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A BUILDING TRANSFORMATION CASE STUDY

The IBIS, Glasgow

Render façade repairs, strength coating and full external façade redecoration.

Project overview

Our brief from the hotel and client was clear; deliver the works with minimum scaffolding and impact to the hotel. This gave us a simple project objective and drove all elements of planning. We had 6 months to complete the works in line with the plan.

Cleaning, repairs and 4 coats of various strengthening, primers and tops were applied throughout, ensuring protection for another 10 years from the Scottish elements. Exposed to Scotland's variable weather conditions, the rendered external façade of the IBIS hotel has over the years degraded, leading to a range of various defects, failures and weathering related issues that included specialist repairs and sections replaced. The completed façade was strengthened with a specialist coating prior to re-decoration to give the extra flexibility and adhesion required for the façade's future performance.

Due to a lack of general maintenance, the façade was discoloured/damaged by various types of algae and lichen and looked unappealing for those visiting the hotel. It was beyond a simple clean due to the level of build up and stabilised pollution, specialist cleaning works were required prior to any repairs, strengthening or re-coating.

The scope of works were reviewed in detail with the client, with particular focus around the pre-treatments (such as biocide treatment), cleaning methods and strengthening base coats. Such works required cross hatch testing, cleaning trials and inspections to help validate the level of specification required and the impact that this would have on the budget.

Task Overview

- Undertake condition survey, map defects, build repair and re-decoration specification.
- Develop access plan and ensure methods of refurbishment can be effectively completed by rope access, MEWP and scaffolding.
- Remove all weak and failing parts of the render at high and low level.
- Apply façade strengthening coat throughout to support future performance.
- Re-mastic all windows and replace expansion joints.
- Re-decorate with primer and 2 top coats of specialist render coating.

Project description

The works were planned to be delivered whilst taking into account the weathering cycles and façade exposure risks to create a working programme that was feasible and realistic. An access plan was developed that focused on elevation specific rope access delivery for all elements of the works. MEWP access helped to scale up the project and scaffolding specific sections enabled the larger repairs sections to be removed and replaced and the works completed with the same quality throughout.

The façade was treated with a biocide and then cleaned with low pressure 150 degree steam to ensure that deeply ingrained organic spores on the façade were destroyed and then removed. Once a section was deemed clean, we documented and removed the sections which were failing. This then helped us identify, map out and agree the full scope of work with the client.

Repairs varied in size and nature throughout all elevations and locations on the façade, with the larger repairs focused around adjoining sections where expansion joints had failed or sills had retained large volumes of moisture and overflowed into the render over time.



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Once all repairs were complete, a new strengthening coating was applied throughout the façade. This specialist coating would help bind the current render together, bridge and cover any minor cracking on the render and provide a new textured finish for the future primer to bond effectively to. Once applied the façade was primed and then re-coated with 2 coats of specialist paint applied using the traditional roller method.

The key learning is to maintain the façade within a suitable maintenance plan and not let the issues build to a point of expensive phased works.

Project challenges

The site being a hotel meant that it required sensitive working and a working plan that suited the hotel's operational needs. Weather was our main risk, moisture levels required constant monitoring and rain limited our working capacity on many occasions. Making the most of each day was critical on this project.

- Rain, moisture and work scheduling to fit within unpredictable weathering patterns.
- Scaling up resourcing effectively to keep works on schedule. Utilising abseil, BMU, MEWPs and teams working in temporary cradles to accelerate the programme and support the client in handing over the building.
- Matching new render repair texture with the current façade at high level.
- Gaining access to core locations via rope access.
- Blending the finish of the coating so that the finish was even and deep.