difficult to identify and would require on-site uncovering if further information were required

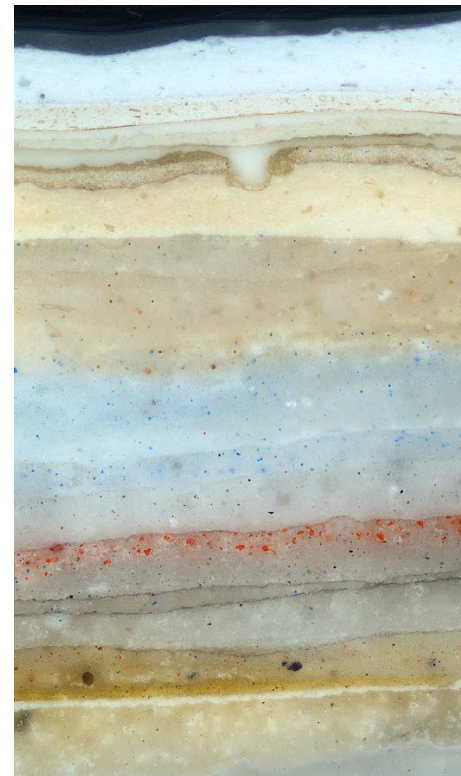
The lack of evidence for schemes within the entrance may indicate the usage of wall papers, which have subsequently been removed. It might be possible to investigate this area in greater detail if the wall panelling were removed.

Figure 15: G01 Entrance Hall



In contrast to the wall faces the cornice, retains a very complete decorative history, including an original and early phase of soft distemper paints. Usually, these would be washed off prior to redecoration but not always, and their survival here is a strong indicator that distempers would have been used in other areas, where perhaps the information has been lost. For example, the adjacent G02 the Drawing Room

Figure 16: Sample: TheCanons/ 1.2 Cornice



#### Description of layers

- Schemes 12-15 pale cream zinc & alkyd oilpaints
- Scheme 11 Pale cream zinc based oilpaint
- Schemes 8-10 Untinted white distempers
- Schemes 6-7 Pale blue distemper
- Scheme 5 Pale grey distemper
- Scheme 4 Pale-mid pink distemper
- Scheme 2-3 Untinted white distempers
- Scheme 1 pale orange/cream distemper (also found on the first-floor stair cornice)
- Substrate plaster

The sample above records the full history of the cornice. The ceiling was also sampled which allowed for referencing between the two. the ceiling schemes commence with scheme 11 on the cornice, so it seems the ceiling was thoroughly washed off, perhaps due to peeling of the schemes, while the cornice was merely painted over.

## Summary for G01 Entrance Hall :

The research within the Entrance Hall again identified evidence for the eighteenth century 'Mahogany Colour' on the skirting with soft distempers on the cornice.

The wall faces are again disappointing with no evidence prior to scheme 5 and then scarce evidence for subsequent schemes. It is known from the research within the adjacent Stair Hall and Stair itself that there has been a history of alteration and restyling throughout those spaces and it would be very unusual if this had not also compromised the evidence for schemes within the Entrance Hall.

As the Entrance Hall and Stair Hall are linked by an open arch it should be possible to combine the information for the three areas together into a cohesive period scheme with informed decisions on treatments where evidence is missing, extrapolating information through to fill in the gaps of information.

Stair wall faces add to correct section and info into scheme chart



## STAIR HALL AND STAIRS:

Figure 17: G03 Stair Hall & stairs



The Stair Hall and Stair has perhaps proved the most complicated area to disentangle due to the development and alterations over time. For a clearer explanation of the development please refer to the scheme chart provided for these areas prior to the summary for the space.

