

Landmark restoration

A central element of Earlestown's redevelopment plans is the restoration of its Grade II listed Town Hall and the addition of a steel-framed café extension.

Situated within Newton-le-Willows, Earlestown town centre is benefitting from a wide-ranging regeneration programme.

As well as the transformation of its historic market square and wider public realm improvements, the multi-million-pound scheme also includes the restoration of the Grade II listed Earlestown Town Hall.

The iconic red brick building and clock tower have been a key landmark and a beacon to the local industrial heritage since opening in 1893.

In recent times, the building predominantly operated as an administrative and community space, but closed in 2008 as it needed significant investment.

The Town Hall restoration is being delivered by St Helens Borough Council and ECF, and is backed by the Government's Levelling Up Fund. The internal works are now well advanced, following the successful completion of a £1 million external refurbishment, which will address the long-standing deterioration issues to the building's fabric, ensuring its future.

Main contractor HH Smith & Sons has undertaken a comprehensive enabling package, including a full strip-out of the structure. The company is also working closely with local heritage experts and skilled stonemasons to preserve as many of the original features as possible.

Within the existing building, the work will create community meeting rooms, flexible workspaces, a new courtyard garden and café area, together with public toilets, a changing place facility and wider accessibility and environmental improvements.

On the upper floor, the main hall's stage, which once played host to The Beatles, will be restored, enabling it to host regular theatre, music and dance productions again.

The hall will become more flexible, with the mezzanine removed to create more space and the introduction of retractable seating. This will form a new

community asset that could host a variety of events and functions.

Alongside the hall's brickwork, there are some 19th Century steel elements, mostly beams positioned around the main staircase, which are being cleaned and preserved.

Supporting M&E equipment and creating new service openings, a small quantity of new steel beams are also being installed inside the Town Hall.

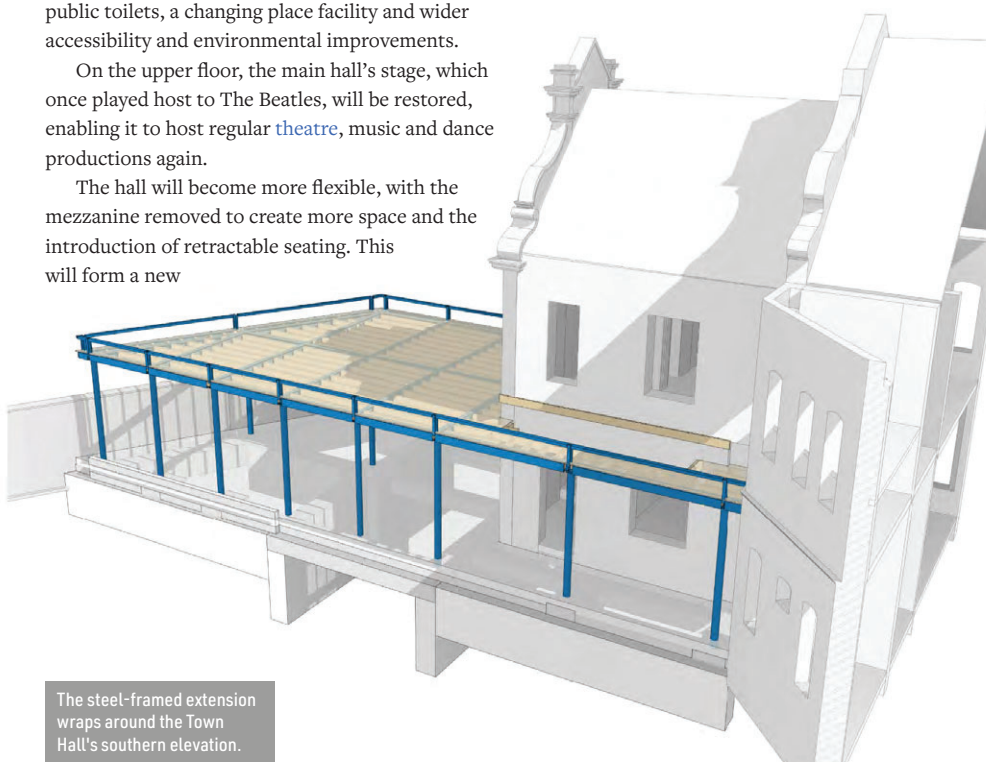
ECF Senior Development Manager Matt Whiteley, says: "The building has been central to the town's rich history and it's at the heart of its future. With a new range of uses and amenities, it will be a fantastic asset for local people and visitors alike."

Councillor Kate Groucutt, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business & Inclusive Growth, St Helens Borough Council, adds: "Earlestown Town Hall holds deep historical and emotional value for the community, and its restoration is not just about preserving the past, but creating a vibrant and inclusive future.

"We're delighted to be working with the project team to breathe new life into the building and ensure it remains a cornerstone of civic life for generations to come."

Complementing the Town Hall renovation work, an 11.9m-long x 8m-wide steel-framed extension has been erected along the building's southern elevation.

The plot was previously occupied by a 1960s-built annex, which was demolished as part of the project's enabling package.



The steel-framed extension wraps around the Town Hall's southern elevation.



A video of this project is available on the NSC website

The extension is structurally-independent and gains no support from the Town Hall.

The 3.5m-high steel frame will accommodate a community café and kitchen, overlooking a refurbished courtyard.

Wrapping around some existing doors, thereby negating the need to create a new access opening, the extension takes no support from the Town Hall and is structurally-independent.

With little space for locating bracings (one elevation is fully-glazed and two façades have glazing above the level of the surrounding courtyard wall), the design utilises roof level sway frames for its stability.

Sat on 1.5m-deep footings and a reinforced concrete slab, the frame includes a series of CHS columns that support steel beams and a flat timber roof. Internally, there is just one column, in the otherwise open-plan space.

As well as fulfilling the architectural vision for the extension, the use of steelwork has also provided some sustainability benefits, as the material is inherently recyclable.

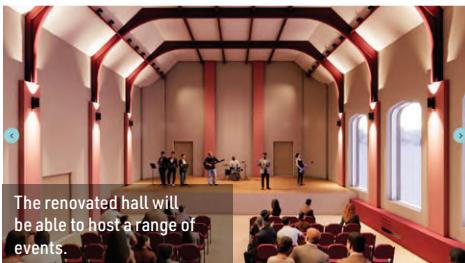
Excluding the CHS members, the project's steel has a 93.9% scrap metal content and was sourced from an Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) production facility.

The benefits of EAF steel are significantly lower in carbon emissions associated with its production. EAF production relies on melting recycled scrap metal and does not use traditional blast furnaces. Instead, it uses electricity rather than coke as the primary energy source.

The Earlestown Town Hall is on track to be complete in summer 2026. ■



FACT FILE
Earlestown Town Hall redevelopment
 Main client: St Helens Borough Council and ECF
 Architect: Buttress Architects
 Main contractor: HH Smith & Sons
 Structural engineer: Heyne Tillett Steel
 Steelwork contractor: BD Structures
 Steel tonnage: 6t



The renovated hall will be able to host a range of events.



The majority of the steelwork was sourced from EAF production facilities.



Steel beams support a flat timber roof.

Market canopy

A key part of the Earlestown market square redevelopment includes the construction of a permanent market canopy that will provide sheltered trading space for up to 60 stalls.

The steel-framed structure will also allow the market to function year-round and in all weather conditions.

Being built by main contractor Eric Wright, the market canopy is 59.5m-long x 19.5m-wide and

reaches a height of 8.5m at the roof ridge.

The remainder of the newly landscaped public square will continue to provide outdoor trading space on market days. ■

