

### Foreword

This series of booklets has been produced by the Department of the Environment to increase awareness of the value of our architectural heritage and to provide information on the basic principles and methods of conservation and restoration.

The titles in the series are listed on the back of each booklet.

These texts are not intended to be comprehensive technical or legal guides. The main aim is to assist architects, builders, owners and others, in understanding the guiding principles of conservation and restoration. They will facilitate the identification of the most common problems encountered in heritage buildings, and indicate the best solutions. It should be appreciated that specialised aspects of conservation and restoration will require professional expertise and more detailed information.

The Department acknowledges, with appreciation, the efforts of the authors of the individual booklets, the Irish Georgian Society who coordinated their production, the Conservation Advisory Panel established under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development and all others involved.

### Summary of Conservation Principles

- Research prior to planning work
- Minimum intervention - repair rather than replace
- Respect the setting.

### Summary of Conservation Procedure

- Research and analyse history of building
- Survey building and identify original material
- Plan work according to conservation principles
- Use experts where necessary
- Record all work
- Install maintenance procedures.

## Introduction

This booklet deals with the interior decoration, normally found in rooms from 1700 - 1900, both in public and domestic buildings, in Ireland.

At its simplest, interior decoration consists of painting. However, in most instances the following have to be considered and specified, approximately in the following order:

- floor finishes and floor coverings
- light fittings
- wall coverings, in particular wallpapers
- window curtains and bed hangings
- items of furniture including mirrors and paintings.

## Brief History

In order to comprehend why rooms were decorated and fitted out, in a specific manner, it is important to understand how they were originally intended to be used. Mark Girouard in his *Life in the English Country House*, and Peter Thornton in *Authentic Decor*, are among the contemporary historians who have studied the evolution and decoration of historic rooms.

### **The interior from 1700 to 1740**

In the early 18th century, public and domestic rooms of consequence were used in a formal and rigid manner. This was reflected in their decoration where the architectural embellishments formed the most prominent element of the room, and a limited amount of furniture and fittings was formally arranged around the room. All of these items were

subservient to the overall scheme and complemented the architecture of the room.

Whereas relatively few rooms from this era have survived intact, particularly good examples are the House of Lords in the Old Parliament Building, College Green, Dublin, and the entrance hall in the King House, Boyle, Co. Roscommon and also Bellamont Forest, Co. Cavan, and, on a smaller scale, the Still Room, Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon.

Three paintings which illustrate rooms of this period are, 'The State Ball at Dublin Castle', 1731, attributed to William Van Der Hagen, and the more intimate domestic interior, 'Conversation Piece', circa 1750, possibly showing the members of the Corbally family and attributed to Philip Hussey, in the National Gallery of Ireland, or the equally instructive painting of 'The Bateson Family', circa 1740, again attributed to Philip Hussey, in the Ulster Museum.



Attributed to Philip Hussey 'Conversation Piece', possibly members of the Corbally family.

***The interior from 1740 to 1760***

By the middle of the 18th century, the rigid formality of domestic rooms was gradually declining, and this is partly reflected in a lighter form of architectural treatment.

Again, it is also reflected in the manner in which the rooms' architectural embellishments become less imposing and more enriched. Thus, in place of timber panelling from floor to ceiling, wainscoting is used on the lower walls, in order to permit the upper part to be painted, or hung with hand-blocked wallpaper and, in very imposing rooms, with a silk damask.

The greater use of textiles, both for carpets and curtains, contributed to an added sense of comfort. In addition, many more pieces of furniture were introduced which were less imposing and generally more comfortable.

In public buildings and in the grander domestic interiors, the more formal approach was still retained. Nonetheless, it is from this era that the fine cut glass chandeliers, gilt tables and mirrors originate.

Good examples from this era are to be found in the rooms in No 85 St. Stephen's Green, and the Provost's House, Trinity College, Dublin. For rooms of a somewhat smaller scale, Newbridge House, Co. Dublin, together with the nearby Malahide Castle, or Belvedere House, Co. Westmeath, contain important and intact interiors.

***The neo-classical interior from 1760 to 1800***

With the completion of Charlemont House and the Casino at Marino circa 1760, the neo-classical form of decoration, was introduced to Ireland, by Sir William Chambers, for his patron Lord Charlemont.

