



THE CORINTHIA HOTEL, LONDON  
Redevelopment & Restoration









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“CORINTHIA LONDON HAS BEEN CRAFTED BY AN EXPERT TEAM OF CONTRACTORS AND DESIGNERS, FROM DEMOLITION TO BUILDING SITE, TO TODAY’S POLISHED GEM OF GRANDIOSE EXCELLENCE.”

SLEEPER MAGAZINE, 2011



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“THIS SEVEN-STOREY PILE IN WHITEHALL HAS BEEN RETURNED TO ITS FORMER LIFE AS A GRAND HOTEL. ITS INVITING MIX OF THE CLASSIC AND THE CONTEMPORARY IS HERALDED BY A 1,001-CRYSTAL BACCARAT CHANDELIER EXPLODING ABOVE THE LOBBY.”

DAILY TELEGRAPH



## INTRODUCTION

In May 2011 Corinthia London opened its doors as one of London's most luxurious new hotels following an extensive renovation that comprehensively transformed this historic site.

The property, which had been empty since 2004, now sits proudly as a grand 306 room hotel, which includes the largest hotel room in London, a four storey spa, grand marble entrance way and glass domed reception area.

As the main contractor on this project Ardmore was responsible for everything from excavation and ground stabilisation to providing a full fit out service including fixtures and fittings. This remarkable hotel was delivered in just two years, a feat achieved through the operation of Ardmore's direct labour force.

Immensely proud of the outcome, Ardmore has commissioned this book to tell the story of Corinthia London and its £300 million transformation from unused office space back to a landmark five-star hotel.



Northumberland Avenue and the Hotel Metropole. c.1900

## HERITAGE

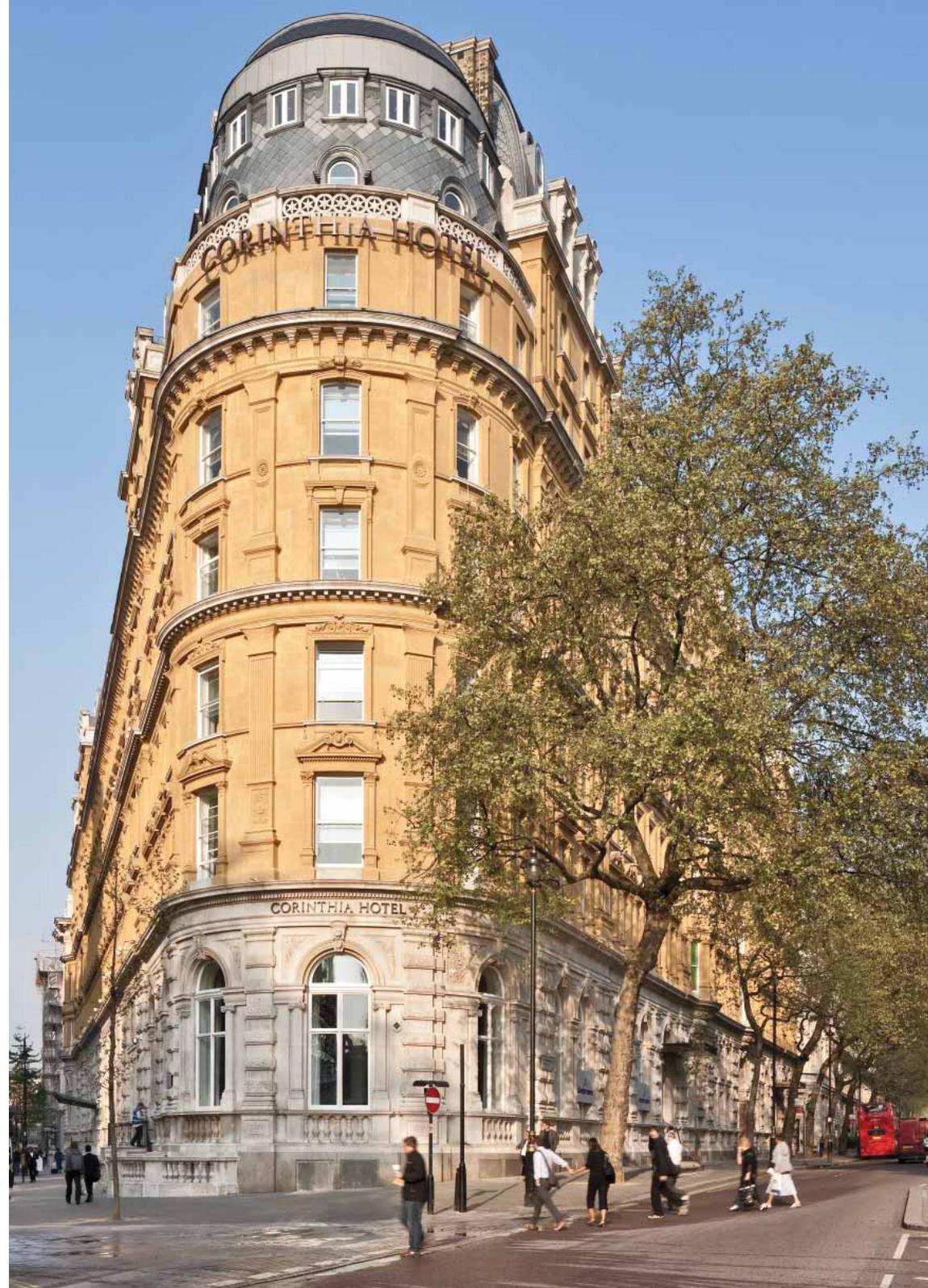
Originally built for the Gordon Hotels Company in 1883, the Metropole Hotel spent a number of decades as one of London's most glamorous hotels, playing host to a glittering array of European royalty, visiting dignitaries and the celebrities of the day.

The close proximity to the Houses of Parliament and the political hub in Whitehall saw the hotel being commandeered for use as emergency Government offices during both world wars. In the late 1940's it was then acquired by the Crown Estate and leased to the Government on a permanent basis, providing overflow offices for the Ministry of Defence until 2004.

