

Manchester Heritage
Buildings Network
Elizabeth Gaskell's House
The Interior Fit-Out

Thursday 16th February 2017

First some background to
the project

“We’ve got a house. Yes
we really have.
It certainly is a beauty”

“I must try and make the
house give as much
pleasure to others as I can”



Elizabeth Gaskell writing to Tottie Fox in April 1850

Elizabeth’s words express our own feelings about the house and our hope that it will much pleasure to others



84 (formerly 42) Plymouth Grove, c 1890
An early photograph of the house showing the
original conservatory



Mary Barton was published in 1848.
After the move to Plymouth Grove Elizabeth wrote all her other books,
including *Cranford*, *Ruth*, *North and South*, *the Life of Charlotte Bronte*,
Sylvia's Lovers and her last (unfinished) novel, *Wives and Daughters*, as
well as many shorter works



Charlotte Brontë



Charles Dickens



Harriet
Beecher Stowe



Charles Halle



Ruskin



William Gaskell & Beatrix Potter

Visitors to the house included Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, Ruskin, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Halle. Beatrix Potter visited William shortly before his death in 1884

Some key dates.....



1838: Approximate date of construction

1850: The Gaskell Family occupy the property

1865: The death of Elizabeth Gaskell

1884: The death of William Gaskell

1913: The death of Meta Gaskell (the last family member to live at Plymouth Grove)

The house was built in about 1838 and was designed by the Manchester architect Richard Lane.

This late Regency suburban villa is typical of many that were built south of the city to escape the smoke!



In September 2009, after a period of fundraising, and with a grant from English Heritage, works began to restore the house. The Trust commissioned £750,000 of structural repairs



A brief respite: The exterior is restored and after submitting an HLF bid we wait to hear if we have been successful.
A period of calm before further work begins!



Trustees & representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund celebrate the good news!

The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a grant of
£1.85 million to restore Elizabeth Gaskell's House.
The total project cost was £2,565,949

Some Key Facts

Key costs in the HLF bid

Repairs & Conservation Work: £1,515,315

Architects & Specialist Consultants Fees: £ 210,658

Project Management: £50,000

Interpretation: £80,000

Period Room Decoration & Furnishings: £80,000

Publicity and Marketing: £50,000

Volunteer time (match funding): £268,550

Total Project Costs: £2,565,949

We used Specialist Consultants to guide our interpretation and fit-out of the period rooms

Paint and wallpaper research: Crick Smith
Interpretation specialist: Helen Reece-Leahy
Period Room specialist: Dorian Church
Project Management: John Williams
Architects: Bernard Taylor Partnership
Contractor: Armitage Construction

Specialist Consultants can be employed either as part of an HLF Phase 1 Development Grant (as with the Crick Smith report) or as part of the Phase 2 delivery phase as with the Interpretation and Period Room consultants

Furnishing & Interpreting the House

What guided our choices for the Period Rooms?

We used contemporary period images to help get the
details right

Furnishing & Interpreting the Rooms



We used contemporary period images to help get the details right



We used contemporary period images to help get the details right....and to guide the choice of wallpapers, paint colours, carpets, curtains, furniture and lighting

Furnishing & Interpreting the House

And where did we find
furniture?

We used the sale catalogues from the 1914 auction to guide some of our choices and acquired late Regency and Victorian furniture of the period



'Frank goes shopping' ...for a hall table
Because 'brown furniture' is 'out of fashion' some
pieces were very affordable



....and a hall stand ...and hall chairs

Some key costs in the HLF bid

Repairs & Conservation Work: £1,515,315

Architects & Specialist Consultants Fees: £ 210,658

Project Management: £50,000

Interpretation: £80,000

Period Room Decoration & Furnishings: £80,000

Publicity and Marketing: £50,000

Volunteer time (match funding): £268,550

Total Project Costs: £2,565,949



Antique
replacement
three branch
gas-light
converted to
electricity

The Drawing Room in 1897

This photograph provided the evidence for the selection of a suitable replacement gas-fitting



Plaster removed from the chimney breasts in the main reception rooms reveals the bell-pull positions either side of the fireplaces



