MEMORANDUM

MX West Gym Exterior Stair Cleaning, Preparation & Painting

Date:	August 30, 2026
To:	MX Facilities / Building Team
Subject:	**Recommended process for repainting the West Gym exterior metal stairs**
Finish:	Satin dark bronze / dark brown, matched as closely as practical to the existing canopy support structure

Purpose

Provide a durable, maintainable coating system for the exterior steel stairs, railings, stringers, grating and related stair framing. The most important factor for long coating life is thorough cleaning and rust/loose-paint removal before primer and finish coats are applied.

Recommended Appearance

- Paint the entire stair assembly from the handrails down in one coordinated color.
- Use a satin dark bronze / dark brown rather than flat black.
- Match the existing canopy/support-post brown as closely as practical. A warm dark bronze will blend with the brick and canopy, hide dust/pollen better than flat black, and clean more easily.
- Leave the canopy/roof structure as-is unless it also requires repainting.

Materials / Equipment

- Leaf blower, broom and shop vacuum.
- Exterior detergent/degreaser, stiff nylon scrub brushes and clean water.
- Pressure washer with 25° or 40° fan tip; use moderate pressure rather than a narrow high-pressure tip.
- Paint scrapers, hand wire brushes, drill/angle-grinder wire wheel or cup brush, and 80–120 grit sanding materials.
- Drop cloths/plastic, masking materials and protection for brick, door hardware, lights/electrical devices and landscaping.
- Rust-inhibitive exterior metal primer. Recommended example: Sherwin-Williams Pro Industrial Pro-Cryl Universal Acrylic Primer, or an equivalent commercial primer approved for exterior steel and compatible with the selected topcoat.
- Exterior industrial direct-to-metal (DTM) acrylic finish coating. Recommended example: Sherwin-Williams Pro Industrial DTM Acrylic Primer/Finish, or an equivalent exterior industrial DTM acrylic system. Use the selected satin sheen/color where available and approved by the supplier.
- Application equipment: quality brushes for edges, welds and touch-up; roller for broad flat areas; and an airless sprayer for grating, balusters, undersides, intersections and other difficult geometry.

Safety / Pre-Work Inspection

- Barricade the stairway and keep it out of service during cleaning, preparation, painting and cure time.
- After loose rust/paint is removed, inspect welds, tread attachments, stringers, railings, base plates and anchors for significant corrosion, cracks or looseness. Repair structural defects before coating.

Recommended Work Sequence

1. Dry clean the stairs

Blow, sweep and vacuum loose dirt, leaves, cobwebs and debris from the treads, landings, railings and underside. Removing dry debris first keeps the washing step from turning dirt into mud.

2. Degrease and scrub

Apply an exterior detergent/degreaser to the steel. Scrub visibly dirty, oily or chalky areas with a stiff nylon brush. Pay special attention to handrails, landing areas and lower sections where dirt accumulates.

3. Pressure wash

Pressure-wash the metal using a broad fan tip (25° or 40°). Approximately 2,000–3,000 PSI is generally adequate; keep the nozzle roughly 12–18 inches from the surface and adjust as needed. The goal is to remove dirt, chalking and loose material—not to gouge sound coating or force water into seams.

4. Allow the steel to dry completely

Do not begin sanding, priming or painting while moisture remains in grating intersections, welds, seams or base plates. Prefer a full dry day after washing; longer may be needed in cool or humid conditions.

5. Remove loose paint and rust

Scrape flaking coating and mechanically remove loose rust/scale with hand wire brushes, a drill/angle-grinder wire wheel or cup brush, and sanding materials. Concentrate on tread edges, welds, lower stringers, bottom posts, base plates and other rust-prone areas.

6. Feather existing coating edges

Sand the transition between bare steel and sound existing paint so there are no sharp ridges. Sound, tightly bonded coating can remain; the entire stair does not need to be stripped to bare metal unless the old coating is broadly failing.

7. Final surface cleaning

Blow/vacuum all sanding and wire-brush residue. Wipe or clean as required by the primer manufacturer. The steel must be clean, dry and free of dust, grease and loose corrosion before priming.

