

RESTORATION : RETAINING & ENHANCING THE VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY

Scotland has a proud heritage of outstanding architecture but how do you retain the unique historical and architectural value of such buildings inside and out, while keeping ahead of 21st century working demands?

There are several important points to consider when commissioning the restoration of a listed building in order to install new services or carry out extensive repair works, according to Craig Murie, Business Unit Director of fitout, housing and maintenance specialists Morris & Spottiswood.

Morris & Spottiswood is currently engaged in the restoration at the Glasgow School of Art, the largest and most ambitious conservation project ever conceived for the Charles Rennie Mackintosh masterpiece.

It is a prestigious contract, made even more rewarding, says Craig by the opportunity to work with an experienced and enthused design team who have a defined vision, and a very good technical understanding of construction.

“There is little doubt visionary designs are an inspiration to work on for the entire project team, but the ones that succeed are those where the client’s appointed design team possess sound understanding of construction principles as well as strong design credentials. This will save a lot of time and any protracted negotiations at the conceptual stage that can easily be avoided.”

“Ensuring the proposed restoration and repairs works are carried out sympathetically in keeping with the original features is a key requirement in the majority of restoration work we are asked to carry out on behalf of clients” says Craig.

“Much of it involves meticulous and painstaking work to remove and re-instate the original features, such as ornate carpentry, plasterwork and stonework in order that new services,

for example data and audio cabling, can be concealed in order to preserve the appearance.”

Whether the brief involves concealing new services behind old wooden panelling, replicating the timber of old doors or major structural renovation, Craig recommends clients utilise modern technology by asking to see 3D images of what the proposed changes will look like *in situ*.

“2D technology is still being used today with surprising regularity but there is no substitute for the big picture, which is only achievable using the latest 3D software. With this we are able to provide clients with a huge degree of comfort in terms of what the finished article will look like, down to the choice of materials and even further into the finer details such as the direction of the grain in the wood. More importantly perhaps, they are able to be absolutely certain that the design will be aesthetically appealing once *in situ*, as well as correct.”

The firm, which employs 600 people at its offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Manchester is currently involved in £3million of improvement works within a number of Scotland’s Sheriff and High Courts. As well as creating additional court rooms and annexes that match the century old original features of the court interiors, Morris & Spottiswood has also been asked to introduce new lift installations within these properties for the first time whilst maintaining the integrity and historic value of these magnificent listed buildings.

“This is a very challenging brief because the work needs to be carried out without interference of any type to the day to day running of the courts. We have experienced teams who are well used to working in live environments so for us this is business as usual”. Craig says clients should discuss with bidders how they will schedule the works, understand what experience they have of working in live environments and where necessary, explore through careful programming and phasing of the project, whether potentially disruptive activities can be restricted to the evenings, or overnight.

Finally, don’t automatically opt for the lowest tender. Best value says Craig could come from a contractor who understands the importance of maintaining your productivity and turnover. A contractor that does, will also be contributing to the overall value of your assets.

Craig Murie, Business Unit Director of Morris & Spottiswood

Editor's note: Morris & Spottiswood is a leading provider of fit out and maintenance services to the retail, banking, commercial, education and healthcare sectors across North West England and Scotland. Established in 1925, the company is Britain's third largest retail fit out specialist. Morris & Spottiswood is also a leading regional provider of new build, fit out, refurbishment and maintenance services to the social housing sector. The company has a growing portfolio of social housing projects arising from partnering agreements with local housing organisations throughout Scotland.

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