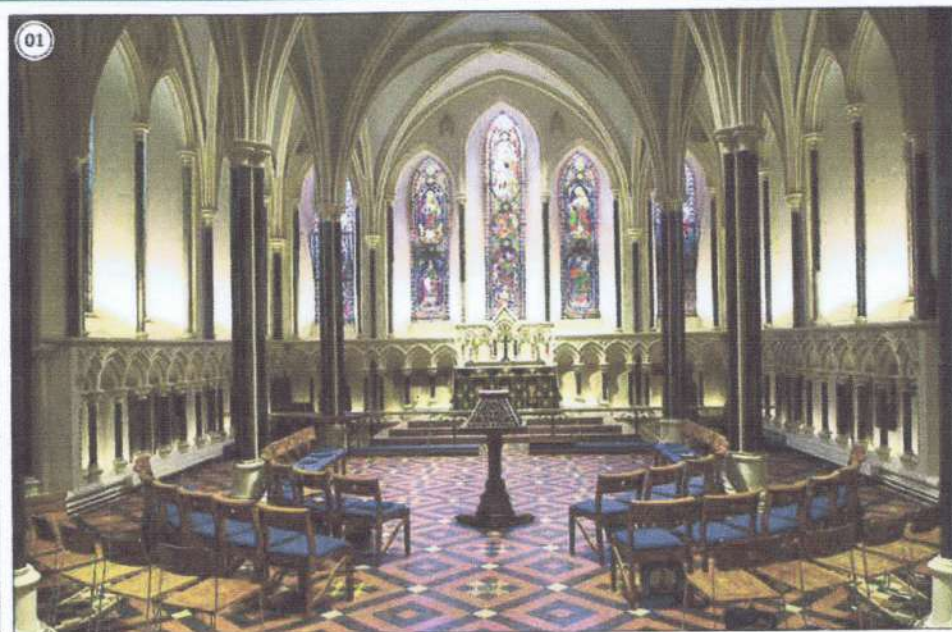


PROJECT



ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL DUBLIN

by John Beauchamp, Cathedral Architect

The current Lady Chapel is the second to be built at the east end of the cathedral. The earlier Lady Chapel was started in 1235 and used for daily service until in 1845 Dean Pakenham appointed the English architect Richard Cromwell Carpenter to design a replacement series of three chapels and his drawings still hang in the Dean's Robing Room. The external envelope was finished in 1855 and the interior was completed in the 1865 Guinness restoration.

The internal cleaning and re-ordering project developed from an initial proposal to maintain three separate chapels sub-divided by railings and screens into a single open space. The incumbent 1884 Forster & Andrews organ disturbed the symmetry and blocked the ambulatory walk. Following removal of the organ in 2012 the full architectural intention of Carpenter's vision for the Lady Chapel was visible for the first time in over 100 years.

The Lady Chapel is seen as the pilot project for cleaning the cathedral interior and we carried out extensive sampling in advance of submitting the planning application. Consent was granted in 2011 and in summer 2012 the cathedral interviewed potential contractors. As the works were being funded entirely by the cathedral community with no



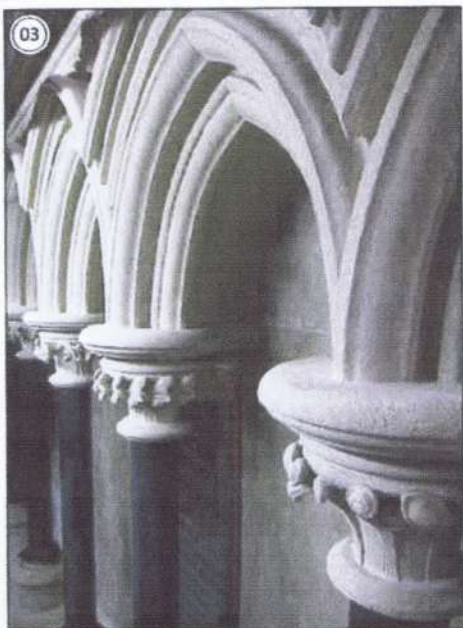
outside grant aid they selected Conservation & Restoration (Ireland) Ltd on the grounds of experience and approach, not cost. Very refreshing and reassuring to know the quality of workmanship was paramount.