Figure 18: Sample: TheCanons/ 4.4 Stair String

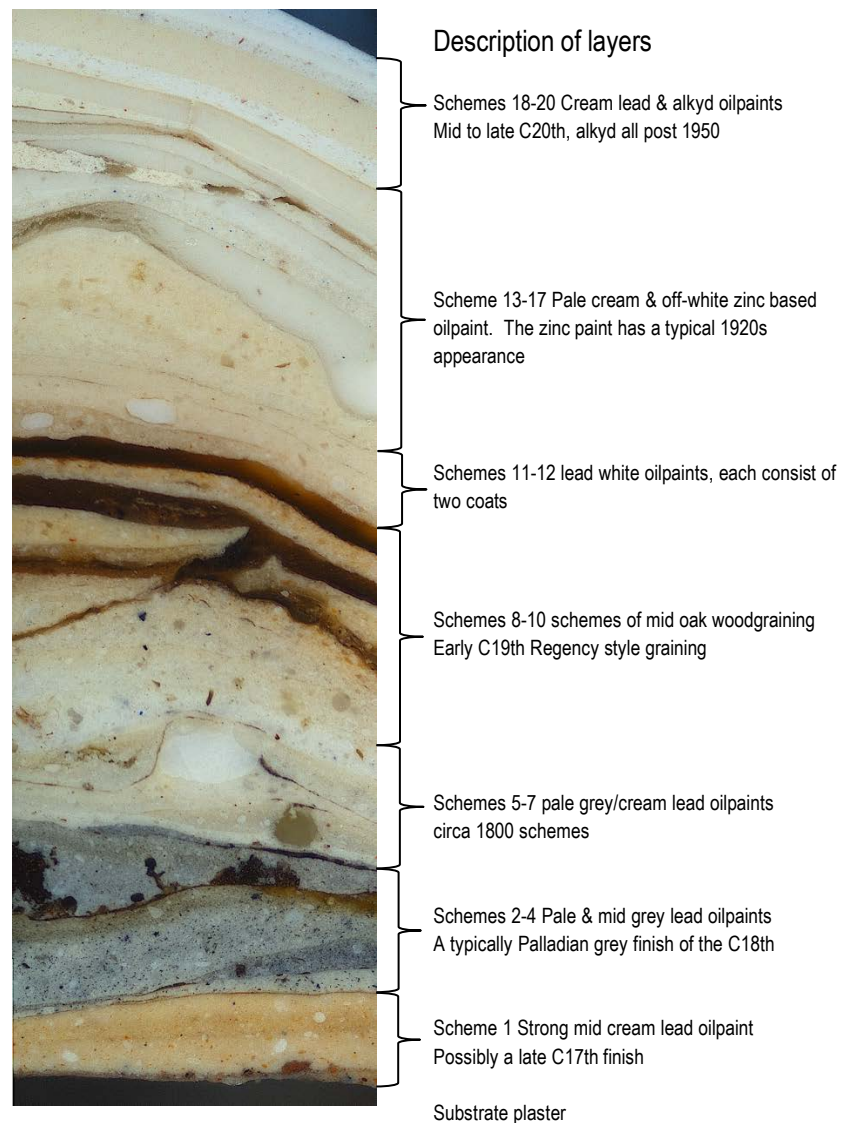


Figure 19: Detail of figure 18 Sample: TheCanons/ 4.4 Stair String



The south wall face skirting and shutter box are similar to those in the G02 the Drawing Room as the commence at scheme two. The staircase, being of late seventeenth century start with two schemes of strong mid-cream lead oil paints. The skirting and shutter boxes then come in at the second scheme indicating that while the stairs date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, further alterations were carried out soon after in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. At that time the skirtings were painted in dark brown in imitation of mahogany, known as 'Mahogany Colour', a typical 18<sup>th</sup> century treatment in association with the grey joinery.

Figure 20: Area of dado panel on the stair, upper edge



The door to the garden and the stairs to the basements stairs starts a scheme 8 the first woodgraining and are therefore from the first part of the nineteenth century.

