



## CASTLE STREET ARCADE, CARDIFF



PAINTER & DECORATORS:  
**J J Williams (Painting Services) Ltd**

CATEGORY:  
**Restoration**

PRODUCTS:  
**Johnstone's Trade Undercoat, Eggshell, Pliolite  
Masonry, Smooth Metal paint, Covaplus**

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**The prestigious Castle Quarter Arcades have been an integral part of Cardiff's cultural landscape since opening in 1887.**

Lying just a short distance from Cardiff Castle, the Grade II listed Victorian buildings attract thousands of locals and tourists each year with their fashion boutiques, gift shops and cafes. However, after years of tenants painting their shopfronts in a variety of colours, new owners of the High Street Arcade and Castle Arcade felt the buildings needed to establish their own sense of identity. Bridgend-based decorating firm JJ Williams Ltd was brought in to tackle the ambitious transformation.

Commenting on the opportunity, Graham Thomas, director of operations at JJ Williams, said: *"We'd worked with the client, Mansford LLP, for many years, but we'd never undertaken such ornate work and on such a well-known building in Cardiff, so it was a great privilege to take on this challenge. It allowed us to truly put our skills to the test and we couldn't wait to get started."*

### **From shabby to chic**

To achieve a durable, high-quality finish that would work across a variety of substrates and do justice to the buildings' historic features, JJ Williams turned to Johnstone's Trade. The team used over 17,000 litres of paint from the coatings manufacturer to transform the shopping complex from mismatched and dated to sleek and professional.



A variety of Johnstone's Trade paints were used across the interior, with all the ground-floor shopfronts and first-floor banisters being unified in charcoal grey Eggshell paint. The hardwearing, oil-based product leaves a desirable mid-sheen finish and can be used on both wood and metal surfaces. Meanwhile, the first-floor walls were given an elegant colour scheme of grey and off-white using both Eggshell and Covaplus Vinyl Matt emulsion, a water-based, high-opacity paint that is suitable for all interior walls and ceilings, providing excellent coverage and resistance to fading.

After using the products, JJ Williams said: *"Restoration projects require a full coverage product in order to combat years of previous treatment. Johnstone's Trade paints were brilliant in offering strong, seamless coverage across the many surfaces we had to contend with. Also, knowing that they will retain their colour, brightness and finish for the coming years is a great comfort."*

For the external features around the impressive entrances, Johnstone's Trade Stormshield Pliolite Based Masonry Finish paint was used, also in charcoal, but with the architraves being accentuated with Smooth Metal Paint in gold, a primer and top coat in one. Stormshield Pliolite Based Masonry Finish features easy adhesion technology, meaning it can be painted straight onto previously sealed surfaces in temperatures as low as -5°C – reducing unnecessary preparation time. Its durable coating is also certified by the BBA to last at least 15 years, offering guaranteed results for years to come.

#### **Against the clock**

As with most redecoration projects, time was of the essence, and the team had just four months to complete the job. Ensuring that businesses could function as normal during opening hours was a challenge all contractors had to navigate. Access times and health and safety, therefore, became a particular concern.

Graham said: *"To avoid any access issues, we set up just after the arcades closed each day and worked throughout the night in order to be cleared of all equipment by the morning. The arcades also have quirky glass dome roofs which, as well as being tricky to paint, meant bringing in huge electric booms that rose from the ground floor right to the top of the building. It definitely wasn't without its challenges!"*

#### **An award-winning result**

The team's hard work and skill paid off – the client was blown away by the quality of the finish and the arcades are attracting more attention than ever. The project also won the top prize at Johnstone's Painter of the Year Awards, first winning in the restoration category, before battling it out with the other category winners to take home the Supreme Winner award.

Graham said: *"We worked incredibly hard to bring the arcades into the 21st century, while maintaining the traditional features, and feel we've made them a real centrepiece in Cardiff. We hear people commenting on the architecture a lot now and the restoration seems to have had a really positive effect on the people who work in and visit the arcades – they're busier than ever! Plus, to have the recognition of our peers and win Johnstone's Painter of the Year competition really is the icing on the cake."*

Paul Farrell, marketing manager at Johnstone's Trade, said: *"Graham and the team at JJ Williams overcame multiple challenges to bring this focal Cardiff destination bang up to date, without losing any of the building's old-world charm. It looks fantastic and we're so proud to have been involved in such a highly esteemed project."*

