



Adapting Canada's Built Legacy 2026 Webinar Series

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Historic Masonry Coating Removals

Session Abstract

Halifax Train Station - Historic Masonry Coating Removals

Erin Hemm & Emma Sampson

Coating a masonry façade has long been a controversial practice. This presentation explores the understanding, planning and intervention that was necessary to remove the coating that concealed the principal façade of the Halifax Train Station. Like many old buildings, existing documentation can be hard to come by and what can be found doesn't always reflect the built conditions. This project was no exception and required detailed investigations, material testing and archival research to understand the actual composition and construction of the façade. This new understanding completely changed the trajectory of the repair approach from what was initially outlined at the onset of this work. It was necessary to remove the elastomeric coating from the cast stone to fully understand the condition and effectively plan for repair. Due to the deterioration and relative softness of the cast stone substrate, it was the top priority to determine an effective removal method that resulted in the least amount of damage possible. This work also demanded a high level of care to especially sensitive areas such as a cast stone statue with many fine details and small recessed features. A broad range of removal techniques were researched for their applicability, four of these methods were trialed through mock-ups and investigations with both dry ice blasting and high temperature steam cleaning deemed successful. This case study will review coating removal methods evaluated, the criteria used for the evaluation, and their efficacy in trial and implementation.