As part of the conversion process back to a luxury hotel, secret tunnels built during World War II to facilitate below ground access for defence ministers to Whitehall had to be securely filled in.

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THE ORIGINAL GRAND BALLROOM  
WAS A FAVOURITE HANG-OUT OF KING  
EDWARD VII WHO HAD A PRIVATE BOX  
RESERVED AND REGULARLY STAYED IN  
THE ROYAL SUITE





## CONSTRUCTION

Due to the age and location of the existing buildings, conversion of this dated property involved considerable structural reconfiguration and adaptation.

The desire to create vibrant spaces and large guestrooms also led to the need for significant changes to the arrangement of internal supports.

Major construction elements included the excavation of two stories to create spa facilities; the creation of new lobby, lounge and reception areas; the addition of a seven storey hotel wing; the construction of an 8th floor extension overlooking the Thames to form a two bedroom Royal Suite; extensive facade restoration and retention; installation of new steelwork that was designed and fabricated in Ardmore's factories; and implementing the sustainable measures required to achieve a BREEAM Very Good rating.

At times during the construction process the Corinthia London was the UK's second largest single building site after the Olympic Stadium.

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“AS FIVE-STAR HOTELS GO, THE CORINTHIA IS A FORMIDABLE ACHIEVEMENT – INDISPUTABLY A CONTENDER THAT THE LIKES OF THE CONNAUGHT, THE DORCHESTER AND, INDEED, THE SAVOY WILL FIND THEMSELVES RECKONING WITH.”

FINANCIAL TIMES





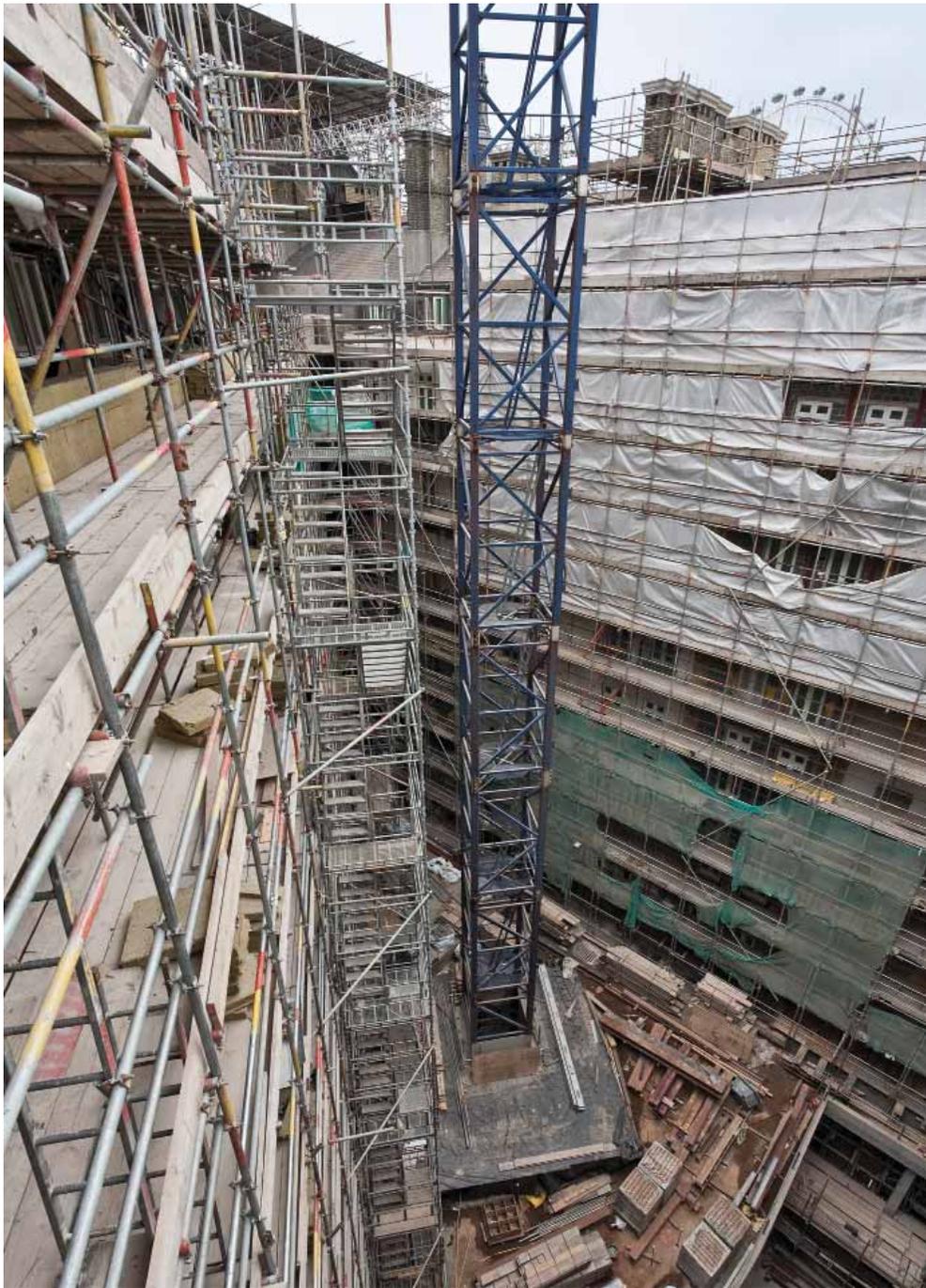
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ARDMORE HAD UP TO 1000 STAFF  
ON SITE 24-HOURS A DAY FOR TWO YEARS  
IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE COMPLETION  
TIME OF THE PROJECT



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7 NEW ENTRANCES FORMED 32 NEW LIFT  
SHAFTS CREATED 700 WINDOWS REFURBISHED  
15 CHIMNEY BREASTS REMOVED



## LOGISTICS

The nature of the existing structure of this property created considerable logistical challenges.