Work commenced in autumn 2012 on cleaning down the internal plastered surfaces with sugar soap, removing paint from masonry with StripAway, cleaning masonry and monuments with Arte Mundt 5 and localised

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Images 02, 03, 05 & 06
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ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

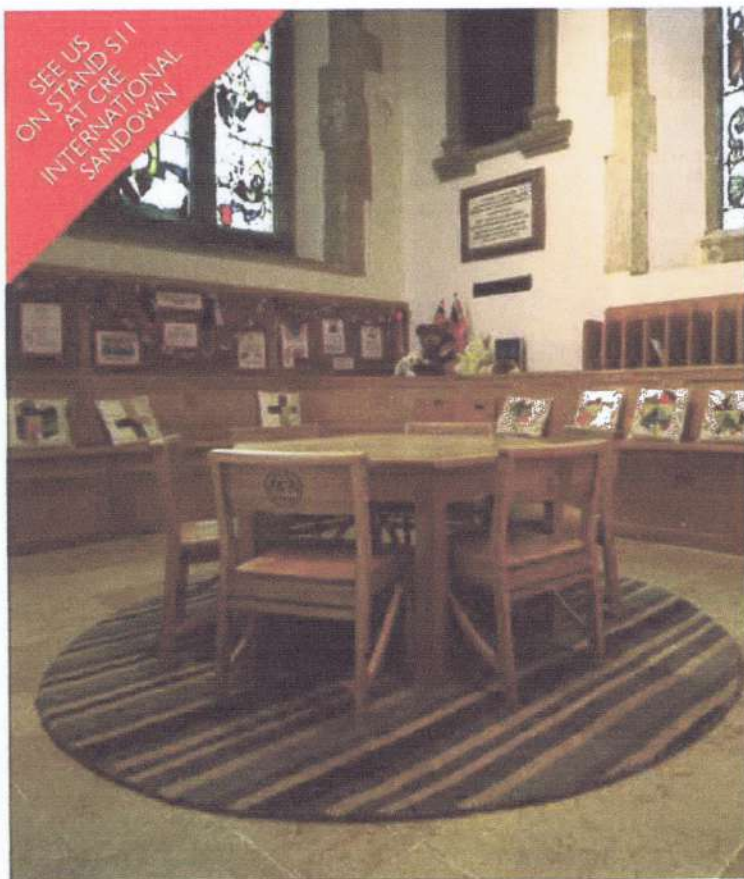


03
cleaning of vulnerable surfaces with Remmers HD400. The success of these processes is very much in the hands of the applicator; it is about knowing how to apply and when to remove and neutralise the materials to achieve a consistent level of cleaning throughout, the experience of the conservator is key.



04
Our aim was to avoid 'over cleaning' the interior and we left a small area for comparison.

The project ran as a very collaborative contract with the contractor offering positive solutions and experimenting with surface finishes. For example the Kilkenny Limestone shafts, a naturally dark stone with shell >



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PROJECT

PROJECT TEAM

Client:
The Board of
St Patrick's Cathedral

Architect:
John Beauchamp of
Benjamin &
Beauchamp Architects

Main Contractor:
Conservation
& Restoration
(Ireland) Ltd

Supplier of altar
furniture, metal-
framed chairs and
wooden chairs:
Irish Contract Seating



figuring which surround the main Bath stone columns, frame the windows and support the lower arcade were all painted in a dark oil based paint to emphasise architectural contrast – a clear design intention. The contrast was lost after cleaning and the recovery process had to be reversible without permanent dis-colouration of the underlying stone. Two coats of micro-crystalline Renaissance wax were applied to the stone samples and then treated with boiled linseed oil for its strength of colour and matt finish. This method was then trialed on a column and eventually used throughout. Colour variations came from different stone beds within the stone quarry and have been left as an honest expression of a natural material.

We selected a clay paint hand tinted with natural ochres to visually integrate with the Dundry stone columns and ceiling ribs, provide a

light blue ceiling [in the tradition of the St Patrick's Cathedral colour and from paint evidence on the ceiling] and a light coloured wall. The clay paint has the advantage of being breathable, has a density and opacity that it can go over uneven backgrounds, is low reflective and can be easily touched up without repairs looking obvious.

Throughout this process all 27 windows within the Lady Chapel were cleaned by an ICON conservation accredited conservator on both faces and two of the east windows were removed from site and repaired. One of these windows formed the site entrance. Bianca Divito cleaned 25 of these in-situ, inside and outside, with cleaning swabs and a 1:1 ratio of acetone and de-ionised water solution – an exercise in patience and persistence, working at the rate of two faces per week it took seven months to complete. The two Wailes windows, were re-glazed by Connon Studios in Dublin. The cathedral was pleased to support Irish craftsmen throughout the project.

A new LED lighting scheme was installed in partnership with the lighting designer Jim Morse, the scheme included new lighting within the 1904 Drew arcade and window cills. The LED fittings specified in 2010 were no longer available in 2013 – an interesting commentary on how fast the market is moving – and the specification was updated with a warmer lamp output.

To complete the presentation of the space and in support of daily services bespoke seating and altars were commissioned from ICS [an Irish furniture maker specialising in ecclesiastical furniture]. These new pieces are toned to look similar to existing furniture, they pick up on architectural motifs within the Lady Chapel and look comfortable in their surroundings. ■