The main characteristic of these rooms is the use of a shallower form of ornament, together with the introduction of carefully designed furniture, such as pier tables and mirrors, together with suites of chair furniture.

Among the surviving examples from this era are the Green and Red Drawing Rooms, at Castletown House, together with the work of Robert Adam at Headfort House, Co. Meath. In the case of Headfort House, both the rooms and the original architect's drawings survive, the latter in the Mellon Collection at Yale University.

Somewhat later, is the work of James Wyatt and his circle, and the most complete surviving example of this era is the interior of Castlecoole, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. For the most part, however, the furniture and fittings at Castlecoole are from the first quarter of the 19th century.

From this era too, the fine interiors of the then newly built terraced houses have survived in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, usually with well executed plaster work by such practitioners as Michael Stapleton, in a style greatly influenced by the work of Robert Adam.

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A painting (shown on the cover of this booklet) that captures the very essence of this age is 'Mrs. Congreve and her daughters', by Phillip Reinagle, circa 1780 (National Gallery of Ireland).

#### ***The late neo-classical or romantic interior from 1800 to 1830***

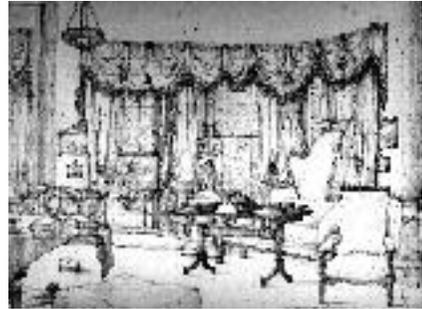
By 1800, the fitting out and decoration of rooms both at public and domestic scale were becoming heavier, and this was greatly influenced by the mass production of items such as plaster decoration and the manufacture of many more varieties of fabrics, and trimmings. There was also a much wider selection of items such as wallpapers, mirrors, furniture and musical instruments.

The two main architectural practitioners during this era were Francis Johnston and Sir Richard Morrison. Both architects practised in a number of styles, creating interiors of the highest quality. Townley Hall, Co. Louth, is the masterpiece of Francis Johnston in the classical style, while Charleville Castle, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, is his masterpiece in the gothic style.

Likewise Sir Richard Morrison, assisted by his son William Vitruvius, was responsible for highly elaborate interiors for the most part in the classical style, in such houses as Fota, Co. Cork, Baronscourt, Co. Tyrone and Ballyfin, Co. Laois.

Of particular interest are the drawings by Maria La Touche, recording the interiors of

Bellevue, Co. Wicklow and Marlay Grange, Co. Dublin. They capture the interiors of a gentry household, at the moment when mass production had ensured that many varieties of fabrics and items of furniture were available to give a greater sense of comfort. There are many good examples of surviving intact interiors, from the late 18th century



*Drawing room of Marlay Grange by Maria La Touche*

terraced houses to be found in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford, in particular the somewhat heavier detailing to the joinery and plaster work.

#### ***The Victorian interior from circa 1830 to 1900***

By this date the industrial revolution ensured that mass production could supply a large variety of paints and paint finishes, together with fabrics and furniture.

Comfort and the irregular arrangement of furniture within the rooms are the hallmarks of this era, together with more sombre colour schemes and the over use of trimmings to curtains and upholstery.

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## Interior Decoration & Finishes

Whereas there are many examples of public and private buildings from this era, and in many instances there are documents, such as architects' drawings, inventories and photographs, the rigid discipline and overall control of design had disappeared, except in the case of the larger residence or public buildings.

By the late 19th century, well established decorating firms, such as Sibthorpe's, of Molesworth Street Dublin, had emerged and a more opulent style of decoration was introduced, using stencil work, with a more controlled approach to the design.

Some of these interiors have been recorded by early photography.

### Typical Elements

The main elements of interior decoration are as follows:

- (a) Painting and decoration, including wallpapers
- (b) Floor finishes and floor coverings
- (c) Light fittings
- (d) Fabrics and curtains
- (e) Items of furniture

#### (a) Painting and decoration, including wallpapers

In early 18th century interiors, the ceilings and walls were generally painted with distemper, and the joinery work stained or painted with an oil paint.