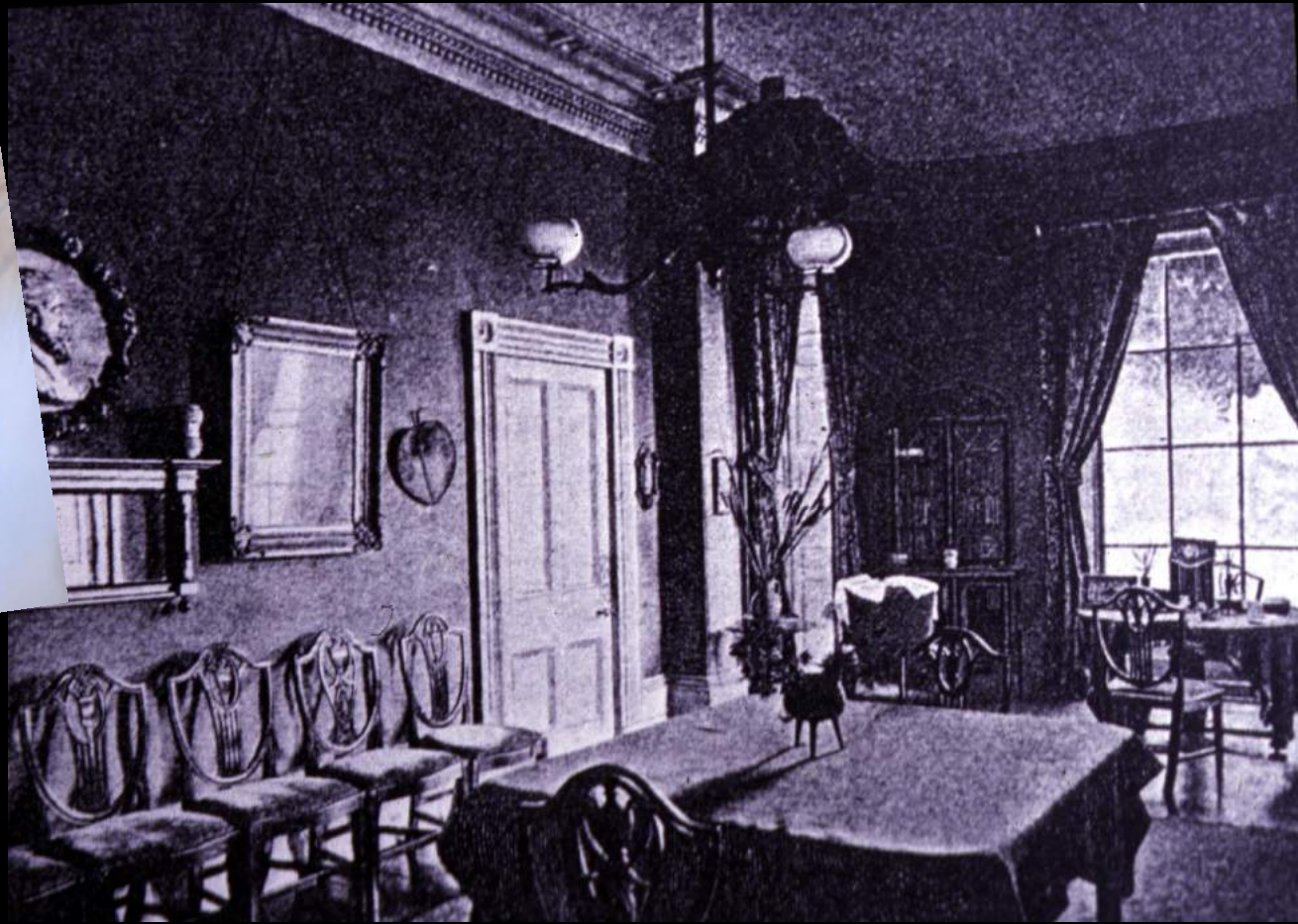
Our 5 replacement antique bells

'Oh ah let 'em ring again' A Cruikshank caricature of a Regency household

The Servant's Bells purchased on eBay.
This was by far the easiest way to source
a set of 5 matched bells



The Servant's Bells installed in the Basement in their original positions



The Dining Room gas-lights – this converted gas fitting was sourced on-line from a specialist supplier and the choice was guided by the 1897 photograph



Counterweighted gas light
(William's study)



Lantern (Outer Hall)

And other gas-fittings are found for each room



All our carpets were woven in West Yorkshire by 'Avena' – including this one for the Morning Room and Study



The Drawing Room carpet

Carpets were woven in
West Yorkshire by 'Avena'



‘Bayham Abbey’
was chosen for
William’s study.

It is very similar
to wallpaper
samples
discovered behind
the bookcases

Wallpapers & paints are by a local Manchester
manufacturer, Little Greene (established 1773) who
are official supplier to English Heritage

- *Schemes 7 – 10*: red/orange oil paint (still extant beneath the current wall paper)
- *Scheme 6*: mid brown oil paint
- *Scheme 5*: pale green/blue lead oil paint
- ***Scheme 4*: Later E. Gaskell period - mid cream lead oil paint (notice the heavy dirt layer above)**
- *Scheme 3*: Early E. Gaskell period - Pale green lead oil paint
- *Schemes 2*: pale green lead oil paint
- *Scheme 1*: Earliest Scheme - Pale pink/cream lead oil paint over a primer



Paint Scrape analysis by specialists Crick Smith revealing multiple layers and at least 10 decorative schemes.

Whilst the house was rented the landlord had a responsibility to redecorate approximately every 7 years



The Study, Hallway, Front Door and Dining Room have all been decorated with a traditional 'wood-graining' finish consisting of dark brown 'scumble' over a cream base coat



The Inner Hall & Staircase with 'Lincrusta' (invented 1877)
applied below a dado rail.
The Hallway was probably redecorated by the Gaskell daughters
after their father's death in 1884



The Tea Room is located in the old kitchen and serves tea, coffee and cakes ...and is popular with visitors. Second-hand books are also on sale

Many Thanks

Elizabeth Gaskell's House is open on
Wednesdays, Thursdays & Sundays
from 11am till 4.30pm

And at other times by appointment for groups

We hope you will visit us soon