

REFURB
PROJECTS
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THE MARBLE SALOON

“As the house... is one of the chief ornaments to the English nation, and justly admired by all foreigners, we shall be a little particular in our description”.

Britannica Curiosa, 1777. A quote which summarises the grandeur of this 18th century English House, a private boarding school nowadays, which boasts among others Stoics like Sir Richard Branson, David Niven, George Melly to name but a few.

Nevertheless, decades of neglect had rendered this important house a ‘risk’ and it is currently on the World

Monuments Fund list (2002) for the 100 most endangered sites of significance worldwide.

For this purpose alone The Stowe House Preservation Trust was founded in 1997 with a sole purpose “to restore and preserve Stowe House for the benefit of the nation and the public”.

As part of the interior restoration The Scagliola Company was commissioned to undertake the restoration of the Sicilian Jasper Scagliola columns in the truly magnificent Marble Saloon; a description derived from the huge White Carrara marble slabs which form the floor

of this elliptical room. This room inspired by the Pantheon in Rome with a splendid plaster frieze inspired by Pheidias’s frieze on the Parthenon in Athens, is adorned by 16 huge Scagliola columns which flank the perimeter of the room and were originally constructed by Domenico Bartoli in the 1780s; a ‘familiar’ name that The Scagliola Company has come across time and time again (for the first time in the Spencer House restoration project in 1987, when Michael Koumbouzis almost single-handedly restored Bartoli’s Sienna Scagliola columns and pilasters).

Although the columns in the Marble Saloon were in a relative good condition, closer inspection revealed layers of varnish – a ‘later finish’ applied to protect the columns from the wear and tear of 100s of children passing through daily; the Marble Saloon was the assembly area of the school! This finish - which was only 2.5 metres from ground level - was gradually taken off with tried and tested methods that the company has used before. All drawing pins, pieces of dried up masking tape and the like were removed at this stage, whilst all the columns were cleaned with Isopropyl Alcohol. All voids and areas of loss were dealt with batches of like pre-mixed Scagliola ‘stuff’ to match the colour, pattern and plaster compatibility and finished off in the usual laborious way.

The polishing with mechanical buffers and oil revealed a brighter more ‘lively’ and deeper Scagliola, reminiscent of the way its creator would have finished them off originally.

The Ionic bases to the columns were also dealt with. All layers of oil-based and led-based paint were stripped off to reveal a hard white plaster, which was subsequently polished lightly to resemble the Carrara floor, as would have been originally.

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BRICKWORK AND MASONRY RESTORED

Alburn House on the Hoath Road in Dublin was a vacant and dilapidated old Manor House. Through a combination

of pollution, time and neglect, the brickwork and masonry had also started to deteriorate.

However the building has now been restored to its former glory and converted to modern apartments in a development by MKN Properties.

The brickwork and masonry fabric of the well known structure was carefully cleaned and restored by specialist contractors Nolan NPC Limited, using Remmers’ state-of-the-art technologies with their unique systems for the specialised cleaning, restoration and preservation of brick and stone masonry. Brickwork repairs using Remmers’ colour matched Restoration Mortar are invisible to the eye due to the excellent match and skilled work by Nolan NPC.

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