By the mid 18th century, hand blocked wallpapers had been introduced and, in very

rare instances, walls were hung with a fabric, such as silk damask.

There was a greater use of wallpapers by the late 18th century, together with a more restrained use of pattern. In the most imposing rooms, specific colour schemes were created by architects, such as Robert Adam, for Headfort House, Kells, Co. Meath.

By 1800, a larger variety of paints and paint finishes, was available together with wallpapers and matching borders. In addition, colour schemes became more complicated, and there was a greater use of gilding to architectural enrichments.

From 1830 to 1850, colour schemes became gradually more sombre, and in addition, there is greater use of decorative finishes in the form of graining and stencil work. By 1890, firms such as Sibthorpe's, used a lighter palette of colour, in particular when executing French revival style rooms. Among the best examples are the Ante Room and Drawing Room at Fota, Co. Cork, where elaborate stencil work and gilding were also employed.

With the assistance of modern technology it is now possible to analyse paint and the various layers that have been applied. There are now a number of firms that manufacture historic colours in a variety of paints.

#### (b) Floor Finishes and Floor Coverings

In the early 18th century interiors, floorboards were normally dry scrubbed floors, both in public and private rooms.

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Carpets when used, were sometimes displayed on a table.

By the mid 18th century, carpet squares were introduced, laid on the floor in only the most imposing rooms.

There was more use of carpets and other floor coverings during the late 18th century and by 1800, one finds a greater use of carpets, both hand made and machined, together with other forms of floor covering. In addition, the use of wax polish and varnish, together with the introduction of parquet floorings became more prevalent.

From 1830 onwards, an even larger variety of floor finishes were employed.

A most informative study has been carried out on historic floor coverings by Anthony Wells-Cole of Temple Newsam House, Leeds. In addition there are still a number of firms, primarily in England, who produce machined carpets in an authentic 19th century tradition.

#### (c) Light Fittings

Among the most important items in an historic room are the light fittings. The surviving examples from the early 18th century are in carved or gilded timber, brass, or cut glass.

By the mid 18th century, the glass chandelier had been considerably refined, and a number of fine quality examples have survived.

By the late 18th century, further refinements had taken place in particular in the use of oil burning lamps. This continued through the 19th century, in particular with the introduction of gas and, later still, with the introduction of electricity, circa 1900.

There are now a number of firms that make good quality reproductions of historic light fittings in cut glass, timber or brass.

#### (d) Fabrics and Curtains

In early 18th century interiors, there were relatively few fabrics and curtains used and then only in the most formal rooms.

By the mid 18th century, many more types of fabric were available, the more formal damasks being used in public buildings and in the larger domestic interiors. Other forms of fabric, such as printed calico, became available, and these were used in less important rooms, in particular in bedrooms.

The late 18th century saw the use of a more restrained design, normally in the form of stripes, both for imposing and modest interiors. The variety of fabrics greatly increased, as did the variety and form of trimmings.

The early 19th century saw the introduction of further varieties of fabrics, in particular printed cottons or chintz, and with the commencement of the industrial revolution, many of these fabrics became available to a wider public. From 1830 onwards, the variety and quantity of fabrics available greatly

increased and more sombre colours were employed.

In the last twenty years, much effort has been expended in creating a variety of fabrics suitable for historic interiors.

#### (e) Items of Furniture

Knowledge of the history of furniture, paintings and mirrors has greatly increased in the last twenty years, and, in addition, worthwhile reproduction furniture is now readily available.

### Common Problems and Solutions

The major problems encountered with regard to the restoration and refurbishment of historic interiors are as follows:

#### 1. The decay of the building fabric

The building should be made structurally sound prior to the commencement of work on the interior.

#### 2. The destruction of paintwork and, in particular, textiles and floor coverings, due to over exposure to natural light, and increased visitor numbers.

Textiles and floor coverings will need the services of experts in those fields. Paintwork is covered in detail in the latter part of this booklet.

#### 3. The dispersal of furniture and fittings.

Furniture and fittings, dating from the correct era can still be purchased, or good

reproductions are readily available.

