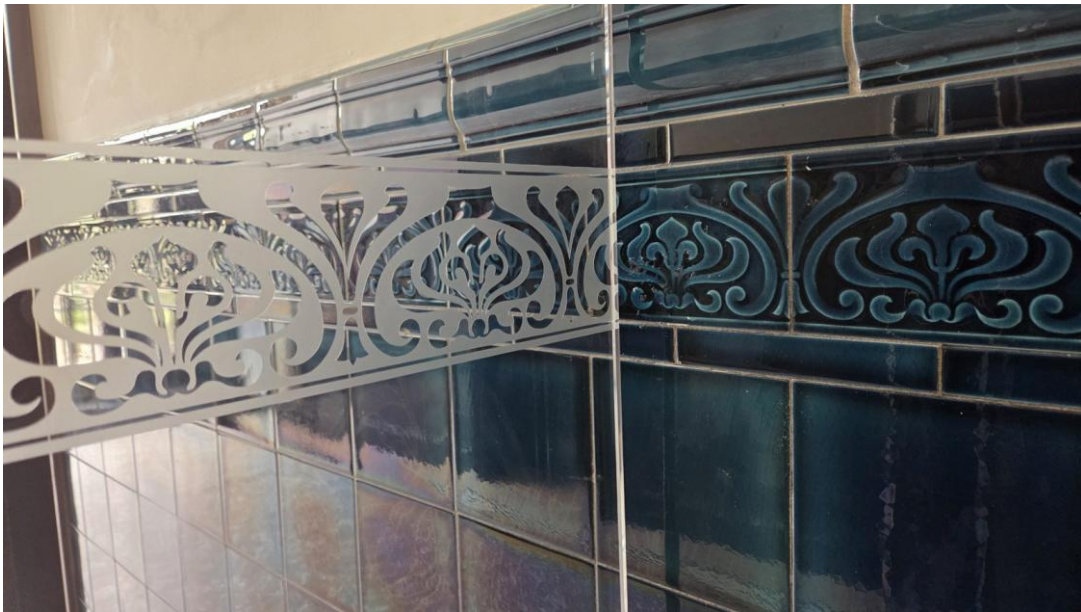


Rutherford opens its doors to a new chapter

The Rutherford Building officially opened on Tuesday, 29 September, marking the end of a two-year refurbishment and a new home for Geography.



The building's original decorative tiling, which was conserved as part of the refurbishment.

The Grade II listed building, which opened in 1900 as the home of Physics, is where Ernest Rutherford, Head of Physics from 1907, led the team that created nuclear physics and, in 1919, first split the atom. Today, it is home to Geography, part of the Faculty of Humanities.

Handling history with care

The onset of the project saw our contractors carrying out comprehensive surveys and remedial work, including extensive mercury remediation, to ensure no hazards remained from historical experiments. Alongside this, everything had to meet both listed building and Manchester City Council's requirements; despite early setbacks, close control by the design team and a proactive commitment from the contractor, Seddon, brought the project back on track.

Where the old meets the new

We restored the building's original glazed tiling, patterned floors, and arched corridors, which now sit alongside bright open-plan workspaces, glass-fronted meeting rooms, focus pods, and welcoming breakout areas.



One of our new breakout spaces

A project delivered with care and value

The building reached practical completion on 2 June, followed by a two-week fit-out of AV, IT, Wi-Fi and furniture, and a decant with BCL that saw Geography colleagues move in by mid-July. Strong financial management means a significant share of the £812K remaining contingency will return to the Size & Shape budget for future works.

Why it matters: the IIP and Manchester 2035

Rutherford shows our Integrated Infrastructure Plan (IIP) in action: making the most of the estate we already have. Giving a treasured landmark a long, useful future avoids the carbon cost of building new, while good project control frees up money for the next priorities.

It also supports Manchester 2035 and the University's ambition to be a great civic university for the 21st century by maintaining an iconic building that is just as much part of Manchester's story as it is the University's, and refurbishing avoids the carbon cost of building new. One of our world-class departments now works in an inspiring space, in the very place Manchester changed science forever.

Barra Mac Ruairí, Chief Property Officer, said: "Our teams and partners worked hard to make this historic building safe and bring it back to life. This is what the Integrated Infrastructure Plan looks like in practice: getting the very best from the estate we already have, and making sure our historic spaces keep working for the brightest minds of the future."

The opening event

The opening event on Tuesday, 29 September, saw colleagues from across the University, as well as Estates & Facilities, come together to celebrate the opening.