

30 Euston square. Design access statement.

June 2021



Ref: Design Access statement for the Conservation, stabilisation and repair to the Ceramic faience Piers, The Royal college Of General Practioners.

Prepared for: Russell Merry on behalf of the Royal College of General Practioners.

Prepared by: Tracy Jeffreys Senior Conservator Campbell Smith and co.

Date: June 26th, 2021

Dear Russell,

Please find attached the design and access statement for your kind attention for the Doulton Piers belonging to the Royal College of General Practioners architectural interior.
Please let me know if you need anything else or further information.

Sincerely

Tracy

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Conservation Clean, stabilisation and repair to the Ceramic faience Piers.

The RCPG.

Outline

30 Euston square the former London, Edinburgh & Glasgow Assurance building is at present home and headquarters to The Royal College of General Practitioners and has been in the process of gradual refurbishment since 2012. Its internal conversion has and is been carried out with an emphasis on the preservation of the (1906–08) original phase of the building.

The building is considered a seminal work by the 'versatile' architect Arthur Beresford Pitte.

A four-storey building with an L plan design. The interiors wall to ceiling decoratively designed faience begins at the building's lobby which opens into the entrance hall. This in turn leads to 4 floor levels designed largely as open plan offices with intermediate corridors.

Assets Description

Listing No: Grade II*

Date: 1906-1908

Architect: A. Beresford Pitte (1861-1934)

Designer: W. J. Neatby (1860-1910).

Construction company: Foster and Dicksee of Rugby.

Location: 30 Euston square, Kings Cross, London

Style: Modern Style

Classification: Architectonic.

Construction: Concrete, UC steel column clad with non-structural modular decorative faience.

Material: vitrified matt lead glazed, stoneware body (Carrara ware)

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Dimensions: N/A

Fixing Arrangement: Metal detected at centre section, indicating limited anchor system. In compression with mortar.

Geographic origin: London. U.K

Provenance Back stamped.

Description

The Edwardian interior is described as Greek Revival and lavishly finished in with green and cream Doulton stoneware tiles with moulded relief patterns.¹

The floors are punctuated with a series of supporting Universal concrete and steel columns decoratively clad with Doulton's architectural stone ware coloured in pale yellow and a mid-range of sage green.

The faience columns together with the tiled walls are integral to the extant 1908 historic interior.

The Royal Doulton's architectural stoneware and its design is credited to the designer W. J. Neatby.

The brown and yellow and cream dado tiling on the adjoining corridors and rooms walls are also by Doulton. These are lead glazed earthenware.

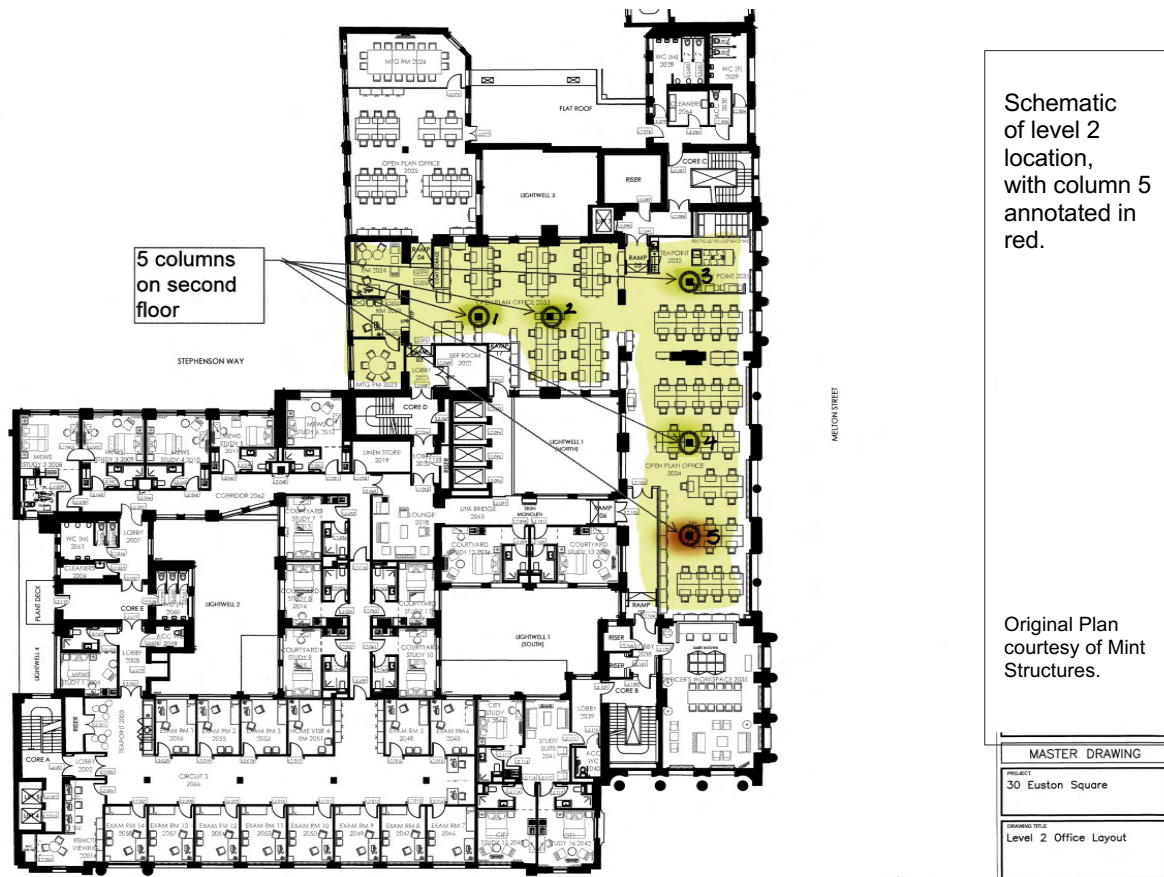
Reference: ('The London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow Assurance Building, London', *Architectural Review*, 23 (1908) March, pp169-176')