The exposed blue/greys seen on the dado relate to the greys in the adjacent enhanced area of 4.4 stair string cross-section. Although the layers appear to have a blue 'cast' to the coloration, there are no blue pigments present within the paint layers. Instead, the use of lamp black to create a grey was also known to add a blueish/purple tint to the paint colour. At a time when blue pigments were very expensive, this allowed for a 'blue-ish' colour to be achieved merely by increasing the lamp black pigmentation of the paint mix.

**Figure 21: Stair balusters**



The photomicrograph clearly shows 4 decorative phases of the stairs, the first strong mid creams of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when it was common to use darker muted tones, and the second the very distinctive grey colours extensively used during the Palladian period (see figure 20), then moving into the pale grey/creams. The third phase is the woodgraining period starting c1815 and continuing through the 19<sup>th</sup> century and finally the fourth phase of zinc-based paints using a white zinc varnish, used 1920's through to the 1950's. following on into the alkyd schemes of post 1950.

**Figure 22: Sample: TheCanons/ 4.6 Stair Newel**



#### Description of layers

- Schemes 18-20 of cream lead & alkyd oilpaints (not shown on this cross-section)
- Scheme 13-17 Pale cream & off-white zinc based oilpaint
- Schemes 11-12 lead white oilpaints
- Schemes 8-9 Mid oak woodgraining (3 schemes of woodgraining were found on the remaining joinery) Regency style
- Schemes 5-7 Pale grey/cream lead oilpaints
- Schemes 2-4 Pale grey lead oilpaints (early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century)
- Scheme 1 Strong mid cream lead oilpaint (1680)
- Substrate softwood (not shown)

The clear chronology of the stair newel perfectly illustrates the changing fashions in paint colours applied to the stairs over its 330-plus years history.

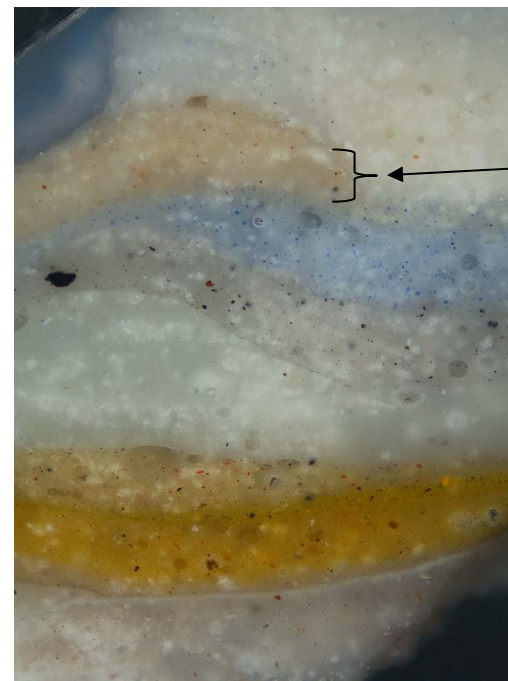
The strength of the late seventeenth century schemes and the drastic change to early eighteenth-century greys is particularly noticeable.



**Figure 23: First floor landing**



**Figure 24: Sample: TheCanons/ 5.9 Cornice**



#### Description of layers

- Scheme 7 Pale blue distemper and schemes 8 – 10 off-white distempers
- Scheme 6 Pale cream distemper
- Scheme 5 Pale blue distemper
- Scheme 4 Greyed white distemper
- Scheme 3 Untinted white distemper
- Scheme 1-2 Orange/cream distemper
- Substrate plaster

The schemes surviving on the cornice to the stair are again very similar to those found on the cornice within the Entrance Hall, following the same colour changes.

The orange/cream distemper could be of early date, possibly late seventeenth century, with the untinted white and greyed white tying in perfectly with the eighteenth-century grey schemes. The blued white of scheme five will be post 1826 as mentioned previously.