Prior to demolition or construction work all machinery had to be crane lifted above the building and placed in the central atrium. Large access points were then formed at street level to allow for the removal of material from the site during construction.

Following the decision by the Corinthia London to redesign the upper floors, the final stages of the renovation were carried out after the opening of the hotel in a fully operational property with the need to avoid disruption to guests.



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“TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO THIS IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL CLIMATE WAS FRANKLY, EXTRA-ORDINARY AND IT MAKES US PROUD TO KNOW, EVERY TIME WE VISIT THE HOTEL, THAT WE HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE INVOLVED.

THE OUTCOME OF CORINTHIA AND ARDMORE’S COMBINED EFFORTS ARE SELF EVIDENTLY OUTSTANDING.”

BOB SILK, RELATIONSHIP DIRECTOR, BARCLAYS HOTELS TEAM





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RAKING, PILING AND  
UNDERPINNING TOOK PLACE  
BENEATH THE EXISTING  
MASONRY WALLS, INCREASING  
THE BEARING CAPACITY OF  
PREVIOUS STRIP FOUNDATIONS

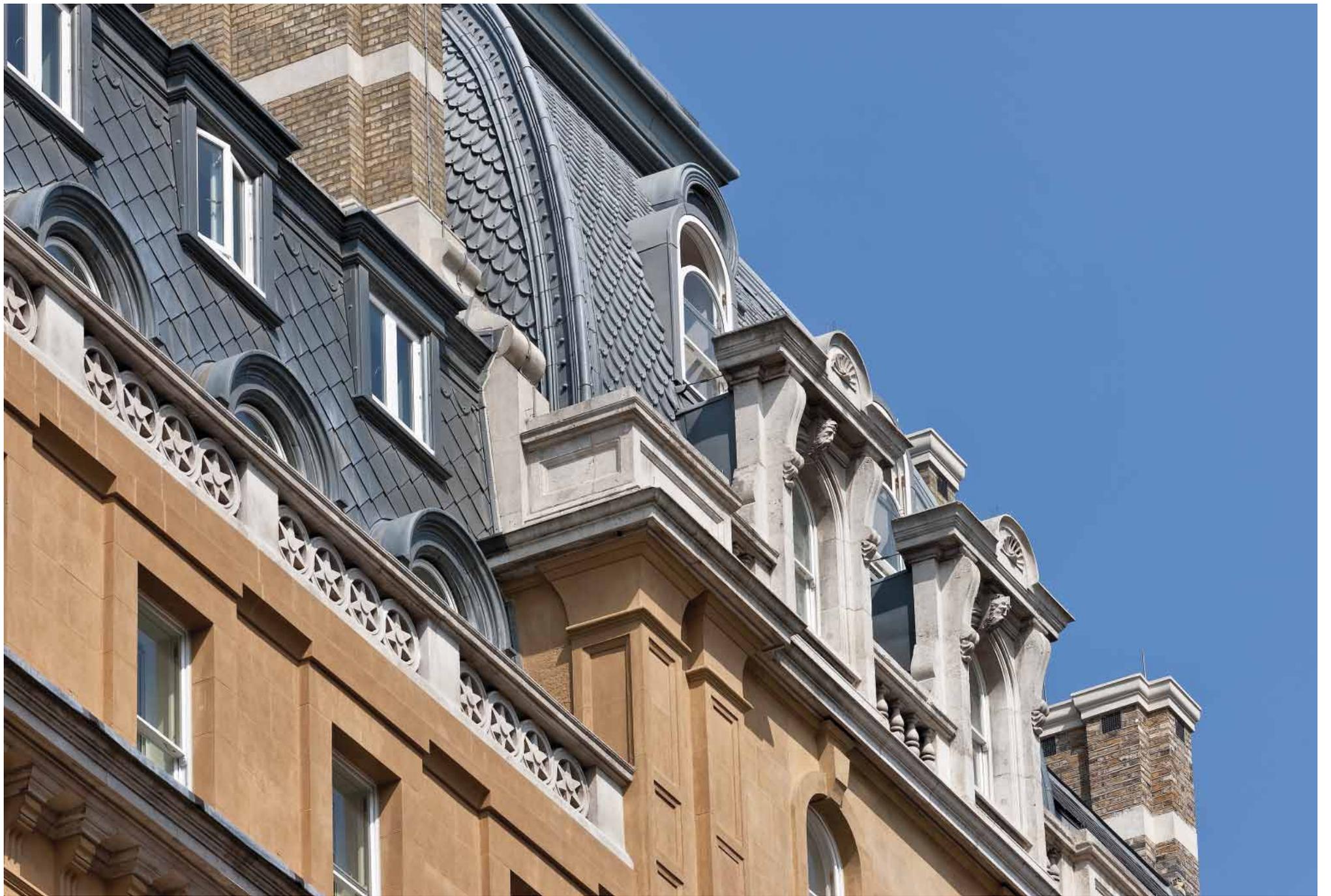


## EXCAVATION

With the added challenge of having to carry out all excavation within the restrictive confines of the existing site and structure, levels were reduced six metres below the original basement in order to house the primary plant room, spa and car park.

Bulk excavation was essential to allow for the remodelling of the front of house areas and substantial reinforced concrete floors and podium slabs were installed to establish a lowered level for the lobby, lounge and reception areas.

The excavation also made space for two lower floors to house part of the hotel's four storey spa - the largest city day spa in London.



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## CORNERS WERE ADDED TO THE FOURTH AND FIFTH FLOORS TO CREATE MORE PRACTICAL LIVING SPACES IN THE CORINTHIA RESIDENCES



### EXTENSIONS

As well as instigating changes to the internal layout within the original building, considerable extension was needed in order to meet the exacting needs of a modern luxury hotel.

Having reinforced the newly excavated basement area, a seven storey extension was constructed in the central atrium. This reinforced concrete structure formed additional bedrooms and a rooftop plant area.

The project saw the creation of an entirely new eighth floor added to the original roof. Overlooking the Thames the entire floor is given over to the two-storey Royal Suite, a 470 square meter space with a wraparound terrace, dedicated lift, two bedrooms, spa, gym and wine cellar.



