

## THE PRESENT LIBRARY ON JORDANGATE

**Macclesfield Library  
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Monday	9 – 7pm
Tuesday	9 – 7pm
Wednesday	9 – 5pm
Thursday	9 – 7pm
Friday	9 – 5pm
Saturday	9 – 1pm



### **Macclesfield Library**

The present Macclesfield Library was officially opened on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1994 by the Duchess of Gloucester.

The building is a part conversion of the former District Bank premises, retaining many of the original features, with a newly built extension on the northern side. The extension occupies land on which an old public house called 'The Pack Horse' stood; this was eventually demolished in the early 1970s, having remained empty for quite some time.

The banking company, under the name of The Manchester and Liverpool District Banking Company, had originally occupied premises on Park Green in 1850. By 1913 the bank had shortened its name to the Manchester & County Bank Ltd. and must have decided a new look was necessary to create a new image, and no expense was spared.

The local newspaper gave notice that the new bank, in the Italian Renaissance style, would open for business on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1914 and commented, "Everyone who has seen the neat and elegant front will agree that it is a decided addition to the architecture of the Market Place. The courteous manager Mr. E.C.B. Leeson says books and cash will be moved into the new premises next Saturday and business will commence Monday".

An excellent description was given starting with the basement and progressing up through the building. A large cellar storeroom, lined with glazed bricks, would be used for storing old books and documents, shut off with an iron grille. The whole of the basement was lit by 'prismatic lighting' (i.e. the old type of very thick small glass squares set in pavements) and by electricity. The coal and coke were also provided for, and could be hoisted to the top floor.

From the Market Place the building was 'reared on a polished red granite base' with the stone above provided by the Stanton & Bettany, Rocester Quarries in Staffordshire and worked in the yard of J.B. Kendall of Ardwick.

The handsome polished mahogany swing doors, still in situ, allowed entrance to the hall and spacious ground floor, where the banking area and manager's office were accommodated. There was also an exceptionally large strongroom at the rear with special fittings by the Chatwood Safe Co. of Bolton for customers' boxes and deeds. At night the mahogany doors were protected by an iron vanishing gate, which was raised by means of a windlass.

A steam radiator heated the air in the entrance hall before it passed into the banking hall, and both areas were decorated with green and white faience panels which were 'bright and pleasing'. The ceilings and cornices were moulded, and the fittings were of polished mahogany.

One superb feature, of which only the ghost of a presence remains, was the half circle coloured domed light in the ceiling,

with an outer dome of green glass, reinforced by wire netting. To prevent condensation a heated pipe ran through, and at either side was 'exquisite moulding' displaying the Arms of the city of Manchester on one side, and those of Chester on the other. Even the manager's room had a domed light.

The mahogany counter was 18 and a half feet long with a modern fireplace in front, and behind was a tramway so that index boxes could be sent from place to place. There were plenty of cupboards with a very heavy door adjoining, behind which were two large safes. The floor was decorated in mosaics of a 'delicate hue and varied patterns', whilst that behind the counter was of maple parquet resting on steel girders supporting a concrete floor. On the western side of the hall was the stamping and sealing counter, with the telephone and toilet rooms beyond.

The caretaker was provided with elegant and spacious rooms upstairs which had windows of steel frames and adjustable openers. The rear view was a mixed blessing, with views down below of the Old Debtors' prison, but somewhat compensated by a further view of the golf links. The front windows overlooked the Market Place and there was a large square kitchen and scullery.

The top floor had three finely decorated rooms, and the length of the whole building from front to back was said to be almost 60 ft., with the rear wall actually built up to the walls of the Debtors' prison!

At the top of the building, over the entrance, is the old bank name with the date 1881. This was the year in which it became a limited company i.e. The Manchester and Liverpool Banking Company Ltd. On occasion it has erroneously been assumed that it is the date on which the building was completed.