



Technical information

Client: Private
Architect: Enrico Sassi
Date: 2024 - 2025
Photographer: Marcelo Villada Ortiz

Situation

The building is a three-storey neoclassical palace located in the historic centre of Riva San Vitale, an area listed in the Inventory of Swiss Settlements in Need of Protection (ISOS). The building is located opposite the Baptistry of Riva San Vitale, an important example of early Christian architecture dating from around 500 AD. The building contains six flats, two on each floor. The palace was built in the second half of the 19th century by Giacinto Vassalli (1824-1888), a lawyer and grand councillor, whose family crest still adorns one of the two stained-glass windows that illuminate the atrium. Purchased by the family of the current owners (Verga) in the 1940s, it underwent several internal modifications to allow it to be divided into flats. The most important works were carried out around the year 2000, which involved the renovation of the exterior elevations and a modernisation of the flats, while the communal areas retained the appearance obtained after the works in the 1950s.

Pre-project status

The building had no bells, the main door remained open at all times, as did the second door that managed access to the main lobby and staircase. Security was minimal. The exposed electrical system did not meet current fire safety standards. The entire stairwell was frescoed with marble slab motifs and granite columns, the pictorial decoration was damaged in several areas. The wall strip on the floor



was purple, all the window frames were painted brown. The floors, covered with hexagonal tiles, 11 cm side, made of red stoneware with black and white inserts were partially damaged. The floor of the secondary atrium on the ground floor had remained in a raw state, awaiting the final tiling.

Project

The electrical system was brought up to standard by laying piping and switchboards within new elements to blend in with the existing architecture. A doorbell system with intercom was installed to control access to the atrium. The original atrium door frame was retained and restored, the single panes of glass were replaced with new laminated glass, 'hammered' finish, like the original glass, to maintain the appearance and quality of light. The original floor was restored and new tiles were laid where necessary. The lighting was completely overhauled and the entire decorative apparatus of the staircase was restored; the original colour palette was revised to give more brightness. The original colour of the door and window frames (brown) was replaced by red at the entrance and ivory white on all the other frames.