## INTERNAL STRUCTURES

As much of the existing structure was formed by masonry careful consideration was required to address the extensive changes being made to the internal configuration of the building.

The introduction of 3000 tonnes of structural steel enabled many of the previous masonry dividing walls to be removed, opening up the ground floor spaces to allow a continuous flow between areas.

All the steel installed in the building was custom made by Ardmore's in-house specialists at their Enfield factory, with lengths cut and re-bolted on site due to the size of the frames and the limited access to the hotel.



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THE HOTEL'S CENTRAL STAIRCASE WAS REMOVED AND ENTIRELY REBUILT ON SITE STEP BY STEP FROM THE GROUND UP WITH NEWLY MANUFACTURED BALUSTRADES THAT MATCHED THE ORIGINALS

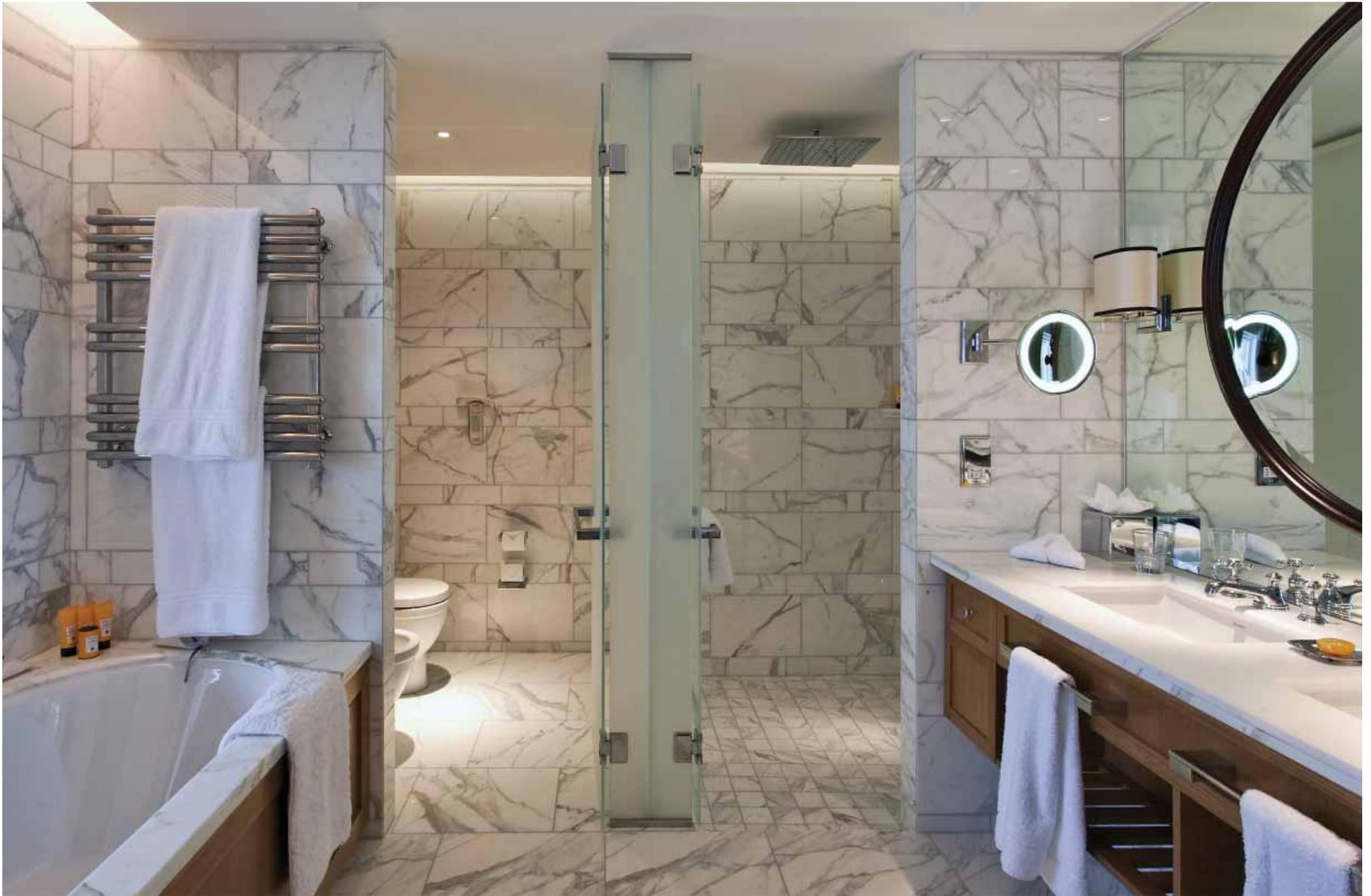




## STONEMWORK

Restoring the external stonework to its original splendour was a key element in reviving the hotel to its former glory. Every inch of the stone façade of the building was cleaned, with defects meticulously repaired and window surrounds remodelled in keeping with the original designs.