(Carrara Parian ware was Royal Doulton's trade name for a single fired vitreous matt glazed stoneware, produced in 1880 and used for studio and architectural work between 1888 to 1939). Usually white, it was also coloured when used architecturally.

¹ Historic England listing 1113131 30 Euston square.
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Proposal Summary

To replicate 2 modular sections and restore the crown moulding
Level 2 Column 5



The following DAS proposal is in association with the conservation clean, stabilisation and repair of the historic ceramic faience cladding to the interior columns.

The observations are derived and made from the preliminary condition assessment and method statement prepared by us and in tandem with the site structural condition report provided by Barry C. Smith in April 2019 by Mint Structures.

The brief presented to us is to preserve, stabilise and reinstate loss to the columns non-structural historic faience.

The original sections of moulding are missing and It is naturally assumed the original ceramic sections were archetypical and having been damaged, were disposed of sometime in the past.

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The intention is to repair the fractured cornice mouldings and replace two sections of previous replicas modelled in wood (Level 2 Column 5, structural condition report, Mint Structures 2019) and to replace the loss of the modular cornice sections with a facsimile using a lightweight acrylic resin system.

The decision to replace the loss with a facsimile instead of a with 'like' replacement was considered on several issues.

The most significant being:

- **The decay behaviour and model**

Firstly, it is important to note that all the corresponding columns clad faience is presently secure.

The mechanisms leading to the structural fissuring of the tiles and cornice has not yet been fully understood or explored precisely enough.

We can summate from the condition report and structural review that there is a general degree of stress and deterioration and it is conceivable for a modular section to detach in the future² and for a replica to become damaged.

It would be unrealistic to take the initial structural survey and Campbell smiths & co.'s visual survey as a sole guide to the general condition of the tiles.

In order, for any remediation of the stoneware decoration to be beneficial we need the opportunity to conduct a full condition assessment using a non-destructive survey and establish if there is an ongoing issue (see Cs & co. Methodology March 2021) and how it may be fully resolved for the long term.

- **Aesthetic value**

The visual compatibility of the decorative repair or reinstatement is an essential consideration. To design a suitable clay replica which meets the criteria required³.

That is, dimensions and the limited finish 'match' that can be achieved to match an

² A crack within a pier or blank wall area may be related to a combination of corrosion of the restraint bars with unaccommodated expansion of the cladding system (Figure 7). Stresses resulting from restrained expansion tend to create either vertical cracks across multiple units or outward displacements at support locations. The vertical cracks form as a result of a weakness within the wall created by intermittent localised points of distress. Understand Terracotta stress and Repair approaches Edward A. Gerns et al 2006, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

³ British Standard 8221-2: 2000

historic lead glaze is challenging. It is well understood and recognized that modern glaze and colour matching is inherently disadvantaged by its range of materials. An inadequate replica is likely to have a greater visual impact than a well matched 'plastic repair' and result in a permanent loss of the aesthetic value of the faience patina. The historic glazing finish which includes, mottling of colour and an aged glaze fit can be well represented using a synthetic replacement.

Insitu example of a 20th century replacement.



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- **Precedence**

We are in fact replacing a failed historic repair with a conservation repair.

- **Financial justification**

The quantity required weighed against the manufacturing challenges e.g., the replicas dimensional tolerances and their aesthetics against the financial investment needed to design and develop the two new units for repair are likely to be cost prohibitive.

Repair and reinstatement philosophy

The conservation philosophy is based on the proportional management of the preservation and conservation repair to the faience with an emphasis on the preservation of as much of the historic fabric as is possible through limited intervention. As the columns are currently stable and assuming the substrate is sound and the modular sections are properly supported, no additional replacement to the lost sections may be necessary⁴. It is possible to repair insitu.

As we are at the intermediate stage of diagnosis and don't have a clear decay model, we are at the stage where the financial investment that is required to understand and explore the design challenges that replacement terracotta necessitates is unjustified. We would however recommend a like with like replacement if a larger number of the decorative mouldings were irreparably damaged.

