Villa Ca' Zenobio: the dexterity of the craftsman and philological material recovery

The time-honoured knowledge of manual techniques, processes and raw materials used in bygone centuries: every work demands to be restored in line with the history of the building, through the application of non-invasive and perfectly reversible techniques, carefully selecting the materials on the basis of laboratory analyses and high standards of functionality and use, entrusting the works to an expert workforce. This is the "style" of the Dottor Group, one of the few companies specialising in the preparation of natural lime-putty based plasters, an ancient bonding agent used back in Roman times.
That, for example, we find in the restoration of Villa Ca' Zenobio in Treviso.

Location

- **location**. Villa Ca' Zenobio, Treviso.
- **history of the building**. Built at the end of the Seventeenth Century, Villa Ca' Zenobio was extended over the course of the following century: the side wings with penthouse floor and the open barn with arched gallery looking onto the garden were added to the shrine and the central body embellished with three-light windows one above the other. In 1779 the property passed to the Zenobi family that had the Music Room decorated with fashionable frescoes, attributed to Gregorio Lazzarini, illustrating the theme of love through the depiction of Eros and pairs of lovers taken from mythology and Gerusalemme Liberata (Jerusalem Delivered).
  Today the Villa houses an International Music School.
- **state of affairs**. Before the intervention the need to structurally consolidate various parts of the complex, in particular the shrine, was evident.

Intervention

- **type of intervention**. Conservative restoration.
- **Duration of the intervention**. 2000 – 2002.
- **customer**. Fondazione Cassamarca.
- **designer**. Edo Vanzo.
- **general contractor**. Dottor Group**.**
- **Structural/architectural and artistic intervention**. The critical points in the realisation of the work were the complexity and the time diversity of the many jobs to carry out. The intervention in fact involved both the central body and the other buildings in the complex. A chemical barrier was applied to counteract the rising damp and underground rooms were created for the technological systems. The original covers have been saved, where possible or integrated. The group's specialised workforce was given the job of shaping the frames and, among other things, laying the paving in the Venetian-style sown terrace. The frescoes in the open barn have been restructured without the aid of chemical solvents and the application of resin.
- **materials and technologies applied to the restoration**. For the structural consolidation of the shrine, the carbon fibre technological innovation was used. In the internal masonry zone between the suspended ceiling and the star-shaped central structure, a carbon fibre kerb was applied. This is an extremely light material but with a much higher resistance to traction than steel. The fabric, bonded with epoxy resin, was anchored to the walls with shaped steel plates placed at each angle of the octagonal perimeter in such a way as to optimise the circling effect. Like this a high level of stability was assured even in the case of earthquakes, without adding weight or removing portions of the original structure.
  The plaster work applied to the lime mortar with crushed pottery base were prepared with materials used in the company in accordance with those originally used with seasoned lime putty.