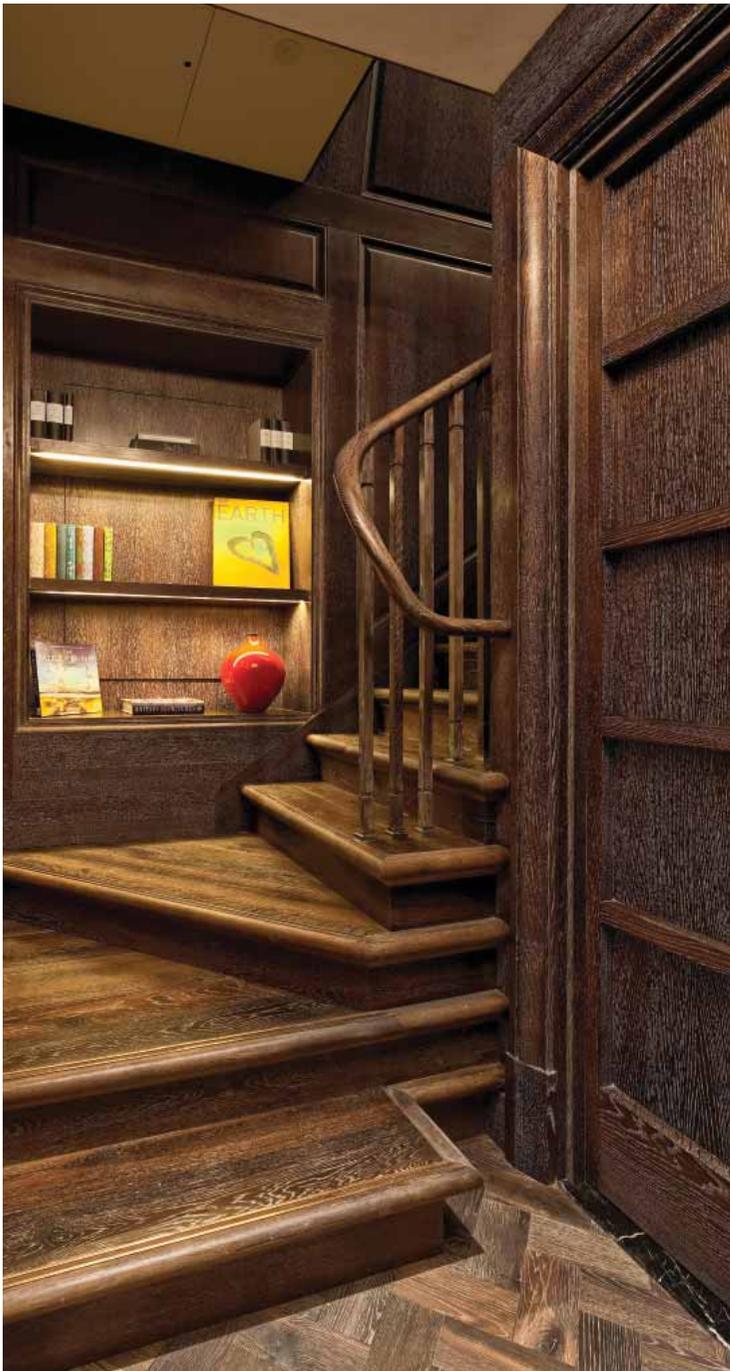
Internally, a vast amount of marble has been used, from the flooring in the lobby, to the unit tops in the guest bathrooms. Ardmore underwent a thorough procurement process to source the best material, acquiring the stone directly from quarries in Portugal and Italy. The stone slabs were then shipped to London to be cut, shaped and crafted by Ardmore's skilled workmen, before being laid and joined in the hotel.



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LED BY ARDMORE THE DESIGN TEAM MADE WEEKLY VISITS TO QUARRIES IN EUROPE TO ENSURE THAT THE FINEST STONE WAS SELECTED FOR THE PROJECT





“THERE IS NO DISPUTING THE  
QUALITY OF FINISHES AND  
MATERIALS”