#### 4. Insufficient appreciation of the importance of original decorative schemes, including the contents of historic houses and buildings.

### Procedure

Prior to the re-decoration of an historic interior it is important to ensure that the following investigations are carried out.

#### (i) Structure

A full evaluation of the structure should be carried out, to ensure that the building is both sound, and is secure from the ingress of all water and dampness.

#### (ii) Architectural survey

A measured drawing of the room should be executed together with a photographic survey. This should record all the architectural elements and finishes together with any original furniture and fittings.

#### (iii) Archival research

The history of the building should be recorded, with the aid of all surviving records, such as original architectural drawings, inventories, or historical photographs. This should include all information concerning items of furniture and furnishings remaining or formerly housed in the room.

Only when this thorough investigation has been carried out can a detailed proposal be prepared and executed to include the

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following schedules and specifications:

1. Schedule and specification of repairs to all surfaces, including ceilings, walls, floors and joinery work.
2. Schedule and specification for the cleaning, repairing and renewing of all finishes to ceilings, walls, floors and joinery work.
3. Schedule and specification for all furnishings to include:
  - light fittings
  - floor finishes and floor coverings
  - wallpapers and wall hangings
  - curtains and soft furnishings
  - mirrors and paintings
  - tables, chairs and furniture together with objects, such as clocks and ornaments.

While work is in progress, all fittings, features and furnishings should be protected. The ceiling may require temporary supports. The fireplace should be encased and loose sheets placed over the floor area. Doors and windows must be protected as necessary. The work in progress, as well as the finished project, should be recorded.

### Maintenance

In order to ensure the preservation of an historical interior, it is important to ensure that a basic maintenance programme is adopted, and this should include the following provisions:

- a. adequate ventilation of all rooms;
- b. adequate heating of all rooms, including the control and recording of the temperature and relative humidity;
- c. adequate cleaning and, where required,

re-decoration;

- d. sufficient protection for all items, in particular textiles and the control of natural light.

Among the most informative publications on this topic is *The National Trust Manual of Housekeeping* (London 1984).

### Do's and Don'ts

- Do*
- check listing of room under local development plan.
  - check or have checked roof space and roof coverings.
  - open up and ventilate room.
  - protect all fittings and features while work is in progress.
  - record the room prior to work by means of drawings and photographs.
  - explain schedule of works to contractor and define the plant and equipment that can be used on site.
  - visit and inspect works, recording where necessary.
  - record completed project with photographs and 'as built' drawings.

- Don't*
- seal room as natural ventilation is always required.
  - remove items from room except when absolutely necessary.
  - endeavour to record room after work has commenced.
  - permit any work to commence until contractor has been clearly instructed concerning the programme of work, and what plant and equipment can be used.

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- carry out any operation that cannot be reversed, as further information may come to light at a future date.
- remove original elements to a room: endeavour to retain as much as possible. This applies equally to all finishes such as paint and wallpaper. If a finish is to be changed, a representative example of the existing room should be left if possible, so that future practitioners may have the opportunity to study the evolution of a room.

### Sources of Information

The sources of information on historic interiors can be divided into the following categories:

- a. Public and private buildings open to the public, and this to include collections of paintings, drawings and decorative objects.
- b. Public archives of architectural drawings, photographs and other records, and, in addition, private archives generally attached to historic buildings.
- c. Publications on historic buildings and interiors including books, periodicals and guidebooks.
- d. Archives attached to established manufacturers of items of furniture and furnishings, in particular
  - wallpapers
  - fabrics and trimmings
  - carpets
  - light fittings.

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## PAINT AND WALLPAPER

### Brief History

It is natural for us to decorate our living environment. In caves 10,000 years ago coloured clays and soot were used to create wall paintings of hunting scenes and familiar animals. Masonry walls were plastered and painted with limewash or real fresco. Wall paintings became more sophisticated in Egyptian and Roman civilisations, culminating in the rich decorations excavated in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

By medieval times decoration was all pervasive and remnants of this decoration survive in some churches and secular buildings in Ireland. In the 18th and 19th centuries paint was used to achieve subtle effects. Plasterwork was painted to imitate stone columns. North facing rooms were painted warm colours and south facing rooms cool colours to compensate for the effect of sunlight. Colour on walls came to be taken for granted and continues so up to the present day.

