



U.S. Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, DC

At the request of the Architect of the Capitol, our conservators performed a survey and condition assessment of selected exterior bronze elements at the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) in Washington, DC. The goal of this assessment was to create an inventory of element types and typical conditions, to investigate and interpret likely original finishes, and to make recommendations for the treatment of each.

Elements studied included decorative features (torchieres, flagpole bases, decorative railings, etc), architectural features (grilles, gates, etc) and utilitarian features (hose bibs, grates, etc). The elements are fabricated from various alloys of cast, pressed, and/or extruded bronze components, alone or in combination. Most of these high-quality elements date to the original period of construction of the building and are part of a harmonious, building-wide design scheme. There have also been a series of additions and/or replacements that are in character with the originals in terms of overall design, as well as appearance.

EverGreene conservators undertook a holistic investigation to determine the possible original finishes, which combined research into historic documents and photos, careful probing and observation of site conditions, and selective analysis through X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF). The findings were summarized in an assessment report and included representative images and descriptions of the various conditions.

In 2012, we treated select exterior bronze elements of the 1930's Cass Gilbert Supreme Court building. A low pressure micro-abrasion system was used by EverGreene's skilled conservators to carefully clean the bronze elements. Welding repairs were made to the railings to reattach elements that had been damaged and missing bosses and rosettes were replaced by taking molds of the original bronze elements and casting new ones. The bronze was then patinated to match the specifications from the Architect of the Capitol, a medium statuary brown highlighted to a light statuary bronze. Finally, a solvent based Inralac was spray-applied to bronze elements to coat them.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/us-supreme-court/>

SERVICES PERFORMED

Conservation Treatments
Surveys & Condition Assessments

PROJECT DETAILS

Contractor

Forrester Construction Company