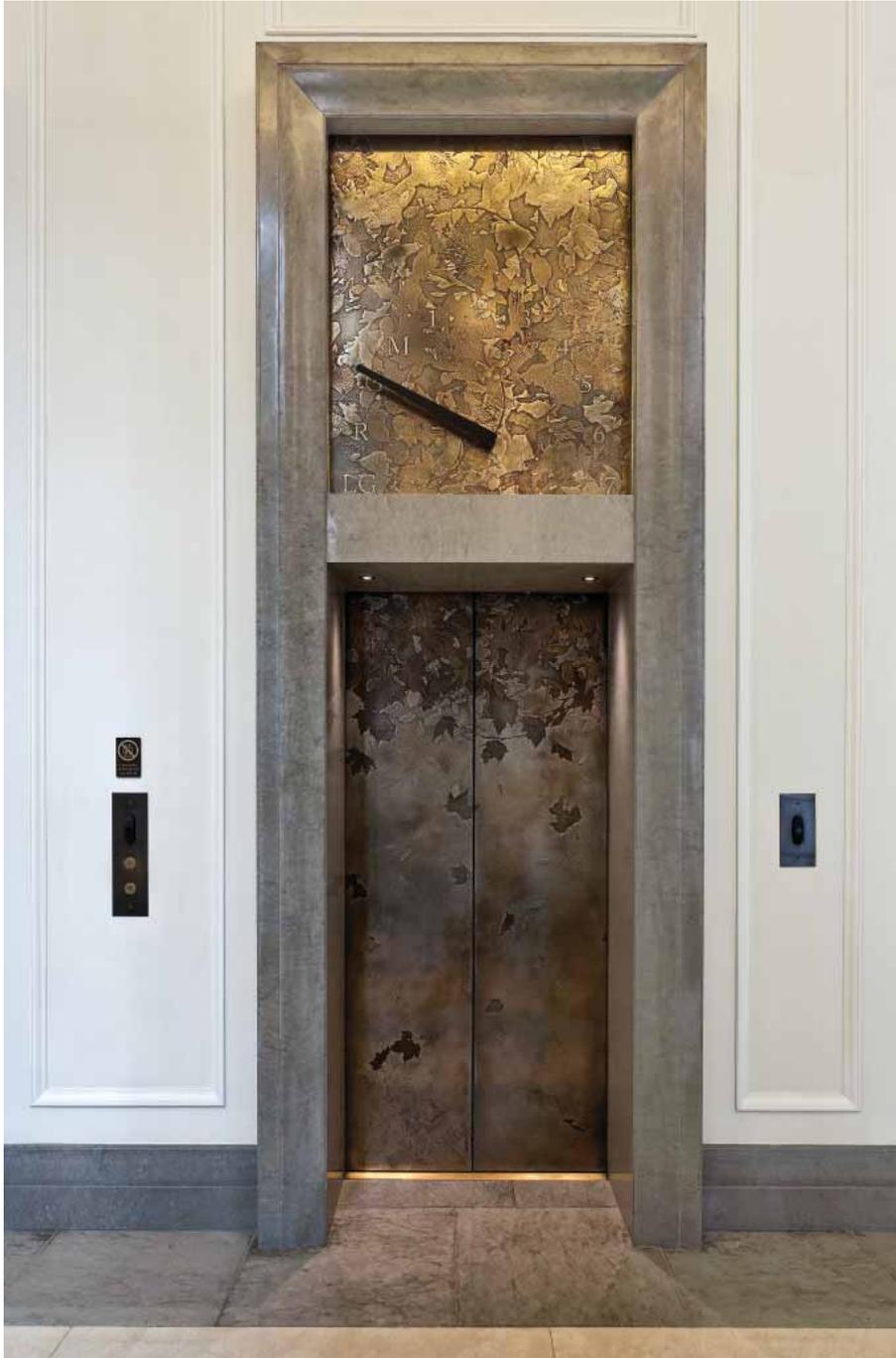
HOW TO SPEND IT

## JOINERY

Every element of joinery in the hotel has been hand crafted in house by Ardmore’s dedicated experts, from every door and window to the bookshelves and the bedroom cupboards to the extensive decorative timber panelling that runs throughout the property.

In all over 10,000 individual pieces were required and in order to meet this demand Ardmore fully dedicated one of its joinery workshops for the duration of the project.

In line with Ardmore’s sustainability policy, all woodwork was sourced from the finest Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) timber.



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32 NEW LIFT SHAFTS WERE CREATED, INCLUDING FIVE PUBLIC LIFTS WITH BESPOKE STRUCTURES, STONEWORK, MIRRORING AND UNIQUE PRESSED BRONZE DOORS



### MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL

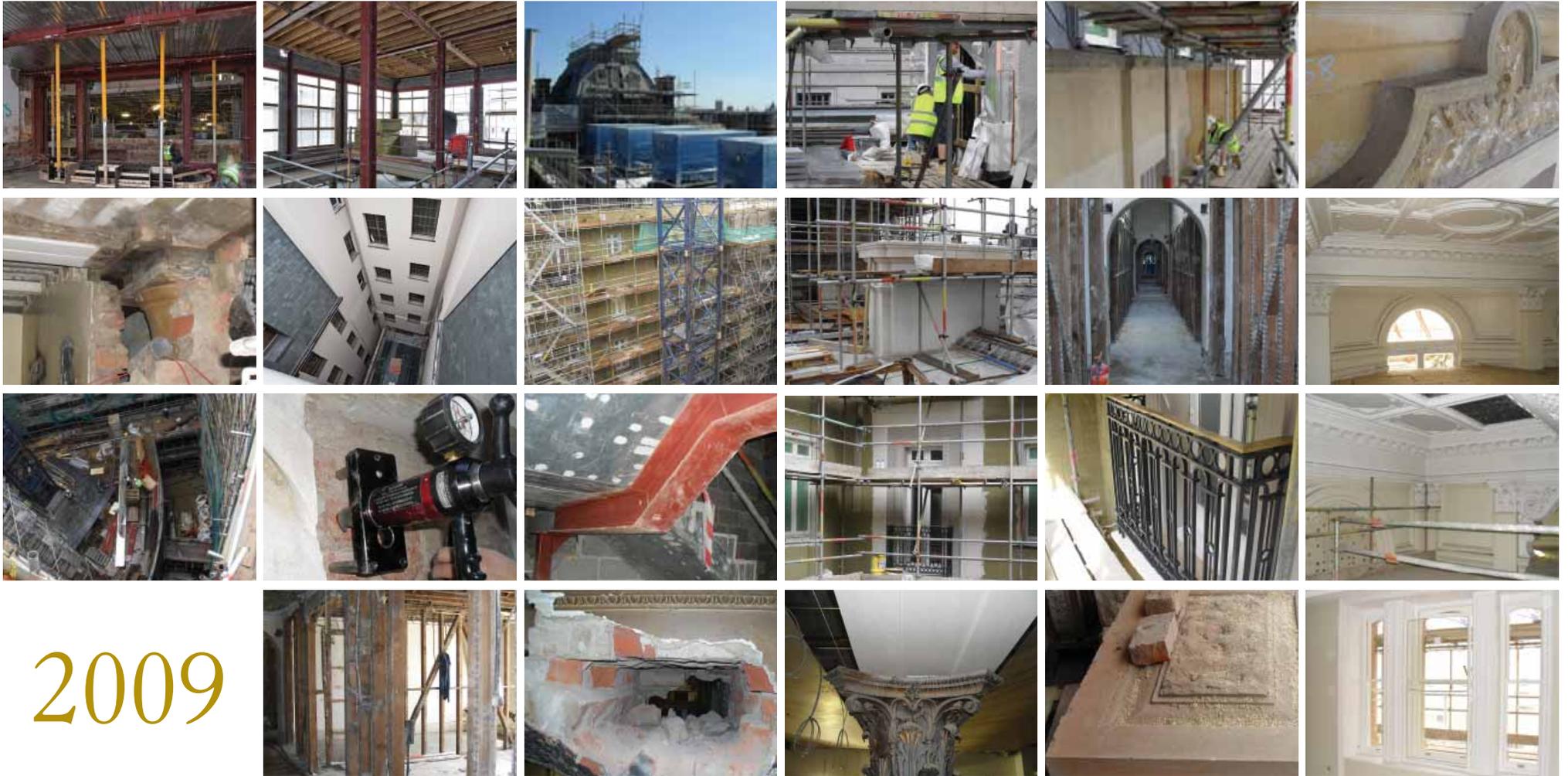
As would be expected for a hotel of this scale the building services have formed a major portion of the works. All of which were carried out by Ardmore's mechanical and electrical division.

Two plant rooms were constructed at basement and roof level. The main basement plant room houses eight air handling units, three boilers, twenty three water tanks with booster and sprinkler pumps and the central electrical distribution panels.

The age of the building meant that all above and below ground drainage systems needed replacing. A completely new electrical system was also designed to allow for state of the art lighting controls and audio visual technology to be fitted in all guestrooms.