The habit of repainting every ten years is a recent phenomenon - thanks to cheap and easy to apply materials. But in the past the decoration of a room might be left for as long as 20 or 30 years. Repainting often marked a wedding, a new tenant, alterations to a room, sudden prosperity, etc., so the paint history also tells us about the fortunes of the house.

Covered by modern emulsion, pre 20th century paint layers are rarely visible today, but the whole colour history of a room can

be revealed by examining chips of paint under high magnification, and, by identifying the pigments, these colours can even be dated.

### Types of Paint

#### **Limewash**

A solution of lime (calcium oxide) in water is stirred up and brushed onto the wall. As it dries, it crystallises as insoluble calcium carbonate. This is the cheapest of paints and was used for humble buildings, in servants' quarters, on exterior walls etc. Limewashes were usually white, but sandy colours were popular for exterior walls in the 18th and 19th centuries.

#### **Soft distemper**

This is a mix of chalk, water and animal glue. It produces a matte, powdery finish, that is marked very easily and has to be frequently replaced. It can be tinted, but because of the chalk content, the colours are always pale though they can be very bright. For three centuries it was the standard house paint and was used right up to the 1950s and 60s as a cheap alternative to oil. Today, it can only be obtained from suppliers specialising in historic paints.

#### **Oil paint**

Since the end of the 17th century this has invariably been used for painting softwood panelling. When full panelling gave way in the 18th century to the fashion for cladding just the lower part of the wall, the upper part was usually covered with wallpaper or fabric, but towards the end of the century oil paint was applied directly to the wall plaster above the dado rail.

Cornices and plain ceilings, on the other hand, were not painted in oil until the end of the 19th/ beginning of the 20th century. If the ceiling was an ornate one it might have been painted in oil as early as the 18th century, but cornices would almost always be painted in distemper.

### **Emulsion paints**

Oil paint is still sold today but, since the 1960s, wall paint is usually bought in the form of an emulsion - a suspension of acrylic in an aqueous medium. As the water evaporates after brushing, the acrylic particles lock together to create a strong and flexible paint film.

### **Historic Colours**

Seventeenth century oak panelling was unpainted but, if it was soft wood, it was sometimes marbled, or grained to imitate oak or walnut. Examples of 17th century graining are very rare. Where it has survived it is seen to be highly stylised, unlike the naturalistic effects sought by 19th century craftsmen. Ceilings and cornices were decorated with pure white distemper.

In the late 17th century and right through the 18th century, softwood panelling was invariably painted. The commonest colours were stone colour, cream or pale grey. It was only in very grand establishments that bright colours and gilding were occasionally used. The same neutral tint would generally be used for all features, including the skirtings, the windows and the doors. In unpanelled rooms, the walls would be painted with soft distemper, also in neutral tints, and service

areas and very poor dwellings would be limewashed.

The invention of Prussian blue in 1704, a pigment which was not only cheap, but had a high tinting strength, worked well in oil and did not fade, meant that, by the mid 18th century, plaster walls were frequently pale blue or pale green (made by mixing blue with yellow), though the half panelling continued to be painted in neutral tones. The beds of 18th century ornate ceilings were occasionally painted in pale colours, but were more commonly white.

The invention of a wide range of strong, bright pigments in the 19th century meant that decoration could become more adventurous and painters used strong colour schemes, including deep reds and greens. Elaborate marbling was popular in hallways and dining rooms, and graining which had virtually disappeared as a technique in the 18th century, had a huge revival which lasted right through into the Edwardian era. Nineteenth century graining was very naturalistic and was completed with a thick glaze to give it a high gloss.

### **Ironwork**

In the early 18th century ironwork tended to be painted white or stone colour to match the colour of the house, or shades of pale grey. Deep blue, based on the pigment smalt, was occasionally used for very grand gates and railings. Towards the end of the century, dark grey and dark blue became more common choices. Black painted railings date from the Victorian period.

## Typical Elements

Each painted surface comprises three parts.

- Support
- Pigment
- Medium

### Support

The support is the surface to which the paint is applied; it can be anything from a cave wall or plastered masonry, to a partition wall or MDF.

