

Colour, as we perceive it, is a trick of the light; a love letter gifted to us by a universe that is made up of wondrous things.

And yet, it is a factor so intrinsically tied to our happiness and well-being that colour psychology predates psychology. Egyptians practised colour healing, building temples that allowed light to pour through rubies, emerald, and sapphires, tinting the stone to the shade that would best heal your illness. Across the world, one of the oldest medical documents published, the Huangdi Neijing, used colour to diagnose illnesses in patients: red, linked to the heart and the small intestines; green, for the liver, yellow for the spleen, black for the kidney, and white for the lungs.

In more modern practices, colours have been proven to soothe and reinvigorate. University researches in Lille found that greenery and colours both showed a boost in morale. Interior designers espouse frequently on the use of natural timbers to add warmth into the homes, on designating colours such as blue for restful areas and red for living rooms and kitchens, yellow flowers for the garden to brighten up dull days, creamy white shades for bathrooms and places with less sunshine to lift the gloom.

We are also fortuitous enough to live in a time where access to colours is, widely, simplified. Technology has given us a kingdom's fortunes of colour options, and what previously would have taken an artist's life work to document is available to us with a few button clicks, and where that colour can go wherever we desire: on wood, on steel, on polymer, on tile, on glass, beautifying the spaces that we spend most of our time in. Whether it's a city centre or a sleepy village square, a little splash of colour stops the world.

Our products have always been available to you in one of over 200 RAL shades, and that option is still there.

However, we have taken the liberty to ease your burdens further and to lift one more consideration off the plate of your placemaking decisions.

From now, all of our core furnitures will be ready available in a reduced colour palette, standardised across all our product lines, with no additional lead time required. This gives you greater opportunity to branch out of the standard grey and brighten up builds both new and old with a little touch of what people turn to poetry.

And you don't need to be a colour expert to pick the colour that would suit your project best. Here are the colours we chose, and what went into the selection process.

What's in a colour?

Red for luck, green for life, blue for calm: the colours we surround ourselves with tell their own story, and become something greater than the sum of their parts. When it comes to places and to building places, the importance of what colour we select grows in importance. As stewards of the built environment, our duty is bisected between the care of the grey and the care of the green; our colour choices therefore have to be at home both in the middle of a shopping estate and the fringes of a forest. Furthermore, the colours we picked had to say

something about the products they were on, and a little bit about the promises that we have made.

To narrow it down, we looked at ourselves over a long afternoon, armed with coffee and a lot of conversation, and came up with the six tenets of our identity, our values, and what we promise you.

1. Heritage

We're old, for a furniture maker. We've been around for 70 years, and will hopefully be around for 75 more. Some of our bollards have just had their 25th birthday.

But beyond just ourselves, we are lucky to work with and in some of the oldest, most glorious buildings in the United Kingdom. We appreciate the heritage of many of the cities and towns we are fortunate to be placed in, and it is what we aspire to create in every bench, planter, and bin.

2. Industrial

By its nature, outdoor furnishings are industrial furnishings, built to last the lifetime and well into our children's lifetimes. Britain as an island was built on industry: from shipyards to the factories that one can still see stretching along the roads, some of our most impressive history is industrial history. The first industrial printing press, gas street lighting, photography, the electric telegraph – our history is inundated with the great ideas that happened in these blocky, robust buildings, and the cities that are proudly embracing their industrial heritage by repurposing the factories and warehouses of their earliest decades.

Mist (RAL 9006)

Flint (RAL 7016)

Coal Yard (RAL 9005)

3. Organic

There are few sharp corners in nature: curves, angles, and ripples are more likely. As we prioritise the inclusion of nature in our materials and strive to create sustainable alternatives for the ones we cannot replace, embodying the shapes of nature help our products to blend in with their environment.

Clover (RAL 6010)

Glade (RAL 6002)

Forest (RAL 6005)

Acorn (RAL 8007)

Conker (RAL 8028)

4. Energetic

Warmth. As people, we flock to it; we seek out others, and we seek out comfort, and we seek out places that present the best of both. We look for the warmth in the world, through shape or colour or lighting. Energy is the outcome of warmth: a liveliness of happy people and moments spent together as a community.

Sunshine (RAL 1003)
Zest (RAL 2010)
Postbox (RAL 3001)

5. Sophistication

We all deserve to feel pampered, and there is a style to pampering that can be applied widely across the worldly board – of spas, of luxurious hotels, of an afternoon spent at a decadent tea-house.

But also: of the shape of expensive, designer chairs, of hand-crafted leather goods, of a decade's worth of technology refined to fit into the palm of your hand.

Oyster (RAL 9001)
Cornish Cream (RAL 1015)
Forest (RAL 6005)
Riviera (RAL 5009)
Midnight (RAL 5013)

A palette of place

At the end of that exercise, we had over 60 colours to choose from, collected from the best of each separate ideal.

We wanted to refine further, which led us to the following metric:

Where does colour belong?

The places that our furniture is placed in are not all made the same – our benches have toured housing estates, hidden walkways, and the fringes of historical communities. The timber we use and the product type all necessitated a different colour need. As our designer said, a planter needs a different colour to a wall-top bench.

But further to that, a heritage walk requires a different breadth of colour than a new-build shopping estate.

Our intention with the furniture we create is to blend into heritage settings, and liven up the grey.

However, we also want to give the creative designers, contractors, and buyers the opportunity to reverse that, if they want to – without burdening them with an overwhelming choice of colours.

With that in mind, we narrowed it down to 15 shades.

Each of these fifteen colours can be applied without further consideration of where that bench will go, and without additional waiting time, adding the colour you want to see in the world to your product as the final touch to urban spaces.

Colour, and colour, and colour

Within this industry, we are in an eminently valuable position to build the world we want to see. Every landscape designer, architect, contractor, and estate manager has a prime opportunity to leave a better past behind for the future.

For us, that better past is bright, and colourful.

What will it be for you?