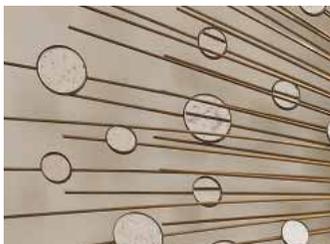
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# THE ARDMORE EXPERIENCE



2009

2011





## FURNITURE, FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT

Almost unique to Ardmore's offering as a main contractor is their in-house capability to design, source and manufacture the hard furnishings needed to turn a well made building into a statement making property.

Working closely with the interior designers, Ardmore's team was instrumental in fitting out and finishing the front of house areas, Harrods Flower Store, Northall restaurant, ballroom, standard guest rooms and junior suites.

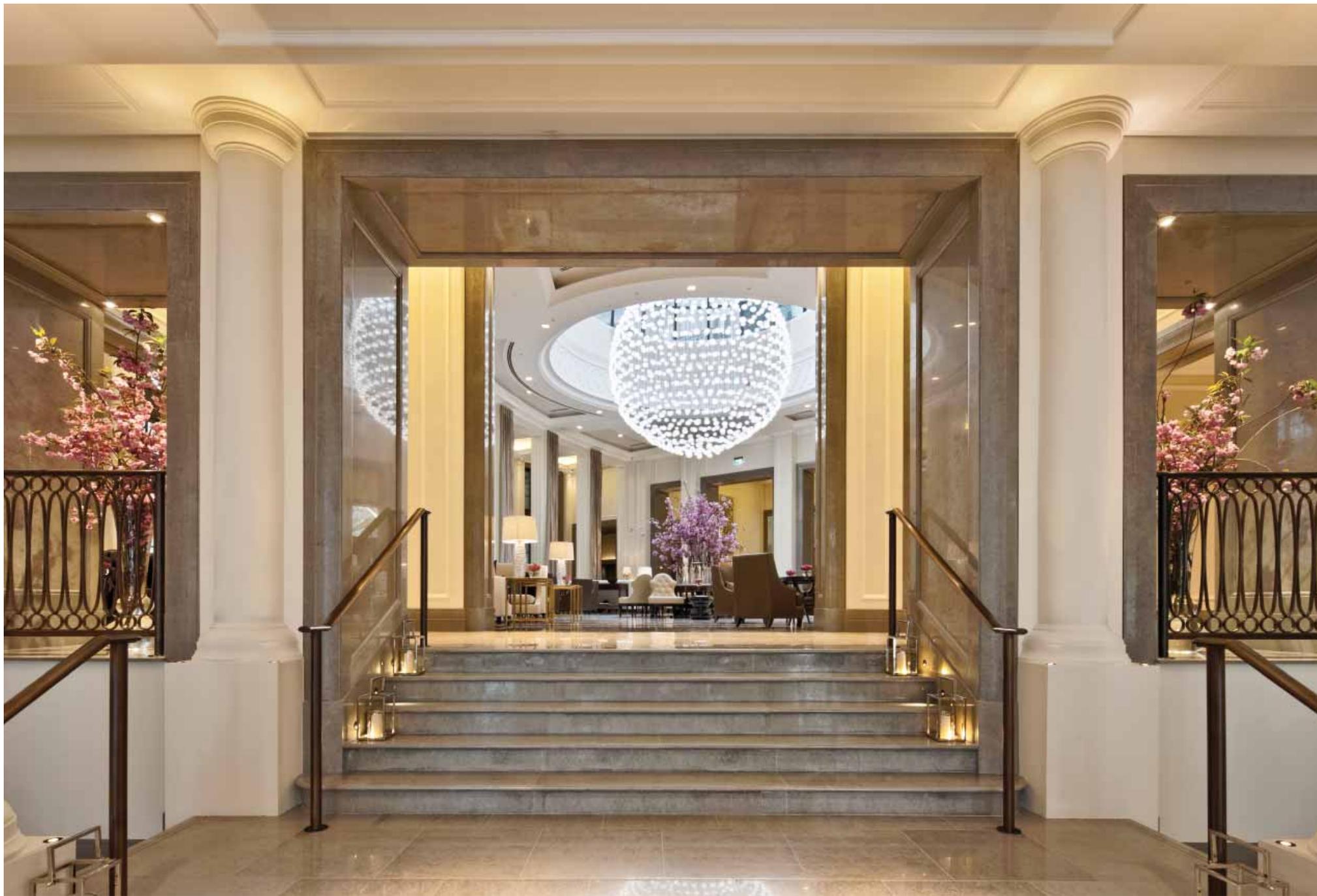
From across the globe Ardmore placed over one thousand individual orders for items of FF&E including fabrics, leathers, light fittings, case goods and silks.





“GRANDER STILL IS THE NORTHALL RESTAURANT WHERE CORINTHIAN COLUMNS, SOARING CEILINGS AND LEATHER BANQUETTES PROVIDE THE BACKDROP.”

THE INDEPENDENT



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THE TWO TONNE CHAFIK  
DESIGNED CHANDELIER IS  
MADE UP OF 1001 BACCARAT  
CRYSTALS WHICH HANG  
DOWN IN INDIVIDUALLY LIT  
BAUBLES CREATING A FULL  
MOON EFFECT WITH THE  
BACCARAT SIGNATURE OF A  
SINGLE RED BAUBLE



## THE LOBBY

Creating a striking first impression, the intricate detailing afforded to the lobby, reception and lounge area sets the scene for the entire hotel, with antique bronze panelling, marble cladding, antique brass and glazed screens featuring heavily throughout.