### Pigment

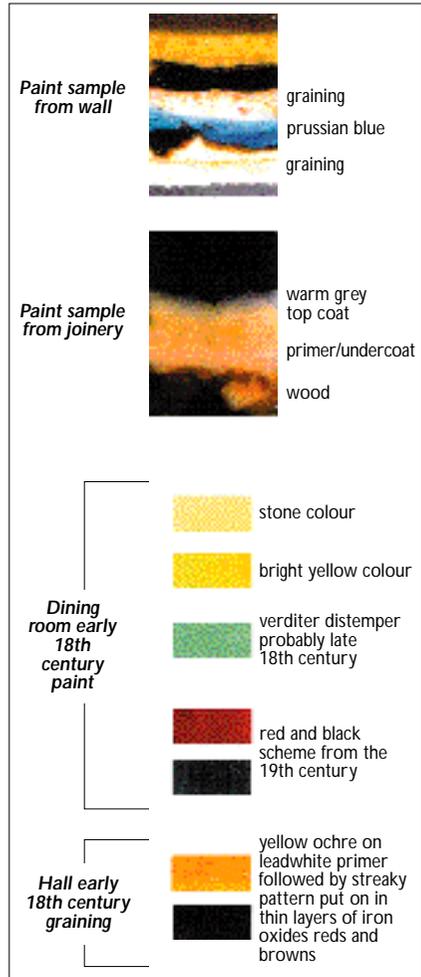
The pigment is the colouring matter used. The first pigments were coloured clays found locally. In time, pigments were traded and manufactured artificially. As certain colours were manufactured at different dates it is sometimes possible to give an “earliest possible” date by analysing the pigments used in a paint layer.

### Medium

The medium is what binds the pigment to the support. This can be lime plaster, distemper, oil, acrylic etc. We define what type of paint it is by the medium used, e.g. oil paint. It is possible to analyse the medium used by taking a small sample of the original.

### Wall Paintings

A decorative scheme executed on a wall in fresco or oil paint may require conservation. A specialist wall painting conservator should be consulted. Flaking paint may sometimes be consolidated using a tacking iron, an appropriate adhesive and silicon release paper. This procedure should be carried out by a conservator.



*Paint analysis of Ledwithstown House, an early 18th century house*

*A selection of the colours used over the years is shown above. However, they should be viewed as approximations, owing to changes in colour which occur in the reproducing process.*

## Common Problems and Solutions

### 1. Failure of the support, structural or otherwise

Check that the wall is in good condition and that the plaster is not loose. Settlement cracks and those caused by vibration, can loosen plaster. If the wall sounds hollow when gently tapped the plaster is vulnerable and must be consolidated before any other treatment is carried out. This involves injecting an appropriate adhesive between the plaster and the wall and is a procedure best carried out by a specialist.

### 2. Problems resulting from dampness and/or attempts to dry out a building quickly

Excessive moisture brings its own problems. The first step is to find the cause of dampness - a leaking roof, no damp proof course, a bridged damp proof course or poor guttering. The source of moisture should be eliminated and the wall allowed to dry out naturally. Most walls are naturally damp but this will not necessarily harm the surface painting so long as the amount of moisture in the wall remains constant. Fluctuating climate and rapid drying brings soluble salts to the surface. These crystals frequently force the paint off the surface causing flaking.

### 3. Soiled paintwork

Before attempting to clean any paintwork, make sure that you know the type of paint used. The most usual types are limewash, distemper (glue bound, casein bound or oil

bound), oil based paints and acrylic paints. This is very important as some media are affected by moisture. Inspect the surface carefully to make sure that the paint layer is sound.

#### Soft distemper

This is glue bound and is generally found on ceilings. It wipes off very easily. The only safe way to clean it is to dust lightly with a soft brush. Never use water.

#### Casein bound distemper

This should be dusted as above. If the paint layer is secure it can be wiped with a damp, not wet, cloth. Do not wash the surface.

#### Oil bound distemper

Oil bound distemper such as Walpamur is generally harder wearing. Dust first with a soft brush. Fresh bread pressed into lumps and rolled over the dry surface will remove a considerable amount of surface grime. If necessary, wash gently with warm water to which a few drops of Synperonic N has been added. Rinse off and dry. Use three cloths and two buckets.

