

ROCH CASTLE

Between a Rock and a Luxurious Place

This timeless 13th century castle had survived war and cannon fire and the tide of time. Today, the Roch castle stands proudly as the ultimate symbol of bespoke luxury.

STORY BY Dewald Haynes PHOTO BY Marcus Oleniuk



Roch Castle was built in 1280, and was the home of the Walter family and their daughter Lucy Walter, who later became mistress to King Charles II and mother of his child, the Duke of Monmouth. The Castle bears the damage caused by cannon and fire during a fierce siege in the Civil War of 1644. In 1900, the castle was restored by John Philipps, first Viscount ST. Davids; a steel frame was installed to provide proper structural support while oak

doors, concrete floors and Bathstone traceried windows were incorporated as part of the Victorian NeoGothic design by D.E. Thomas. Additional smaller improvements were carried out in 1910 and 1918-20 by D.F. Ingleton. When the founder of Retreats Group (Keith Griffiths) purchased Roch Castle in 2008, most of the castle had sat in abandoned decay, the lime-concrete floors from the 1900 had rusted away, the massive keep walls were saturated



with water and required repointing and waterproofing.

As the launch of the flagship property for a newly creating brand of high-end luxury properties for Retreats Group, the owner and founder, Keith Griffiths wanted to develop and create a signature style through bespoke furnishings with an overall luxurious décor that establishes a timeless quality and a sense of exclusive sanctum. Establishing the launch of this brand, the core messages of 'Modernity in an old fabric' was the design brief given to the designers at Aedas Interiors. Modern luxury set with a historical landmark.

Adapted and re-used as a corporate retreat, the Castle has six en-suite bedrooms,

a private kitchen and staff quarters. The Castle sits within four-acres of private and landscaped grounds that extend along the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, the only coastal national park in Wales; making the location as unique as the Castle's rich history.

The outdoor setting of Wales heavily inspired the interior designers on the colour palette chosen; drawing strongly on the relationship from the outdoor to the indoor environment. Local landscapes, colors of the coastline, beaches and grass fields influenced the selected motifs and textures that kept within the colours of the outdoor environment; custom carpet designs were inspired by the grasslands and fields.

The architect and interior designers were presented several challenges in working with the Castle, with existing room configurations awkwardly shaped and sized and the restriction of altering any external walls. The Castle's foundation was showing substantial deterioration and decay. They also had to consider the preservation of original architectural elements including the bronze traceried windows, original wood and stone flooring from the 1900 restoration. Another challenge they faced was to work around the bedrock that sits as part of the Castle's foundation. All restoration work and labor were commissioned to be delivered by the local workers of Wales. As well, the interior



CASTLE TALE
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
— The Sun Room
— The vast grounds of Roch Castle
— The hall of Roch Castle



designs tried to source as many materials locally as possible, including the Gascoigne Bleu limestone. You will even find that local produce and wines fill the pantry and wine cellar.

The selected artwork also tells a local story, with artistry by Brenden Stuart Burns and Geoff Yeomens, both renowned artists based in Wales. Commissioned custom tapestries by Amanda Wright (UK) weave the legendary stories of the Castle; earthenware pots, hand-crafted by Daniel Wright (UK) are bespoke exclusively for all Retreat Group's properties.

Each art element is incorporated with purpose and design intent specific to the Roch Castle; each piece embodies the cultural reference and tells the story of the local heritage of Pembrokeshire, Wales.

The custom furniture, designed by Aedas Interiors, were handcrafted and commissioned from London-based Channels Furniture Company,



Project Data

Project Name
Roch Castle Retreat

Location
Haverfordwest, Wales, United Kingdom

Site Area
Pembrokeshire

Gross Floor Area
Gross External Area 821sqm

Client/Owner
The Retreats Group

Architecture Consultant
Acanthus Holden Architects Ltd

Principal Designer
Acanthus Holden Architects Ltd

Interior Design Consultant
Aedas Interiors Ltd.