8. Prime exposed steel

Apply a compatible rust-inhibitive metal primer to all bare or rust-cleaned steel. A recommended example is Sherwin-Williams Pro Industrial Pro-Cryl Universal Acrylic Primer, which is a rust-inhibitive, corrosion-resistant primer intended for interior/exterior metal. Brush primer into welds, edges, pits and irregular rust-cleaned areas to ensure full contact. If a large percentage of the existing coating has been removed or is marginal, consider priming the complete stair assembly for a more uniform system. Observe the product data sheet for dry/recoat times.

9. Apply first finish coat

Apply one complete coat of exterior industrial DTM acrylic coating. A recommended example is Sherwin-Williams Pro Industrial DTM Acrylic Primer/Finish, or an equivalent approved exterior DTM acrylic. Use brush application on welds, edges, corners and other areas that need the coating worked into the surface. Use an airless sprayer for the stair grating/treads, balusters, undersides and tight intersections where brushing alone is difficult. Spray the grating from more than one direction to coat the sides and undersides of the bars. Do not flood or bridge the grating openings. Mask adjacent brick, doors, lights, pavement and landscaping, and control overspray carefully.

10. Apply second finish coat

After the first coat has dried for the manufacturer's required recoat time, apply a second complete finish coat using the same brush/spray approach. Two reasonably thin, uniform finish coats provide better coverage and corrosion protection than one heavy coat. Recheck welds, edges, grating sides and undersides for missed areas before the stair is reopened.

11. Cure and reopen

Keep the stair closed until the coating has cured sufficiently for foot traffic and handrail use. Cure time varies significantly with product, temperature and humidity; use the coating manufacturer's stated minimum rather than assuming 'dry to touch' means ready for service.

Coating System

- Primer recommendation: Sherwin-Williams Pro Industrial Pro-Cryl Universal Acrylic Primer, or an equivalent rust-inhibitive commercial exterior metal primer approved for steel and the selected topcoat.
- Finish recommendation: Sherwin-Williams Pro Industrial DTM Acrylic Primer/Finish, or an equivalent commercial exterior DTM acrylic coating approved for properly prepared steel.
- Sheen: satin.
- Color: dark bronze / dark brown matched closely to the existing canopy support structure.
- Coats: prime all bare/rust-cleaned steel (or full-prime if warranted), followed by two finish coats unless the manufacturer's product data sheet specifies a different approved system.

Application Method

- Brush: use on bare-steel primer areas, welds, edges, corners, pits and touch-up areas. Back-brush sprayed coating into irregular areas where practical.
- Airless spray: preferred for the open stair grating/treads, balusters, railing intersections, undersides and other complex surfaces. Spray from multiple angles for complete coverage.
- Roller: acceptable for broad, relatively flat surfaces such as stringers and larger framing, but should not be the only application method for this stair assembly.
- Aerosol cans: useful for small touch-ups or isolated hard-to-reach spots only. Do not use aerosol cans as the primary coating system for the entire staircase unless the coating manufacturer specifically approves that product/system.
- Apply multiple thin, uniform coats rather than one heavy coat. Avoid runs, puddles and paint buildup that bridges the grating openings.
- Spray only in calm conditions and mask/protect the brick wall, exterior door and hardware, light fixtures, pavement, vehicles and landscaping from overspray.

Weather / Application Conditions

- Do not paint when rain, heavy dew or condensation is expected before the coating can dry.
- Avoid painting very hot steel in direct sun or when the steel temperature is outside the manufacturer's stated range.
- Check both air and surface temperature, humidity and recoat window on the specific product TDS.
- A dry period with moderate temperatures is preferable to painting immediately after washing.

Completion Checklist

- No loose rust, scale or flaking paint remains.
- Bare steel is completely primed.
- Two uniform finish coats cover handrails, balusters, stringers, framing, grating/tread surfaces, grating sides and accessible undersides, with no obvious missed areas at welds or intersections.
- Grating openings are not excessively bridged with paint.
- No overspray/paint remains on brick, door hardware, lights, concrete or landscaping.
- Stairway remains closed until the coating system is cured for service.