

REFURB
PROJECTS
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The St. James's area in London possesses some of the most timeless and beautiful architectural buildings in the capital often with un-surpassed interiors and exquisite finishes. No 74 St. James's Street certainly belongs to this category, having been once, amongst other things, the headquarters of the conservative party.

Years of neglect and careless workmanship, nevertheless, reduced this building to a shade of its former glory with beautiful surfaces hiding behind years of dust, grime and hasty repairs.

This was until a well known bank bought the building and decided to undertake a 2 year complete restoration of the exterior and interior. To this effect The Scagliola Company under the guidance of Michael Koumbouzis and the expert advice of architectural consultant Yvonne Adamson (and working under the umbrella of Hare & Humphreys) was asked to undertake the conservation and restoration of the Scagliola work, which amounted to 60 full size columns -many fluted- inlaid panels, balustrades and polished Ionic bases.

A sample room comprising of a number of light-coloured Sienna Scagliola columns and pilasters was undertaken first to set the quality for the rest of the areas as well as show the client, the architects and other interested parties the full glory and beauty of the fully restored Scagliola.

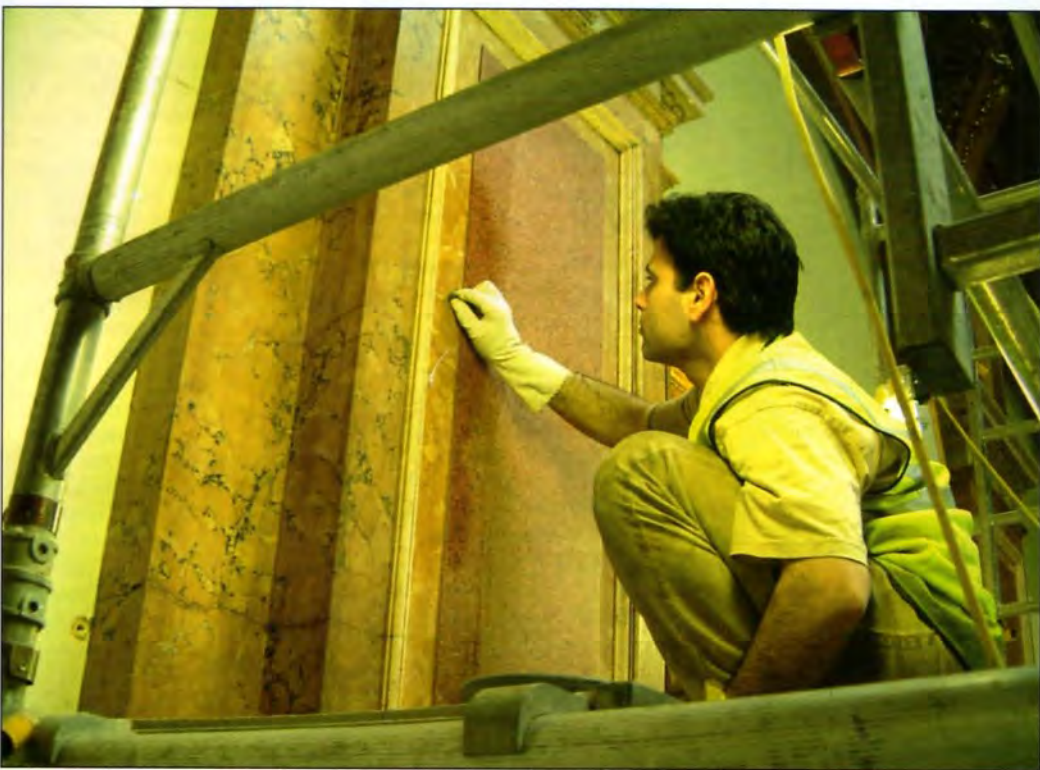
Subsidence, 2nd world war damage, careless past repairs, smoke and grime were some of the problems we had to face in this area. The careful application of forgotten skills coupled with painstaking application of manual labour (no mechanical tools were used) gradually revealed what was hiding underneath sooted surfaces. Many loss areas had to be faithfully replicated and colour and pattern matching proved to be very challenging. Original Scagliola samples were taken back to the workshop and replicated for accurate colour matching on site. This ensured invisible repairs with compatible mixes, closely matching the original coloured plasters used for the Scagliola columns.

Once the sample room was ready with satisfying results, the various other areas were tackled. Layers of paint had to be carefully stripped off fluted columns in the Morning Room before exposing beautiful strong Sienna designs



SCAGLIOLA RESTORATION

by Michael Koumbouzis: The Scagliola Company



which were set off by polished carrara-style white Scagliola bases sitting on Black Belgian marble square dies -a very awakening colour scheme! Similar restoration processes took place in this room, the work finally being buffed and polished with the aid of linseed oil to provide a good, lasting, protective and natural finish, whilst the bases were waxed to preserve the intensity of the white colour.

The gallery area was for myself the most interesting one, comprising of a round Scagliola balustrade area giving the spectator visual access to the panelled and highly painted room downstairs, a glass dome letting ample natural light in, decoratively painted ceilings and an exquisite mosaic floor. In this area large panelled Scagliola areas in the shape of pilasters formed one of the main focal points.

The Scagliola restoration, which was only concluded recently, took more than a year to complete and engaged a small team of about 7 people, proving once more that timeless and enduring skills can still be accessed when needed to preserve a timeless and precious heritage for all of us to enjoy.

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