Interior Contractor
Welsh Heritage Construction Ltd

Lighting Consultant
SABA Consult Ltd

Landscape Consultant
Treeworks Ltd

Mechanical & Electrical Consultant
SABA Consult Ltd

Civil & Structural Consultant
Roger Casey Associates Ltd

Main Contractor
Welsh Heritage Construction Ltd

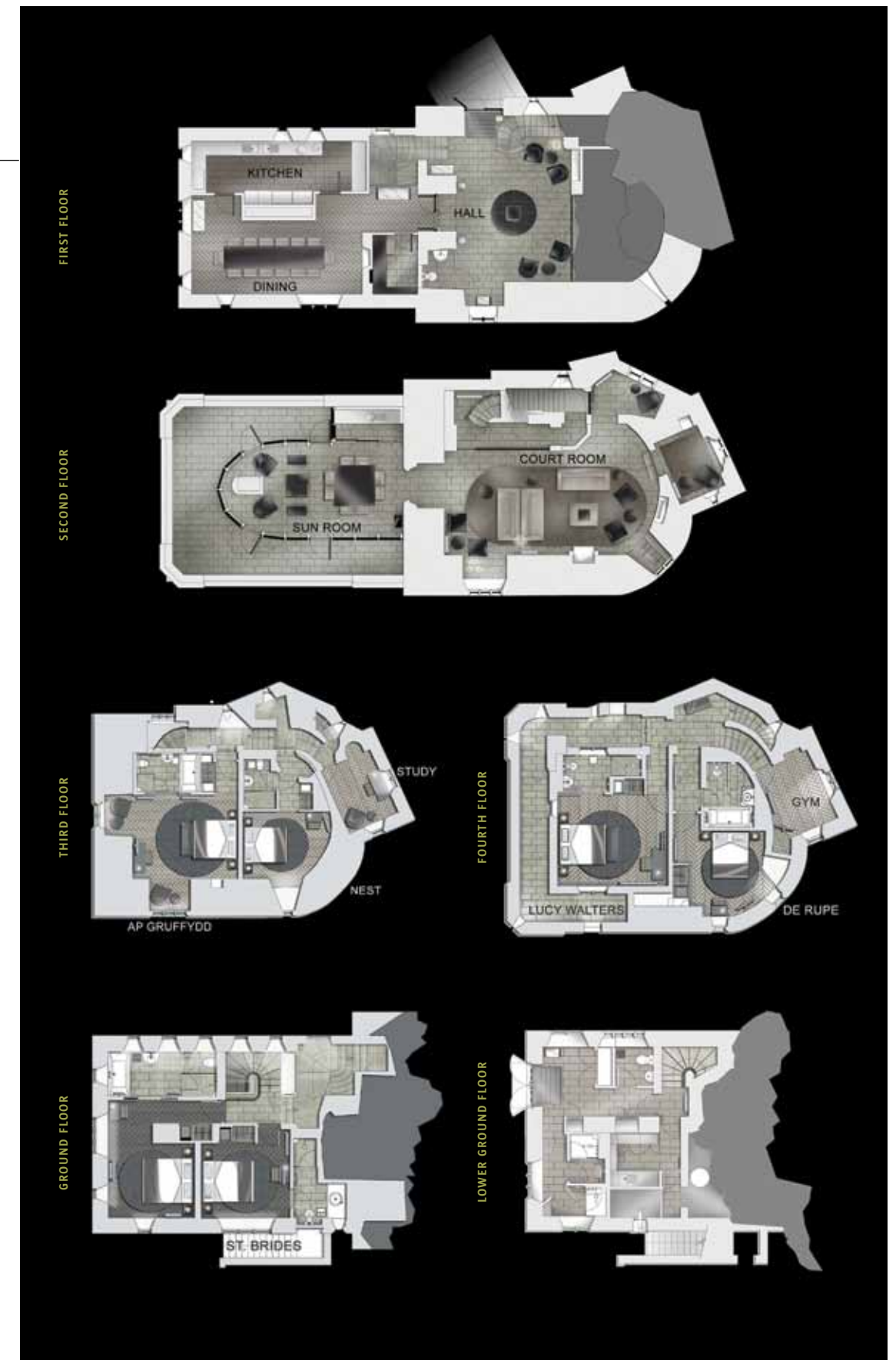
Started
17th Aug 2009 (contract)

Completed
20th Jan 2012 (contract)

CASTLE TALE FROM TOP

The bedrooms are well-appointed and in keeping with modern creature comforts.

The artwork on the tea set





CASTLE TALE
FROM TOP

- The dining room
- The tapestry of Roch Castle
- The Lucy Bedroom, named after the daughter of the first homeowner, Lucy Walter



a company specializing in the making of hand-built craftsman furniture for the five-star bespoke market. Leatherworks, from Italy, crafted into floor coverings infused a high-quality minimalistic and modern sense yet a warm and inviting environment into the Castle's interiors.

