

Oakwrights Bath Ltd

Shortlisted Entry

Entry Type: Project

Project Site: The London Centre of the Self-Realization Fellowship, Chiltern Street, London

Project Description: Refurbishment throughout the Centre

This project involved the complete transformation of a building in central London, into a spiritual centre for the Self-Realization Fellowship. It included the entrance door and frame, all the internal doors, the luminettes, the Altar, lectern and harmonium stand, the literature stand, pin-boards and mirrors, radiator grilles (large and small), and the donations box.

The building comprises two distinct parts: to the right from the entrance foyer is the original part of the building, possibly Victorian. To the left of the foyer is the 1970's/1980's addition, typical of its era.

The clients wanted the modern part to echo the style of the original, and enhance the whole building decoratively, in keeping with its role as a spiritual centre.

The main technical challenge came from turning the vision of the architect and client into a joinery reality. This applied to the entire project, but in particular to the transformation of the windows.

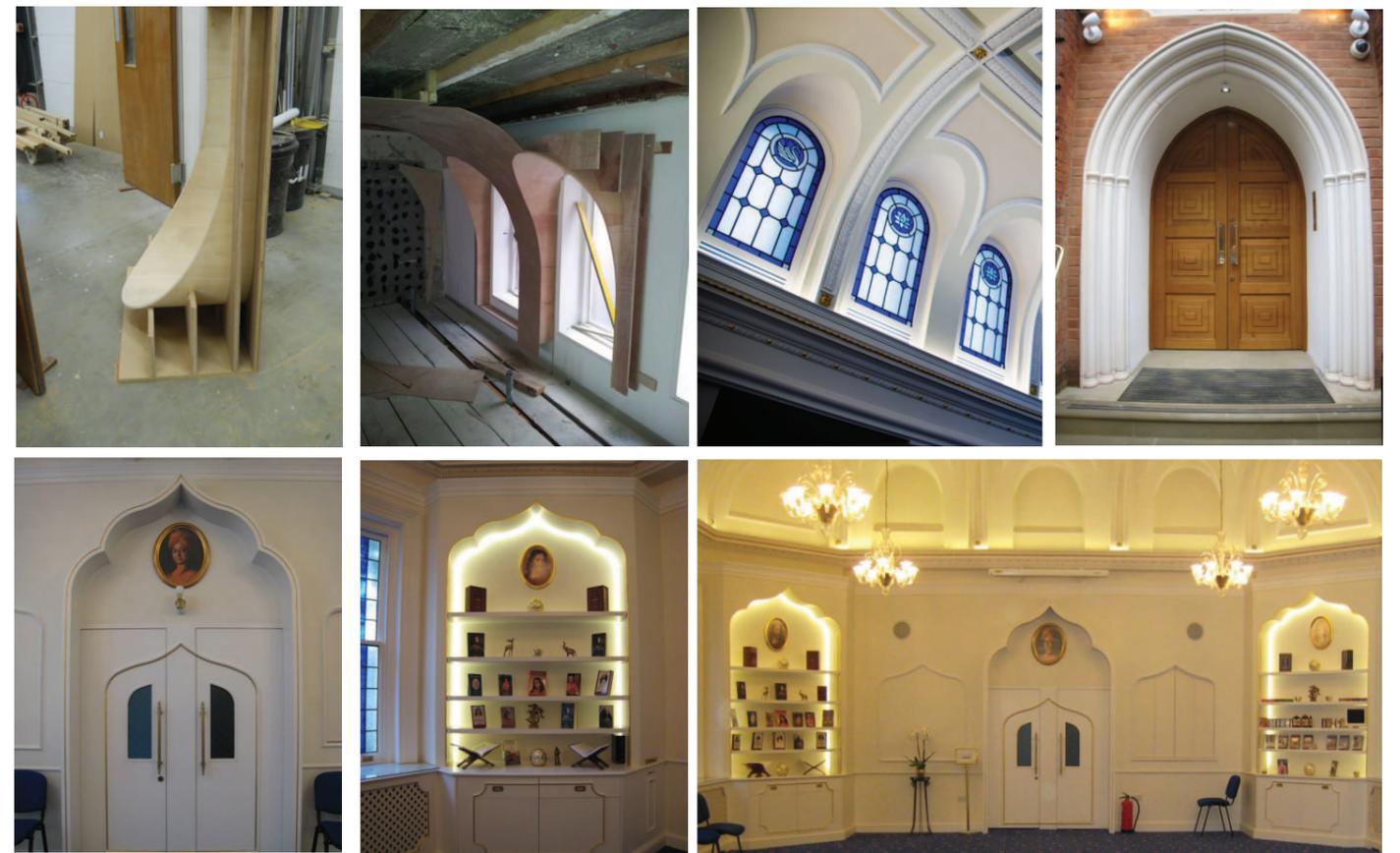
The original windows were to stay in place, and in front of them Oakwright's had to create structural arched formers, which made a recess to house the new arched frames and casements which were hinged at the bottom to allow servicing of the original concealed windows. Timber louvres were installed below the new casements to allow for ventilation.

Modern methods, products and materials were used to achieve a traditional-looking result.

Consideration for other trades involved was crucial – particularly the plasterers, whose decorative work came over the arched formers. To develop and create the shapes of the formers, linings and the windows, CAD and a CNC router were used, as well as traditional joinery skills. These were also used on the other joinery items in the project.

Throughout the building you can see ornate Ogee arch details. Complicated ring fence and cradle work was done on a spindle moulder to achieve these decorative mouldings and frames. The manufacture of the joinery was achieved within a short period to allow for other trades to complete their work in time for the opening ceremony. It was managed within the context of limited space on site, and challenges of poor physical access.

This prestigious project required a high degree of technical ability, and a very high standard of finish. This was achieved by understanding and interpreting the client's and architect's vision, and having very close liaison with them throughout the process.



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