Figure 25: View from half landing to the first floor

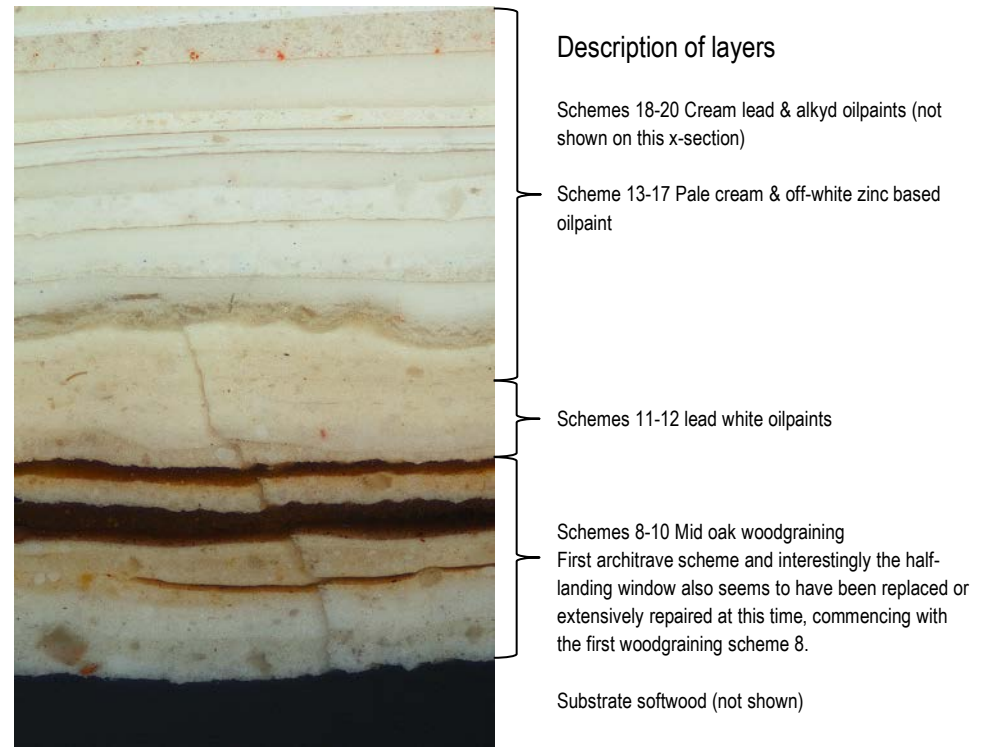


At some point in the early nineteenth century alterations and/or repairs were made to this area of the House. This included the door to F03 and the stair window on the half-landing. Woodgraining, particularly in imitation of pale and mid oak became very popular as early as 1812\* and continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, in this context a date of post 1815 would be more realistic.

No evidence was found on the upper wall face prior to the early twentieth century due to the modern cladding. Sampling was undertaken where possible and this revealed fragmentary traces of distemper on the plaster surface. These had then been washed of prior to an application of lining paper and an orange/brown lead oilpaint identical to that found in the Entrance Hall, this was then overpainted with a modern cream lead oil paint before being panelled over.

*\* Crick Smith have identified this type of graining at Marble Hall, Twickenham dating from 1812 & also extensively at Kenwood House, Hampstead in 1815*

