

REFURB
PROJECTS
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Hylands House in Essex, a beautiful villa with a Neo-classical exterior was first a Queen Anne style red brick mansion built in c.1730. After various modernisations and additions it assumed the shape and size we see today, surrounded by 500 acres of landscaped parkland. After its last owner died in 1962 it fell into a state of disrepair and suffered from fire and vandalism, but before it succumbed completely to decay Chelmsford Borough Council came to its rescue and launched an extensive restoration programme.

The Scagliola Company was asked to view the Scagliola pilasters at the top and bottom of the grand staircase with a view to restoring them completely to their former grandeur.

The work was covered with multiple layers of white paint which when partly stripped back revealed a pair of tall Jasper pilasters downstairs and a pair of Sienna pilasters upstairs. There were many losses that had to be meticulously re-instated. In particular a very 'difficult' section at the bottom of one of the Sienna pilasters as one of the photographs portrays which involved a certain amount of moulded elements.

The complete and careful stripping of all 4 pilasters exposed all the blemishes and areas of loss and revealed their sorrowful recent past before the restoration programme commenced.

At this stage different colour batches were constructed to duplicate the various colours ready for the most important phase of the work, the re-instating of all of the missing sections. The large missing base section drew upon the full knowledge, expertise of years of restoration of Michael Koumbouzis, who was undertaking the restoration with a small team. Firstly the background body of the work had to be built up as there were only wooden laths showing. This was done with a compatible plaster of Paris suitable for this type of background work. This was then keyed and left to set properly, ready for taking the Scagliola layer as a veneer.

Previous colour tests ensured a good colour and pattern compatibility for the Sienna work and the various Scagliola strips were applied onto the keyed plaster backing 4-5 mm thicker than the finished surface. When set, planning and subsequent numerous sanding and filling 'married' the new Scagliola with the original. When sufficiently dry the whole of the work was polished resulting in a very good match indistinguishable even to the most discerning eye.

Lastly we were asked to duplicate a Sienna pilaster to the exact colour, pattern and dimension to reflect the 'scheme' on the opposite side of the grand staircase. Having taken careful measurements, this work was constructed in the workshop and installed on site with pleasing results.

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HYLANDS HOUSE

by The Scagliola Company