However, facsimile repairs can be replaced relatively inexpensively with conservation graded materials developed fillers and consolidants which include polymeric binders. These products have been used in the field for many years because of their suitability. The products we have recommended have a proven longevity; they are environmentally responsible and have excellent performance results.⁵

There are various facsimile techniques which have been proven to perform with well over a 20-30-year life span and have the advantage of being more malleable aesthetically and less invasive.

and can be incorporated in the buildings planned conservation care and maintenance

⁴ ENGLISH HERITAGE CONSERVATION POLICIES AND GUIDANCE
Repair Pg.52

⁵ Technical and aging information on polymeric materials, Canadian Institute of conservation.

programme.

Summary

Given their location their proximity (overhead) within an active workspace.

It is clear there is a bonafide need to undertake a facsimile replacement to provide the necessary support to column 5 (level 2) and provide lasting repairs limited to what is reasonably necessary to prevent the problems from escalating within the other columns and to maintain a safe working environment.

To reiterate; given the limitations; that is the extent of the repair, the insufficient information on the conditions of the stoneware's decay and the cost implications to replace a like for like replica. We would recommend replacing the two missing sections with a sacrificial facsimile.

Moving forward. We would envisage the adoption of an integrated conservation maintenance plan into the buildings general maintenance programme will ensure regular and periodic inspections which will identify the need for repair and or renewal at an early stage.



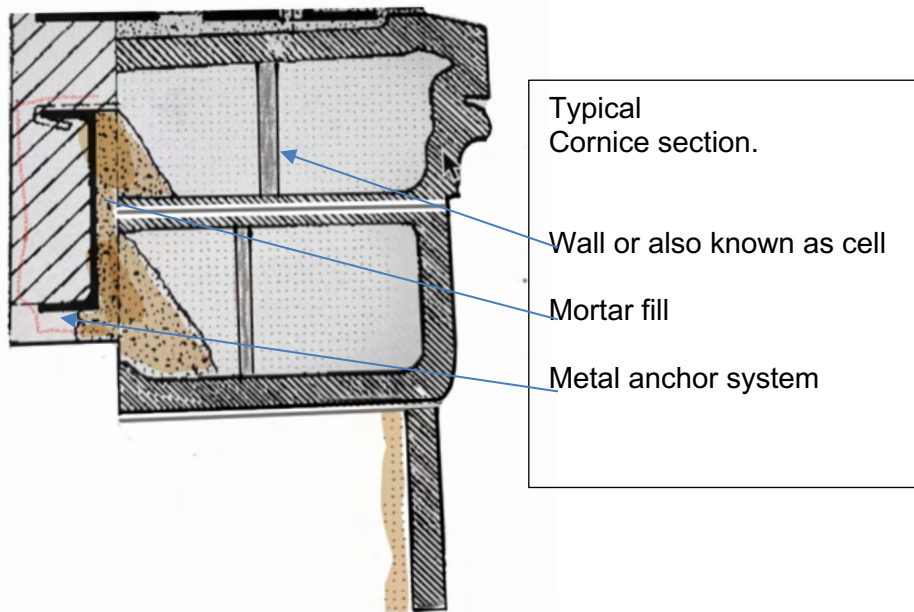
Column 5 level 2 situated above a workstation.

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The structural inspection of one of the sections categorises the failure as 'an inadequate original fixing'.



Cross section of modular ceramic cornice and fixing arrangement.

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Vertical fractures within the lower cornice.

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Example of undamaged column.

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Profile

Tracy Jeffreys is a professional and progressive senior conservator with 28 years' experience. She attained her BA in Graphic Art and the History of Design at Exeter. After which while completing her diploma in Conservation Chemistry from the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation she began a practical 2-year apprenticeship as a novice stone conservator with Cliveden Conservation workshop and followed this with a PGCert in

archaeological conservation studies from York.

Tracy has worked with terracotta from the beginning of her career. Her projects have spanned the conservation of the medieval floors of St. David's Cathedral to Croome Park Coadestone sculpture, to the conservation of Roman mosaics in Dorchester and Cirencester Museum.

Tracy was responsible for the Crown Bar Saloon Belfast 2006-2008 Terracotta faience treatment research and the projects conservation. She co-presented a paper with Berenice Humphreys of Cliveden Conservation on the Investigation into effective solutions to repair materials and synthetic glazes for faience in 2008 for ICON.

She has since worked on several terracotta sculpture and architectural conservation projects including the Pierhead building, for the National assembly Wales in 2012. The Shell Alcove, Osbourne House for Lincoln University and Historic England and the condition survey and decay analysis and advisory for the Grand Corridor, Osborne House on behalf of Cliveden Conservation workshop & Historic England.

Tracy's role extends to conservation advisor, mentor and specialist practitioner of sculpture & architectural conservation. She is experienced in the principles and practices of working within a controlled museum environment to both field & archaeological conservation.

Tracy begun her role as conservation manager for Campbell smith and co. in 2019.

Clients regularly include national organizations, companies, museums and private collections within the U.K and overseas. A member of ICON, ICOM, the ICC and The Association of Preservation Technology International.

Tracy Jeffreys

Conservation Manager & Senior Conservator

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