Figure 26: Sample: TheCanons/ 6.18 Door architrave to room F03

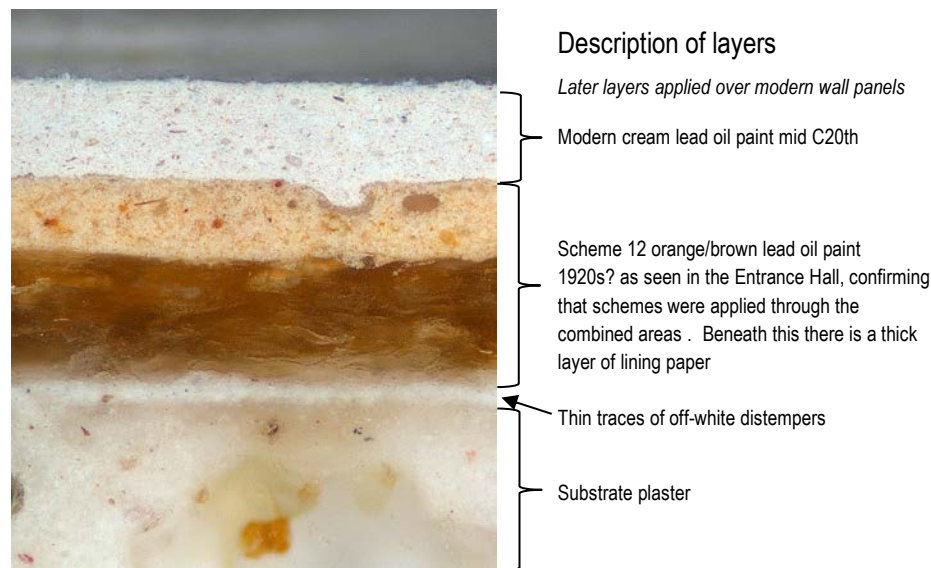


The door architrave to F03, shown above, starts with the first woodgraining, scheme 8. Typically, Regency in style and materials. It is clear that the upper landing area of the Stair has been extensively altered in the twentieth century to make better usage of space and allow for the introduction of modern facilities. It is possible that the area has also been altered at an earlier date, prior to scheme eight. At an earlier seventeenth period, it was quite common too have a larger landing area, as a usable 'room' space. At later dates these often had additional walls inserted to create more private spaces, and as suggested here, a small boudoir would often be created at the top of the stair.

**Stair & Landings: Chart recording the decorative history of the interior with archaeological suggestions inserted.**

Element Scheme details	Stair wall faces	Stair joinery including dado wall face	Half landing shutter back	South wall face skirting	Door to garden	Stairs to basement	Door architrave to F03	South wall face panelled Cupboard/store	Half landing window
<b>Schemes 13-20 20<sup>th</sup> century</b>	Later wall panelling over a modern cream lead oil paint and an orange/brown lead oil paint of the 1920s	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints	Pale cream & off white oilpaints
<b>Schemes 11-12</b>	Very thin traces of earlier off-white distempers only	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint	Lead white oilpaint
<b>Schemes 8-10 Post 1815</b>	No evidence for earlier schemes  Removal of the wall panels throughout this space and the associated Entrance Hall may reveal evidence	Mid oak woodgraining	2 schemes of mid oak woodgraining	Mid oak woodgraining	Mid oak woodgraining	Mid oak woodgraining	Mid oak woodgraining	Scheme 10 A single scheme of mid oak woodgraining	Scheme 10 A single scheme of mid oak woodgraining
<b>Schemes 5-7 Post 1750</b>		Pale grey/cream lead oilpaints	Pale grey/cream lead oilpaints	Pale grey/cream lead oilpaints	Softwood	Softwood	Softwood	Softwood	Softwood
<b>4:</b>		Pale grey lead oilpaint	Pale grey lead oilpaint	Dark brown lead oilpaint					
<b>3:</b>		Dark grey lead oilpaint	Dark grey lead oilpaint	Dark brown lead oilpaint					
<b>2:</b>		Mid grey lead oilpaint	Mid grey lead oilpaint	Softwood					
<b>1: c1680</b>		Strong mid cream lead oilpaint	Softwood						
<b>Substrate</b>	Plaster	Softwood							

Figure 26: Sample: TheCanons/ 6.18



The sample above illustrates the limited evidence surviving on the wall faces of the Stair. Although there are traces of distempers directly on to the substrate, these do not provide sufficient evidence to account for the earliest schemes.

It is evident that during the early twentieth century the walls were very heavily cleaned back prior to the application of a lining paper and a lead oil paint scheme. This typifies the changes that occur to domestic properties when their ownership passes to local authority or similar. The presence of the lining paper suggests that the wall surfaces were uneven and possibly damaged. Once the refurbishment of the House is underway, the removal of the later wall panels may allow for the retrieval of the missing evidence.