#### Oil based paints

These can be treated in the same way as oil bound distemper. Local grease stains on woodwork can be cleaned using a mixture of 300 mls white spirits, 300 mls water to which a teaspoon of mild detergent has been added. A few drops of ammonia in water will also remove grease stains. Care must be taken, however, as all of these mixtures will eventually soften the oil paint and you may

find you are left with a very clean area which stands out too clearly from the surrounding paint. This will also happen if you use commercial detergents and abrasive powders. Where an area of paintwork is prone to gather grease stains, (door panels, light switches etc.), it is a good idea to put a protective sheet of perspex in position to prevent further wear.

### **Acrylic paints**

These can be cleaned in the same way as oil based paints.

Prior to carrying out extensive cleaning it would be prudent to determine where most of the dust is coming from and to eliminate the sources as far as possible. Washing should be necessary only once in every five years - or in ideal circumstances only once every 10 years.

### **Wallpapers**

It is well worth devoting even a small amount of time to a wallpaper search before undertaking any alterations or redecorating - small scraps of wallpaper are sometimes discovered during renovation of old buildings, behind panelling, pelmets, light switches, fitted bookcases or inside cupboards. 'Sandwiches' formed of many layers of wallpaper generally have an unappealing outer surface but may contain many hidden treasures. Until the late 1830's wallpaper was printed on lengths formed from individual sheets of hand made, rag pulp paper measuring approximately twenty-one inches by eighteen, glued

together by overlapping the edges. Often the hand-made sheet will show a distinctive 'aid' pattern of fine horizontal lines when held up to the light, and is characteristically strong due to the quality of the rag pulp. Wallpaper made in this way will show horizontal seams at intervals of about eighteen inches, although these are not always obvious beneath the thick ground colour which was applied before printing.



*Sketch detail from 18th Century wallpaper*

The paper used from the 1830s onwards is much thinner and weaker. Hand blocked paper was printed with thick distemper paint which tends to flake distinctively, unlike the thinner inks used on machine printed papers, which tend to become absorbed into the surface of the paper. The damp conditions which pertain in so many Irish houses favour the removal of wallpaper, and it may be possible to ease the paper gently from the wall using a flexible, flat tool such as a spatula or plastic ruler. If the paper is well bonded to the wall, it may be enough simply to photograph it, rather than risk damage by

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attempting to remove it. Otherwise, the paper will have to be well soaked, either with water or else with a fifty-fifty mixture of alcohol and water for as long as possible.

The application of steam from a wallpaper steamer will help loosen stubborn paste, but may also entail the risk of damaging loose or fugitive pigment; if in doubt, test a small area before attempting to remove the best sample, or else seek help from a paper conservator.

Once the paper has been removed, the back may be examined for traces of duty marks, which were generally stamped using black, or sometimes red, ink.

### Dos and Don'ts

- Do*
- protect and maintain painted surfaces in an historic building.
  - identify type of paint before cleaning.
  - do be careful removing or cleaning old lead-based paint.
  - remember it is possible to discover previous colour schemes by using paint analysis.
  - keep any scrap, however small, of antique wallpaper.
- Don't*
- try to clean wall paintings; always call in an expert.
  - clean paint with water unless you are sure of the paint type.

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#### Sources of Information

Dulux Paints Ireland Ltd.  
17,Sth.Frederick St. Dublin 2 01 679 5890

Farrow and Ball  
Historic Paint Manufacturers  
Uddens Trading Company  
Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7NL  
England

Catherine Hassall,  
UCL Paint Analysis,  
History of Art Department,  
University of London,  
43 Gordon Square, London WC1 H0PD  
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Keim Mineral Paints Ltd.  
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Mary McGrath FIIC  
Conservator  
Rosetown Lodge  
Newbridge  
Co, Kildare Tel. 045 432007

David Skinner and Sons  
Wallpaper Makers,The Mill,Celbridge,  
Co. Kildare 01 627 2913

Tina Sitwell  
Specialist in Interior and Decorative Finishes  
The National Trust  
Queen Anne's Gate  
London Tel.0171 2229251

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