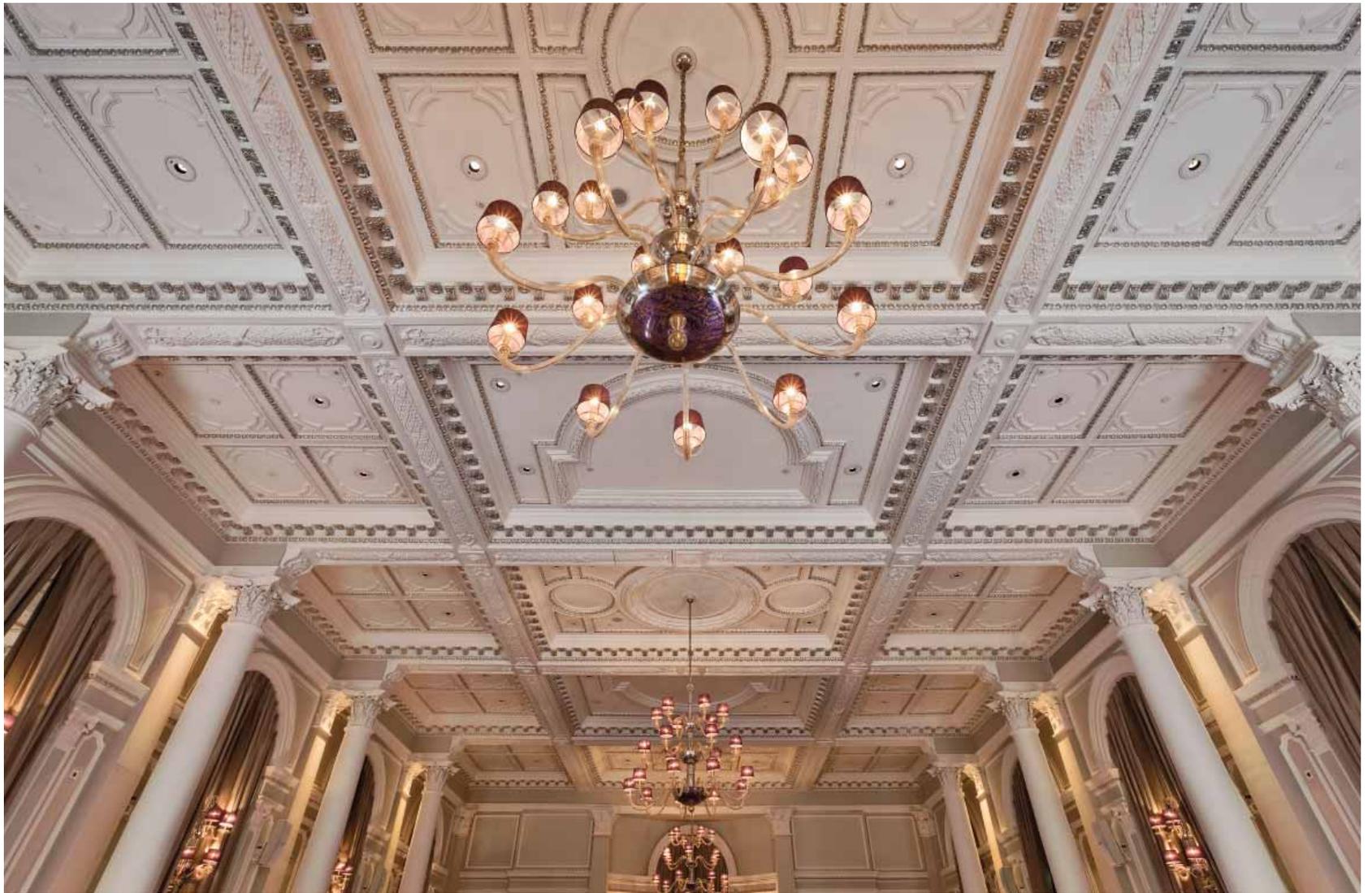
The centrepiece of the open public space is a large seven metre diameter glass dome below which hangs a Baccarat Crystal chandelier, all of which helps to light up the highly patterned polished marble floor, cut and laid by Ardmore specialists to create a series of circular stone features.



## SPACES FOR ENTERTAINING

Substantial reworking of the internal layout of the ground floor has created a network of entertaining spaces for leisure and business with two distinctive bars, the grand Northhall restaurant and the exclusive Massimo restaurant. Exquisite marble, perfectly formed woodwork and rich cowhide leather flows throughout the open areas.

Reconstructing the historic Ballroom from the Metropole Hotel has enabled the recreation of many of the original features lost when the property was converted in to office space. This has been achieved by creating complex coffered ceilings in fibrous plaster and decorated in extensive gold leaf sheets.



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“IF YOUR TRIP TO LONDON DOESN'T INVOLVE STAYING AT  
BUCKINGHAM PALACE, THEN THE CORINTHIA LONDON  
MIGHT JUST BE THE NEXT BEST PLACE”

HUFFINGTON POST



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STANDARD GUESTROOMS HAVE AN AVERAGE  
FLOOR-PLAN OF 46.5 SQUARE METRES,  
AMONG THE LARGEST IN LONDON



ACCOMMODATION

Great importance was placed on designing and constructing guestrooms that were both spacious and opulent.

An additional challenge to overcome was the variance in floor to ceiling heights inherited from the original structure. To address this Ardmore designed and installed bespoke joinery specific to each room.



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“I WAS AMAZED WITH THE SCALE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE RENOVATION. SOME OF THE WORK HAS BEEN INGENIOUS AND I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THAT THE ENTIRE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING COULD BE REMOVED AND REBUILT WITHOUT REMOVING THE FAÇADE. ARDMORE’S MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF SUCH WAS MOST IMPRESSIVE EVEN BY MILITARY STANDARDS.”

RICHARD PARRY, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## PROJECT TEAM

Main Contractor: Ardmore

Architect: Sigma Architects & Interiors

Project Manager: Gardiner & Theobald

Interior Designer: GA Design International

Services Engineer: Building Services Group

Structural Engineer: Price & Myers

Planning Consultant: Gerald Eve

Landscape Architect: EDCO Design London

Monitoring Surveyor: E C Harris

Funding arranged by Barclays Hotels Team

Consultant: QPM Limited

With thanks to the CHI Hotels & Resorts, without whose inspiration and vision this project would have not been possible.