Bathroom installations, modern hardware and fixtures were pre-fabricated and fitted out into the existing space of each en-suite bathroom; a literal installation of modernity into the existing framework onto the old Castle.


The designers and architect also

conceived the new addition of the glass-enclosed Sun Room, adjacent to the elegant Court Room on the second floor. The Sun Room extends over the battlements terrace and offers a transformative indoor-outdoor space framing the magnificent panoramic views of the Irish Sea, St. David's Peninsula and the mountains of Wales.

At the Client's request, the use of allergy-free, chemical-free materials and fabrics can be found in the fitting out of the interior space, including natural wood and wood oils, which were meticulously selected by

the designers with sensitivity toward the emission of toxic VOC's. This also includes the selection of lime plaster and woods from sustainable sources and use of a hemp-based mineral paint on the walls, which allows the Castle walls to breathe and withstand the moisture while stabilizing the temperature from the seasonal climates of Wales. This philosophy toward sustainable materials extended to the selection of bath amenities, towels, linens, pillows and bedding made available for guests.

For the design team of Aedas Interiors, Greg Farrell, Executive Director and Leslie Lui, Associate, detailing this project was the key to creating a signature style and feel for the Retreats Group properties. The detailing includes the integration of the Griffiths' Family crest, bestowed by the Queen of England. The Crest adorns the fireplace mantle in the Court Room, while other extractions of the Crest embellish the handles of the cupboards in the Sun Room and the etched glass panels separating the stairwell from the Court Room.

Completed in May 2011, the Castle now sits, externally restored to its original majestic state, whilst quietly juxtaposed within; a luscious modern interior we like to call William the Conqueror meets Giorgio Armani. 

First there was the ocean

The combination of existing conditions in some places of the earth during the pre-historic times has been the prerequisite for the formation of slate. More than 200 millions of years ago micro grained depositions of clay mud compounds were formed at the bottom of primeval oceans. These compounds hardened by increased pressure and became mudstone.

Later during the formation of mountains these stone layers were splitted by the lateral pressure. During these processes the original minerals were placed onto finest shear areas. They crystallized by means of pressure and heat to become very flat minerals. The native rock obtained a structure called slate.

These slates from selected sources around the world are the raw material for Stone-Veneer®

Slate

The variety of colours and the natural appeal to all the senses make this architectural material very attractive. Colours like light grey, natural or red and black exist for millions of years and have been created through oxidation. The natural colours of slate are resistant against light and UV.

Quartzite Slate

Compared to slate being flat and thin, quartzite slate is medium-grained or coarse-grained. Quartzite Slate consists of quartz and of layers of silicate. These ingredients make the surface glimmer and lightly shine. It is a long way combined with great skill and careful handling from the stone quarry to the finished sheet of Stone-Veneer®. Due to geological conditions in nature, only limited sizes of quartzite slate can be mined. The splitting process of Quartzite Slate is more difficult and involves more labour to split than slate. The partly rough surface structure of quartzite slate should not be used for horizontal panels like countertops or flooring.

Sandstone

Sandstone is a sedimentary rock consisting of cemented grains of sand which mainly contains quartz. The sandstone for Stone-Veneer® Sahara is mined in sand pits in Northern Germany. Sand is bonded vertically with thermoplastic binders to large sheets.

Stone-Veneer® Sahara has a very attractive texture from its large content of white quartz sand with stripes from light-brown to darkbrown. Approximately 90 % of Stone-Veneer® Sahara is pure quartz sand with a thickness of 1 – 2 mm. Sandstone is

suitable for interior and exterior applications. It can be glued directly onto surfaces because of its backside support layer. If heat is applied Sahara can also be formed three-dimensionally. Sahara layers may also be glued onto engineered panels.

NanoStone

This stone surface has a very thin fleece on the back and can be formed in a vertical and horizontal direction. This unique product was introduced recently and won the prestigious awards.



PT. AMAN TIRTA
Komplek Citta Graha, Unit 2Q
Jl. Panjang Arteri Kedoya No.26
Kebon Jeruk - Jakarta Barat 11520
P. (021) 5830 4455, 5830 1991
F. (021) 5830 4535
E. info@amantirta.com
I. www.amantirta.comtirtaaman