



'Join truth with trust' trade union banner, 1863

Museum number: 1993-275



Condition assessment, conservation treatment proposal and cost estimate

Owner: Dundee City Council
Contact: Nicole Stahl, Conservator

Scottish Conservation Studio textile estimate number: T275/26.11.10

The pole-sleeve is approximately 155cm wide and 220cm tall.

Client brief

Stabilise the banner and prepare it for display.

Brief description of materials and construction

The banner is single-layered and double-sided painted silk banner. The ground, made by seaming three sections of the silk vertically together, is turquoise medium-weight plain-weave silk, and its design is painted with some gilding.

Unusually the pole-sleeve of the banner is located along the top of the banner.

Condition

The overall condition of the flag is very poor. It is unsafe to do anything with it in its present condition. The most serious negative aspects of the condition of the banner are:

Soiling

The banner has long brown streaked stains from the top corners slightly diagonally down. One third of one of the sides of the banner is clearly more stained in this way than the rest of the banner. Such staining appears to indicate the banner having become damp in the past. Overall the silk is yellower than it would have originally been. This level of staining and discolouration is actively degrading the silk.

Physical damage

- The banner has sharp creases scattered all over it (photos 1 – 5) from its past storage. The degradation of the silk of the banner is advanced enough for it to have split along many of the creases. Overall the silk is much weaker than it may look. Where the silk has not yet split, it is likely to do so soon. An approximately a bottom third of the banner has significant losses and splits, with the silk being in tatters: the lower along the banner one looks the more serious the losses and damage are. The edges of the banner have numerous horizontal splits.
- The pole-sleeve is crushed. An almost a full length of one of the vertical strips of the ground silk of the banner is torn off along the seam of the pole-sleeve.
- Apart from having become lost along creases and areas of greatest wear, the paintwork and gilding appears to be well adhered onto the ground silk of the banner.

Proposed treatment

To treat a flag in such a poor condition would be a demanding task.

1. Surface-clean the banner with controlled vacuum suction in order to remove dust from it.
2. Relax the sharp creases with raised humidity in order to make the banner flat and to prevent the creased silk splitting further down the treatment.
3. Test the dyes and paints for solubility in water. Providing they are stable prepare the banner for wet-cleaning by encasing it between two layers of fine net.
4. Measure the pH level of the banner.
5. Subject to negative wet-cleaning test results wet-clean the banner. Remove the supportive layers and lay out the banner to dry. Since with this degree of silk degradation and size of the banner it would be impossible to get the banner completely re-aligned on the day of wet-cleaning, carry on re-aligning it by relaxing it with raised humidity after the wet-cleaning.
6. Dye medium-weight plain-weave silk fabric, see-through silk Crepeline and 20-denier nylon net and fine silk filament thread to match the turquoise silk of the banner as closely as possible.
7. Find out by testing what acrylic adhesive concentration and combination of Lascaux 360 and 498 works best in order to adhere the back of the banner to a silk support. Lay a film of the best combination on the dyed silk Crepeline.
8. Line the back of the banner with a layer of the dyed silk Crepeline and activating the dry adhesive with sufficient heat in order to adhere it onto the back of the banner.
9. Make a rigid support board for the banner out of Cellite, light-weight board that has an aluminium honeycomb inner core sandwiched between two skins of resin-bonded glass-fibre sheeting. Cover the board with washed, unbleached cotton fabric and then with another layer of washed, unbleached plain-weave cotton fabric. Adhere the fabrics onto the back of the board with Araldite, a stable epoxy resin.
10. Mount the banner on the support board by laying a layer of the dyed silk under the flag in order to disguise its losses. Lay a layer of the dyed nylon net over the flag. The silk under the flag would disguise the losses of the original silk on the board. Sew lines of running stitch down the seams and through the splits in the banner silk in order to make sure the banner will stay in place. Fold the edges of the protective net layer under the edges of the banner and sew them onto the board.
11. Pack the mounted banner with acid-free tissue paper, Tyvek and bubblewrap for transport. It would require a van for transporting it away from the studio.

The banner and representative areas of its damage would be photographed digitally in order to document its condition both before and after the treatment. The photographs would be handed on a CD to the Client at the end of the treatment. The treatment would also be documented in a brief written report.

Estimated costs

270 hours @ £40/hour ¹	£10 800
Materials	£ 775
Photography	£ 200
Total	£11 775 + VAT

¹ Please check the current hourly rate after November 2010.

Tuula Pardoe
Accredited Conservator of Costume and Textiles
November 2010

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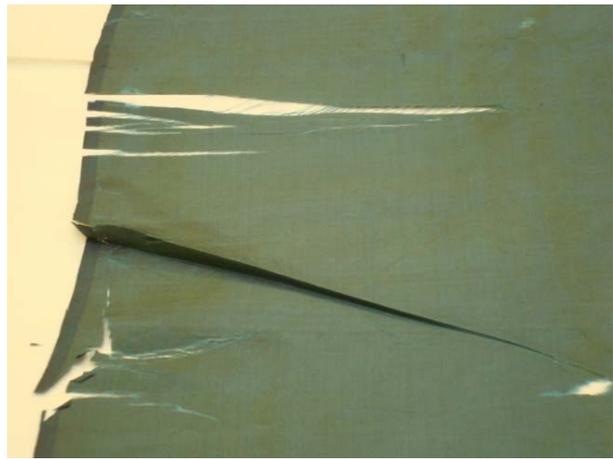
1. Sharp creases in the silk of the banner.



2. Sharp, split crease across a painted area.



3. Sharp creases and paint losses.



4. A sharp crease and splits along the right edge of the banner.



5. A crease across a painted area, paint and silk loss.