## Summary for the Stair Hall and Stairs :

The chart on the preceding page illustrates the complexity of the chronology within the Stair area.

There is evidence for the original scheme of 1680 on the earliest joinery elements, and as seen in the Drawing Room, a distinct change with some alterations at scheme two and then the characteristic eighteenth century mahogany colour treatments combined with the warm grey on the Staircase elements. A calmer later eighteenth-century phase of pale grey/creams then follows before the alterations and introductions of the Regency woodgraining schemes.

The significance of these earlier nineteenth century woodgraining finishes has only recently been recognised, as they brought in a naturalistic recreation of hardwoods and exotic timbers not seen previously. Initially this was undertaken in the most fashionable of houses and in particular those in close proximity to London.

This is relevant here and brings The Canon's House into the same status of property as Kenwood House, Marble Hill and even at Windsor, where it was introduced by Sir Charles Long when George IV came to the throne on 1820. The introduction of woodgraining at The Canon's was a deliberate and expensive upgrading to the decoration of the interiors.

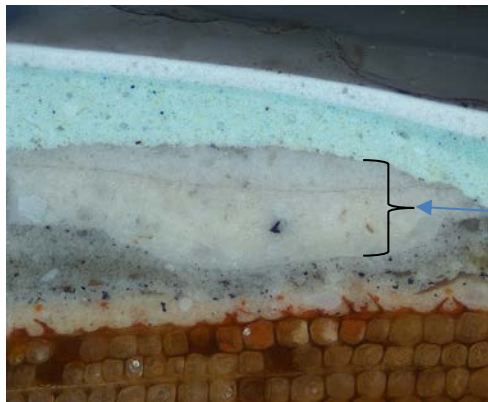


## F03 PARLOUR? (later office) :

Figure 27: F03 Office



Figure 28: Sample: TheCanons/ 7.2 Window shutter



Modern lead & alkyd oilpaints

Schemes 2-3 traces of lead white oilpaints

Scheme 1 Mid warm grey lead oilpaint with a cream lead undercoat/primer

Substrate softwood

Figure 29: Sample: TheCanons/ 7.3 cupboard interior



Description of layers

*All in traditional lead oil paints*

Scheme 15 Very pale cream lead oilpaint

Scheme 14 Warm cream lead oilpaint

Scheme 13 Dark brown lead oilpaint

Schemes 9-12 Lead white oilpaints

Scheme 8 Pale blue lead oilpaint

Post 1826

Schemes 3-7 Cream lead oilpaints

Scheme 2 Lead white lead oilpaint

Scheme 1 warm grey lead oilpaint with off white undercoat & primer

Substrate softwood (not shown)

Although heavily damaged by fire, evidence for early eighteenth-century schemes survives within this interior. Within the cupboards and on the shutters the earliest finish of grey, tinted with Lamp Black ties into the decoration of the joinery within the Stair and also the Drawing Room. Once this interior has been cleared out it may be possible to retrieve further evidence, which may also shed some light on the wall face treatment of the Stair and Entrance Hall.

## Summary for F03 Parlour (?) Office :

The interior of F03 survives well considering the fire that has taken place here. The recreation of the room in with the Drawing Room, Entrance Hall, Stair and Landings would provide the House with a natural sequence of interiors, that flows as a route in a manner that would reflect the historic usage of the property.

Evidence for a complete decorative history was found within the cupboards and this could be added to once safe access is available.

The sequence of schemes very much follows that within the other interiors that have been researched. Commencing with the greys of the early eighteenth century, creams leading coeval to the woodgraining finishes on the stair, through to the introduction of the blue oil paint, containing Artificial French Ultramarine, post 1826.

## ROOM F02:

Figure 30: Room F02



Although not included within the original brief for the research, observations within this interior identified good survival of historic finishes. Now one large space, created from two separate interiors at some point.

## Summary for the Room F02 :

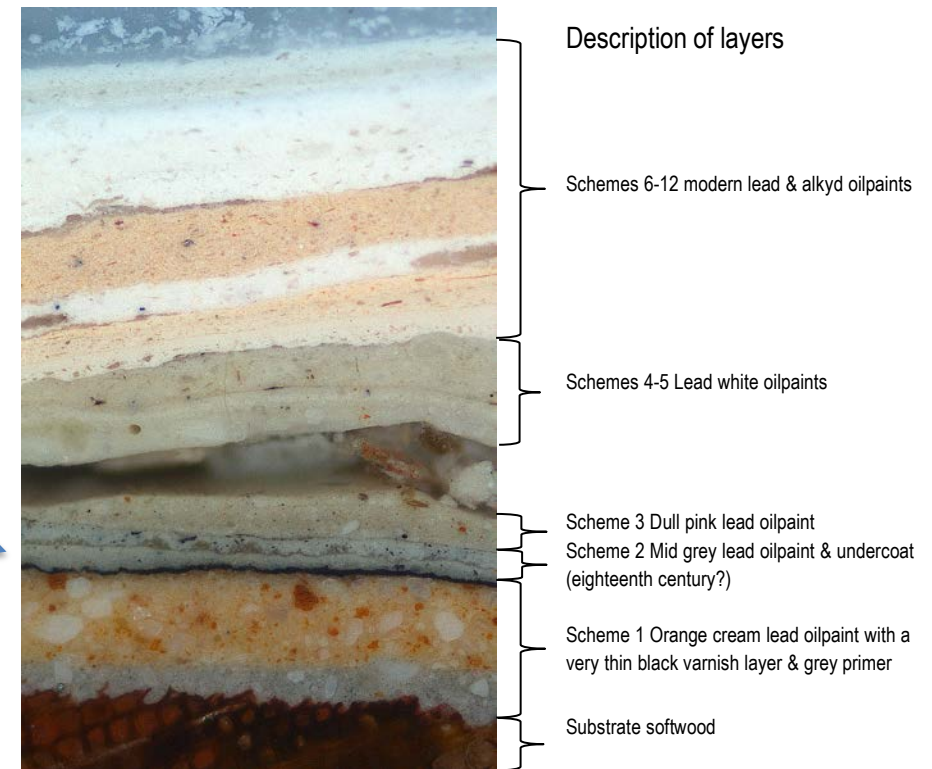
Onsite investigations identified a single eighteenth century grey scheme, beneath which a distinctive scheme of a rich orange cream lead oil paint with a black varnished finish was identified. For reference a sample was removed for analysis and this is shown in figure 31.

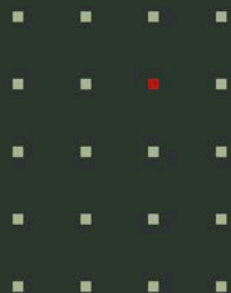
This type of black varnish suggests an ornate decorative finish, which can only be clarified by onsite uncovering. The resinous nature of the layer and its application over a distinctly different rich cream base coat, might indicate a late seventeenth ornate interior. Although based on a single sample the nature of this cannot be clarified at this point, it is possible that this represents a section of a Japanned scheme, or very similar

Japanned interiors were highly fashionable in the late seventeenth century, examples of the 1680s are not unknown, for example Ham House, Richmond, has surviving interiors and furniture of this date. The decoration sometimes undertaken by family members following the instructions of a widely available manual by Stalker and Parker, first published in Oxford in 1688 it contains a comprehensive account of lacquering techniques for use by painters and

It must be stressed that a single sample cannot be seen as conclusive evidence of this type of finish, however, this sample does show the existence of something out of the ordinary and of interest.

Figure 31: Sample: TheCanons/ 7.7 Panel moulding (representative)





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